

Université de Montréal

**POWER STRATEGY FORMATION
IN A HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATION
UNDERGOING TURBULENT CHANGE**

par

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Summary of the Research

The literature on strategy formation in the human services sector is relatively unexplored when examined against the backdrop of research on power from the industrial sector. The present research examines power strategy formation of employees in a mental health organization that went through a long separation from a psychiatric hospital. The central questions addressed were: What kinds of strategies emerge when there is turbulent organizational change? How do the employees deal with the turbulent events in terms of power strategies? How are their power strategies similar or different? What relational power patterns emerge around the power strategies?

To understand power strategy formation, a perspective using an interdisciplinary power games and relations perspective is advocated. Power strategy formation takes place at the surface level of organizations, where actors manipulate power sources to confront others in order to gain their compliance, to avoid resistance, and to prevent the emergence of controversial issues that become dilemmas for them. Strategy formation also occurs on a deeper level, where actions of personnel are coded with cultural values, beliefs, and practices that often are an unperceived part of organizational functioning.

This research relied on semi-structured interviews, historical documents, limited participant observation, and the researcher's personal experience working in the organization. Using a qualitative research approach, the analysis of the interviews compared staffs from different hierarchical levels as well as their veteran or newcomer status in the organization. Six hundred references to sources of power and nearly one thousand references to power strategies were compiled from transcripts of staff interviews.

The present research provides evidence for including cultural identity as a source of power in organizations. Also, the analysis found that higher-ups do not always have more access to power sources, depending on the historical context and the values and beliefs of other participants.

The research explored twelve surface and four deep level strategies. The uneven distribution of strategies across hierarchical groups is viewed as a reflection of differing access to power sources and of historical context. Senior managers placed more emphasis on deep level strategies than team leaders, therapists, and clerical staffs. Senior managers focused on

formal or structural sources of power and strategies and somewhat on cultural identity around issues of hiring. Middle managers, for their part, described themselves as sandwiched between levels and avoided the crossfire or tended to go to outside sources for support. Therapists, for their part, anchored themselves to the past to thwart change efforts and exercised psychological distance. The fourth hierarchical group, clerical staffs, played a more peripheral role and showed little engagement in power games. There was very little reliance on strategies that exert high social pressure such as coercion and reprimands by any of the groups due to the already high levels of turbulence.

Comparisons between newcomers and veteran staffs in the organization showed fewer differences than between hierarchical levels, although newcomers resorted more to deep level strategies. Veterans anchored themselves to the past while newcomers could not invoke the past in their strategies. Senior managers, who tried to break radically with the past engendered a feeling in veteran staffs that their skills and experience were not needed nor wanted.

The data provided evidence that deep level strategies supplemented weakened power bases at all levels, although more evidently in the senior managers and therapists levels. Values and beliefs at the deep level acted as a catalyst to counteract surface level strategies, particularly when there were organizational history and cultural dynamics involved. The model of analysis helped understand the contrast between how senior managers focused on the future and how therapists countered this by anchoring themselves to past history.

The research provided empirical evidence that power strategy formation occurred at every level of the organization, regardless of position or rank. This challenges the traditional notion that strategy formation is for top management only. The study collected detailed information about strategy formation at the micro level in a human service organization, and it identified possible indications of problem spots. The literature from the industrial sector was found to be a valid starting point for study of power strategies in the human services sector.

The research affirms the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of power strategy formation, where power is studied from many sources of information and from different angles. The power relations and games perspective that was used to study power strategies in this research epitomizes the interdisciplinary aspects of the field.

Résumé de la recherche

La littérature sur la formation des stratégies de pouvoir dans le secteur des services humains est relativement inexplorée par rapport à celle qui traite du pouvoir dans le secteur industriel. C'est dans cette optique que la présente recherche examine la formation des stratégies de pouvoir dans une organisation de santé mentale qui vient de vivre une scission mouvementée avec un hôpital psychiatrique.

En effet, l'organisation étudiée était un centre de santé mentale en voie de séparation administrative et organisationnelle complète d'un hôpital psychiatrique. Depuis plusieurs années, l'hôpital faisait face à des pressions de la communauté pour assurer une plus grande présence communautaire. Certains groupes culturels, pour leur part, réclamaient le contrôle des services par leur population. Suite à une proclamation du gouvernement ontarien, une nouvelle organisation a été formée, chacun des groupes culturels ayant son propre conseil consultatif dépendant d'un conseil administratif central.

Les questions centrales de la recherche furent donc les suivantes : quels genres de stratégies émergent quand il y a un tel changement organisationnel? Comment les employés réagissent-ils à ces événements en termes de stratégies de pouvoir? En quoi leurs stratégies sont-elles semblables ou différentes? Quels modèles de relations de pouvoir émergent autour des stratégies?

Pour bien comprendre les stratégies de pouvoir, une analyse interdisciplinaire utilisant la perspective des relations et des enjeux de pouvoir est préconisée. La formation des stratégies a lieu à deux niveaux : à un premier niveau, plus évident, où les acteurs manipulent des sources de pouvoir dans leurs relations avec les autres et leurs actions par rapport aux autres, et, à un deuxième niveau, plus profond et subtil, où les stratégies des personnes sont nuancées par leurs valeurs culturelles, leurs croyances et leurs pratiques, qui passent souvent inaperçues dans le fonctionnement organisationnel.

La partie empirique de cette recherche exploratoire s'est basée sur une étude d'employés appartenant à quatre niveaux hiérarchiques de cette organisation. Les quatre groupes avaient en commun la séparation organisationnelle de l'hôpital psychiatrique, un environnement politique mouvementé, et tous travaillaient à l'amélioration des services répondant aux besoins de santé mentale des enfants, des adolescents et des familles de la région.

Par contre, des contrastes existaient au niveau des responsabilités et des rôles des groupes, de leur autonomie professionnelle et de leur formation. Nous avons aussi comparé les groupes d'employés selon leur ancienneté (les nouveaux venus et les anciens) dans l'organisation.

Pour la cueillette des données, nous avons utilisé des entrevues semi-structurées, des documents historiques, fait une observation participante limitée, et utilisé notre expérience personnelle dans l'organisation étudiée. Utilisant une approche qualitative, l'analyse des entrevues a comparé les stratégies de pouvoir selon leur appartenance hiérarchique et selon leur ancienneté. Les quatre groupes étaient constitués de trois personnes de la haute direction, de trois chefs d'équipe (cadres intermédiaires), de dix-huit thérapeutes et de trois secrétaires. Il y a eu en tout vingt-huit entrevues. Celles-ci ont révélé que les employés étaient très préoccupés par les enjeux de pouvoir entre les membres de l'organisation. A cet effet, la littérature fait état de huit sources de pouvoir, ignorant la dimension de l'identité culturelle. C'est justement ce dernier point généralement ignoré que cette recherche met en lumière. De même, contrairement aux croyances générales, ceux qui sont au sommet de la hiérarchie n'ont pas toujours un accès plus facile aux sources de pouvoir.

La recherche a exploré douze stratégies au premier niveau (*surface level*) et quatre stratégies au deuxième niveau (*deep level*). La répartition inégale des stratégies dans les groupes hiérarchiques relève de l'accès différencié aux sources de pouvoir, du contexte historique, et des valeurs et croyances des personnes impliquées. L'analyse révèle que les membres de la haute direction ont mis l'accent sur le pouvoir formel, notamment sur les politiques et procédures, les lignes de communication formelle, et l'identité culturelle pour justifier certaines pratiques d'embauche. Les chefs d'équipe, pour leur part, se sont décrits comme "coincés" entre les autres niveaux. Ils ont évité les tirs croisés et ont eu tendance à aller chercher des alliances à l'extérieur. Les thérapeutes, quant à eux, ont utilisé le passé pour contrecarrer les efforts de la direction, qui voulait faire croire que seulement ce qui était nouveau était souhaitable; ils ont aussi entretenu une certaine distance psychologique. Le quatrième groupe, celui des secrétaires, a joué un rôle plus périphérique et a fait preuve de peu d'engagement par rapport aux enjeux de pouvoir. Aucun groupe n'a mis l'accent sur les stratégies comportant des contraintes et des réprimandes. Les résultats ont souligné que la haute direction avait davantage eu recours plus aux stratégies de deuxième niveau que les autres groupes.

Les anciens ont profité de leur connaissance approfondie de l'organisation et de son histoire pour imposer leurs stratégies, dimension que les nouveaux venus n'ont pu intégrer dans les leurs. Les directeurs ont essayé d'exercer un contre-pouvoir en promouvant l'idée que tout changement était désirable et qu'il fallait se départir des habitudes et des pratiques du passé. Les données ont démontré que les stratégies de deuxième niveau augmentaient ou renforçaient les sources de pouvoir au premier niveau lorsqu'elles étaient affaiblies, quel que soit la position dans l'hierarchie. Les valeurs et les croyances à ce niveau ont agi comme catalyseur pour contrecarrer les stratégies de premier niveau. Le modèle d'analyse utilisé a aidé à comprendre le contraste entre les stratégies de la direction, visant le "nouveau", et celles des thérapeutes qui ont tiré profit de leur connaissance du passé de l'organisation.

La recherche a mis en évidence que la formation des stratégies se produisait à tous les niveaux de l'organisation. Cela défie la croyance générale selon laquelle la formation des stratégies de pouvoir serait une fonction de la haute direction. L'étude a rassemblé et analysé des données au niveau micro-relationnel de l'organisation et a identifié des indicateurs possibles de problèmes organisationnels. Le modèle d'analyse utilisé a révélé une scission entre le mandat de la haute direction, qui était de mettre sur pied une toute nouvelle organisation, et les efforts et stratégies des autres niveaux pour maintenir les pratiques passées.

En terme de contributions théoriques et méthodologiques, nous reconnaissons qu'il y a une complémentarité entre les différentes approches théoriques des organisations, chacune apportant un éclairage particulier. La littérature sur le changement dans les organisations industrielles cite souvent l'importance de dépasser les questions d'histoire organisationnelle pour amorcer le changement. La présente recherche révèle que des dynamiques semblables existent également dans le secteur des services humains. La littérature du secteur industriel peut être utile comme point de départ pour étudier une organisation tel un centre de santé mentale communautaire.

En conclusion, cette recherche affirme l'importance d'une approche multidimensionnelle et interdisciplinaire pour l'étude de la formation des stratégies de pouvoir. L'analyse a démontré que la structure organisationnelle, son contexte, son histoire et son développement, les composantes relationnelles entre les niveaux hiérarchiques, les relations entre les anciens et les nouveaux, et les valeurs et croyances des personnes impliquées interagissent et jouent ainsi un rôle déterminant dans la formation des stratégies de pouvoir.

L'analyse des stratégies des premier et deuxième niveaux est essentielle pour comprendre les enjeux de pouvoir dans les organisations.

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Actor. A person (or group of persons) who participate(s) in an action and that has interests in common with others to carry out that action.

Alignment. A grouping of persons based on joint action against other groups. Similar to coalitions.

Coalition. A temporary alliance of persons which involves the joint use of resources for promoting a common organizational interest. Similar to alignments.

Influence. The capacity to pressure certain actors without necessarily having authority over them. Influence exists on a continuum with power.

Game. A mechanism that actors use to structure and regulate their power relationships with others while preserving some freedom to act in their own best interest. Games imply interdependence between actors.

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Power. The potential of an actor to influence behavior, to change the course of events, to overcome resistance, and to get people to do things that they would not otherwise do.

Strategy. A pattern of actions over time; streams of actions through which power is organized, exercised, maintained and enhanced.

Strategy formation. The activation of persons who are in interaction around the manipulation of sources of power in different levels of an organization.

Tactic. An action that is goal-oriented. Exists on a continuum with strategies.

Uncertainty. A condition that exists when there is lack of information about future events, so that alternatives and their outcomes are unpredictable.

Zone of uncertainty. An area of uncertainty for actors that are manipulated by others to gain benefit.

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Daniel Côté

Introduction

“Power is America's last dirty word. It is easier to talk about money — and much easier to talk about sex — than it is to talk about power.”

Rosabeth Kanter (1979)

This research pertains to the study of power and strategy-making by employees in a mental health organization. Research on power has often been difficult because it raises apprehension in many persons (Kanter, 1979; Mintzberg, 1983; Summers, 1986; Friedberg, 1993). Power also is difficult to analyze because it is an elusive and “messy” concept (Frost, 1987). It is difficult to describe and analyze, in part because it is multifaceted by nature, having visible characteristics and hidden ones “whose interrelations must be teased out if one is to fully grasp their meaning” (Frost, 1987, p. 505). Because power is not an easy subject to tackle, researchers often study organizations from the outside or from a distance. Mintzberg (1983, p. 3) points this out well when he says, “Until recently, power ... was not quite a respectable topic for research. Few researchers were inclined to knock on the organization’s door and announce ‘I’m here to find out who has the power in this place’.” Also, we still lack the knowledge on how to use power even if much has been written about it.

“Our ambivalence about power, and the fact that training in its use is far from widespread, mean that members of organizations are often unable to supplement their formal authority with the ‘unofficial’ processes of power and influence. As a result their organizations suffer, and promising projects fail to get off the ground. This is why learning how to manage with power is so important.” (Pfeffer, 1992b, p. 29)

While this ambivalence about how to use power is widespread in private and multinational corporations, it also extends to human service organizations such as mental health centers. These organizations are not immune to power and political processes because they bring people together in relationships that involve power.

1.1 WHY STUDY ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH POWER?

In *Images of Organization*, Gareth Morgan (1986) suggests that theories about organizations arise from the images or metaphors people have about them. Some authors, for example, portray organizations as machines and bureaucracies that are designed as interlocking parts, with each part playing a defined role. Other authors describe organizations as organisms having a life cycle, as cultures defined by the values, norms and rituals, as instruments of domination, and as political entities, where the focus is on conflicts and power plays that shape activities in the organization. Each of these perspectives, to name only a few, helps us understand organizations from a different angle.

The political or power perspective is useful for the study of organizations for several reasons. First is the recognition that power is an everyday part of organizations. As Mintzberg (1983) says,

“although there are many other, more tangible forces that affect what organizations do such as the buying habits of clients, the invention of a new machine, an upturn in the economy, power is a major factor, one that cannot be ignored by anyone interested in understanding how organizations work and end up doing what they do.” (p. 1)

Mintzberg continues by saying that to improve our organizations and to ensure they act in our best interests, we must understand the power relationships that occur within them. This is echoed by Bacharach and Lawler (1980, p. 1) who state that “survival in an organization is a political act... [O]rganizational life is dominated by political interactions”.

Also, Morgan (1986) and Friedberg (1993) say that all interactions between humans in organizations are, at least in part, related to power, and that power cannot be ignored because it permeates all organizations. According to Morgan, “an analysis of organizational politics in terms of the interplay among rival interests, conflicts, and sources of power can help us understand these forces of endogenous change” (p. 196).

Other authors, such as Gargiulo (1993) support this.

“Since March and Simon's (1958) influential book, the political image of the business firm has been a key component in organizational theory... . To understand [how decision makers overcome constraints on their ability to exercise discretion], one must first understand how differences in power arise among organizational actors.” (p. 1)

Friedberg (1993) provides further reason for the study of power:

“Power is not an abnormal, pathological, or unhealthy phenomenon. To the contrary, it is a natural manifestation of human cooperation... Power is everywhere; it is part of our everyday actions. Instead of hiding ourselves from what is a normal dimension of human cooperation, we must accept its omnipresence to be in a better position to control its consequences.” (p. 116, translation.)

Because organizations are human constructs (Crozier and Friedberg, 1977; Friedberg, 1993), and because people exercise power through a relationship (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980; Friedberg, 1993), analysis using a power perspective allows us to examine the human side and functioning of organizations. This is not to say that all human interactions in organizations can be reduced to power and politics, or that those individuals constantly seek power. As Friedberg (1993) points out, however, to exclude the study of power would result in an incomplete picture of organizations.

1.2 MOTIVATIONS FOR THE RESEARCH

This research project grows out of the researcher's personal interest for understanding the daily life of organizations, especially those that have undergone long periods of change and that are still dealing with the effects of power and turbulent change. The organization studied (a Northern Ontario mental health center) is an organization that has continuously experienced turbulent change events that have been menacing to its employees over the past few years, particularly in the period 1990-1993. It is an organization that, after

several years of heated discussions and negotiations at the local and provincial levels, split from the local psychiatric hospital in 1990 to form an independent corporation. The new corporation was an organization of 48 staff, with the mandate of offering community-based children's mental health services through four satellite clinics in the city. The satellite clinics were divided along English, French, Native, and multicultural lines and situated in areas of the city with high concentrations of their respective ethnic or cultural groups. For many of the new organization's employees, the question of power remained intimately tied to the turbulence before, during, and after the organizational separation because they were continually involved in power struggles since the mid 1980's.

“Turbulent change” is an expression that has been chosen over others such as “evolutionary change” and “radical change” because it originates in the field or is grounded in the experiences of the participants, rather than originating purely in theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The employees interviewed in the present research used the term frequently, and both they and the researcher found it easy to understand and relate to. Briefly stated, change may range from predictable and non-threatening (little turbulence), as in situations where one knows about coming events and outcomes, to situations where coming events are completely unfamiliar and where results are unknown (high turbulence) (Ansoff, 1978). In terms of practical application, turbulent change is characterized by its menacing nature to employees (job security, role, working conditions, leeway in job, etc.) and their inability to formulate clear short-term and long-term goals and to define the means to attain these goals. In turbulent settings, unplanned activities and behaviors often replace standard procedures and policies. Solutions and decisions often precede recognition of the problems to which they might be applied (Van de Ven, 1980). Thus, turbulence goes hand in hand with uncertainty and instability in an organization. This definition of turbulence is useful because it focuses not simply on the content or type of change individuals and groups in organizations are going through, but also on the behavior and interactions of the actors involved in change.

The turbulence discussed in this research encompasses all levels of turbulence, from small predictable change (both positive and negative) to the completely unpredictable. The changes in the organization studied represent an important shift in the structure of the delivery of intervention services to children and their families in the community. More importantly, they also triggered a series of dynamics that made employees very apprehensive about

any further changes in their organization, even if these changes were promoted as positive. Any talk about change, for example, instantly raised anxiety and issues of power and mistrust. Several employees at different levels of the organization even described their agency as “sick” because of the accumulation of turbulent events that they continued to experience at the time of this study. One of the participants in the present research summed this up well when she said, “I wish I could figure out what’s going on in this organization so that I can get on with my work”. It also struck the researcher as meaningful that most staffs were preoccupied by old “skeletons” that they felt still lurking in the hallways of their new organization. Thus, strategy formation not only related to the types of changes that occurred but also the perceptions of these changes by the involved actors.

The availability of an organization that the researcher knew well and that had experienced such changes thus presented an excellent opportunity to carry out this research. Observations concerning the constant focus on power issues, maneuvering, and complicated personal relations between the employees raised many questions about the effects of accumulating turbulent events on them. They also led to questions about how they dealt with power struggles in terms of strategies when there is so much uncertainty surrounding them. It was ironic that the staffs did not understand why there were so many dysfunctional interactions and conflicts in the agency over issues of power and control, despite their strong skills, training, and experience in analyzing such processes in the individuals and families they treat. The researcher was intrigued at how they would sometimes collaborate with each other, while at other times purposefully not cooperate, and how they would work both directly and in concealed ways against the formal structures of hierarchy and authority of the organization.

Thus, employees of the mental health center were often caught up in power struggles within their organization. The strategies used by employees, or their strategic behaviors as Friedberg (1993) would put it, were not totally accounted for by existing theory. Strategies, as defined in this research and commonly in the literature, are a pattern of behaviors occurring over time through which power is organized, exercised, maintained, and enhanced (Frost, 1987). There is a tremendous gap in current research and knowledge on power strategy formation, despite much attention in the literature to the subject of power. Bacharach and Lawler (1980, p. 4) emphasize this when they say, “it is not power that has remained un-

examined but rather the patterns of intraorganizational politics... No political perspective has been developed for analyzing the internal workings of organizations as political systems". Also, formal models of strategy formation in organizational theory, social psychology, and political science provided little explanation of these processes, especially since few of them addressed the dynamics of staffs in human service organizations, let alone mental health centers. Their focus on management levels of organizations provided only a narrow perspective and little understanding of the strategic behavior of employees at other levels of the organization. They also did not explain the interaction of the strategies between the different levels. Hart (1992, p. 327) supports this in stating that "associated empirical work has covered such a wide range of considerations that little cumulative knowledge has resulted. A conceptualization that is capable of providing a framework for ongoing research is lacking".

Power strategy formation, as it is being studied in this research, addresses members at all levels of organizations, from clerical staffs to middle management to executive levels. The research is not specifically aimed at examining union-management relations, although many dynamics around this were observed. Rather, the focus is to examine the dynamics behind the formation of power strategies when turbulent change occurs in human service organizations.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The present study aims to provide an exploratory empirical analysis of power strategy formation in a human service organization, from the perspective of employees who have experienced cumulative turbulent change. The research will focus on the dynamic process of strategy-making through an interdisciplinary perspective, with particular emphasis on the interactional dynamics of power relationships — not just *what* the actions of people are, but *how* the actions fit with each other into the larger picture. The focus of power in this dissertation is thus on dynamics and processes instead of content and structure. In this research, the actions of people will be explored to examine how they act in a given setting.

The questions that will be addressed in this context-specific study are the following: What kinds of power strategies emerge when there is prolonged and accumulating turbulent change? How do employees at different levels of the organization (e.g., managers versus

front-line staffs) mobilize power in support of their strategies in a turbulent context? How are they similar/dissimilar in their use of strategies? What is the relationship of the strategies between the different levels? What relational patterns emerge in terms of power strategies?

Using a hybrid approach based on inductive principles of analysis, the research was carried out starting with the experiences of employees having gone through turbulent events, rather than testing and measuring prior hypotheses. This approach is particularly fruitful in the study of micro-level processes in organizations. As Friedberg (1993) says,

“without observation of the actions of [a system’s] members, knowledge about the system remains in inert form, a form where we cannot appreciate its full impact, nor its inertia... All hypotheses about the characteristics of the system ... can only be shown by the demonstration of their effects in the empirical behavior of the actors.” (p. 19, translation)

The examination of the field from a hybrid approach will lead to a better understanding of the nature of the power relationships between the actors in the organization and of the process involved in strategy-making in turbulent contexts. This study highlights power strategy formation at the micro level, using an interdisciplinary model adapted from several other models of organizational analysis. The research methods used for this study relied on documentary evidence, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation to gather the data.

Concerning the interdisciplinary nature of this research, studies on organizations are at the cross-roads of many disciplines, each of which, for different reasons, has made contributions to our understanding of the structure, functioning, and reasons for the existence of organizations. The body of research is as abundant as it is wide and eclectic. In terms of levels of analysis, for example, the microanalysis of individual organizations is paralleled by comparisons of processes between large systems or networks of organizations. Methodologically, approaches are varied, ranging from positivist and statistical to interpretative approaches.

While this richness in the literature can be an advantage for research on organizations, the literature on power is nonetheless fragmented among several fields of knowledge that cut across several academic disciplines such as organizational theory, business management, sociology, social psychology, political science, anthropology, and organizational communication (Jablin, Putnam, Roberts, and Porter, 1987; Rahnema, 1992; Friedberg, 1993).

Findings from one discipline may be unfamiliar to researchers from other fields. They do provide a common interest to theorists, however, for analyzing and understanding the behavior of people in organizations. Thus, in keeping with the interdisciplinary nature of the doctoral program behind the present research, the literature review and the analysis will introduce the reader to different approaches, assumptions, and issues associated with power in organizations. Convergences and divergences, and parallels and contrasts of these different bodies of research will be examined from a critical point of view.

In terms of the applied nature of this research, this research is about power that individuals use and exert in organizations. Also, this research has practical value. Most of us work in one form of organization or other. Knowledge about how our individual activities fit into the total scheme of these organizations is helpful if we are to survive in them. The next chapter will review the theoretical writings related to power and power strategy formation.

Theoretical Framework: Interdisciplinary Aspects

“Power dynamics ... are inevitable and needed to make organizations function well.”
(Kotter, 1979)

“You can’t go to the grocery store and buy ten pounds of power.”
(Participant #8, Therapist)

2.1 STRATEGY FORMATION IN INDUSTRY VERSUS STRATEGY FORMATION IN THE HUMAN SERVICES SECTOR

Well-known authors such as Crozier and Friedberg (1977), Bacharach and Lawler (1980), Mintzberg (1983, 1989), Pettigrew (1985), Kanter, Stein & Jick (1992), and Friedberg (1993) have addressed power strategy formation. *Strategy* often is viewed as “a pattern in a stream of decisions” (Mintzberg, 1989) or as “the set of decisions and objectives regarding the range of businesses the firm chooses to operate and the competitive approaches used by these businesses” (Summer *et al.*, 1990). *Strategy formation*, for its part, is the process that organizational actors use in engaging and manipulating power in and around organizations (Friedberg, 1993).

There are different types of strategies. Corporate strategies, for example, are concerned with activities such as diversification, mergers and acquisitions. Business strategies, on the other hand, deal with issues such as competitive pricing, styling and image, and choices about timing and delivery of products.

While the concept of strategy has widespread application and empirical foundation in the industrial and business literature, the literature is not quite so clear about its application to public sector organizations such as governments, universities, hospitals and community mental health centers. As Mintzberg (1989) states, comparisons between a public/professional organization such as a mental health center and an industry like IBM or MacDonald's should not be made without caution. Using Mintzberg's categories of organizations, the mental health center in this research is a professional organization different from the industrial organizations, on which most of the literature focuses. Briefly stated, a professional organization relies on the skills and knowledge of its professionals to function. It is characterized by employees who have a high degree of education and years of training, who are specialists in their field, and whose loyalty and accountability belong to professional associations and certification bodies outside the organization. The employees also exert much discretion in carrying out their functions, and they work relatively independently from their colleagues. This ensemble of characteristics is unique to professional organizations.

Also, as Rahnema (1992) points out concerning the Canadian context, public sector organizations do not have to compete with each other as private organizations do. The incentive to become more "efficient" and "productive" than competitors may thus not be as strong. Professional organizations such as mental health centers and hospitals in Canada tend to be non-profit, and they are often heavily dependent on government funding for their existence. The survival of professional organizations does not directly depend on their performance because the measurement of staffs and program performance in hospitals and mental health centers is abstract and difficult to measure at best when compared to private industries.

Comparing mandates reveals other differences between the industrial sector and the public sector. Profit is the chief motive of corporations such as IBM and MacDonald's, and market forces lead their strategies. This is not the case for human service organizations because legislation and social needs often define these organizations, and market forces are not

a factor. The types of services offered are also quite different. In industrial organizations, the final “product” is designed and manufactured by the company for the client. In professional organizations like mental health centers, the product is a co-construction between the professional and his client. There are thus many differences between professional and industrial types of organizations. These differences are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
**MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRIVATE SECTOR
AND PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS**

PRIVATE SECTOR / INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS	PUBLIC SECTOR / PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
<i>Examples:</i> IBM, General Motors, chartered banks, private enterprise.	<i>Examples:</i> community mental health centers, most Canadian hospitals, voluntary organizations.
<i>Objective:</i> Principal objective is profit; goal of management is organizational survival.	Objectives are often vague compared with profit-driven organizations; profit cannot be a primary goal; funding often guaranteed by government; organizational survival, while important, is secondary to fulfilling social mandate.
<i>Emphasis</i> is on measurable output and efficiency.	Production and output are often difficult to measure and often shunned as objectives by professionals; efficiency recently has become an important concern because of financial constraint.
<i>Mandate:</i> defined by profit motives; organizational strategies led by market forces.	Mandate often defined by legislation and social needs; market forces are not a factor because there is little competition.
<i>Risk-taking</i> is an integral part of competitive strategy.	Low tendency for risk-taking by executives because of nature of services. Professionals exercise much discretion in their judgments and actions.
<i>Final product:</i> designed and constructed by the organization.	The “product” is a co-construction by the professional and his or her client.
<i>Loyalty</i> is to the organization.	Loyalty often to a profession, not necessarily to an organization.
<i>Cost-benefit analysis</i> used to guide production and expenditures.	Cost-benefit analysis just starting to be an important factor in government funding of non-profit organizations.

More specifically concerning health care organizations, including hospitals and mental health centers, Fottler (1987) questioned the applicability of general management princi-

ples to these types of organizations. Fottler found that defining and measuring output is difficult in such organizations, and that the work involved is highly complex, specialized, and requires a high degree of co-ordination among different professional groups. He also found that health care organizations use professionals whose primary loyalty belongs to a profession rather than to the organization, which entails different dynamics of control and authority, and of accountability to the public. Other arguments Fottler brings are that the political, legal, and financial environments that confront health organizations require an understanding of complex linkages between systems such as government and large institutions. Fottler concludes “the size and uniqueness of health care organizations make them worthy of study in their own right. Further, there is the possibility that research findings from other industrial/service sectors may not generalize to the health care sector” (p. 306). Other authors such as Luke, Begun and Pointer (1989) who find that existing models of organizations do not adequately capture the essence of health care centers support these findings. Picard (1980) comes to similar conclusions for the Canadian context.

According to Rahnema (1992), these difficulties are due in part to very limited literature on public sector management in general and to research and writings that tend to be business-oriented. The author concludes organizational studies for the public sector such as hospitals and other government-funded agencies need to find a strong emphasis. This is supported by Hasenfeld (1992) who found that “the organizational literature was helpful to a broad understanding of the dynamics of social and health agencies, but not too useful for illuminating the variant properties and processes of this class of organization” (p. vii). This dissertation is a step toward filling this gap in the literature.

Even *within* the human services sector, there are differences between the types of organizations in terms of mandate, philosophy of intervention, structure, and functioning. Studies carried out in hospitals in the United States cannot easily be generalized to hospitals in Canada because of different social mandates and funding sources, for example. Hospitals in the United States are often profit-driven organizations, whereas in Canada, federal and provincial legislation prevents them from being run for profit. Also, hospitals and community mental health centers, in Canada at least, are governed by two different sets of philosophies. Hospitals function under the medical diagnostic model, while community mental health centres are generally less diagnostically oriented. Community mental health centers

also are much smaller than hospitals. Smaller size often means that employees potentially have easier access to the executive levels of the organization, compared to much larger institutions where all staffs cannot have access to these levels because of the sheer numbers of people and levels of bureaucracy. Other differences include status differences and power dynamics between staffs. Medical staffs, for example, generally hold the hierarchical power in hospitals, but in community mental centers they rarely have a leading hierarchical role. Medical staffs often act more as consultants or simply as clinicians in community mental health centers rather than holding hierarchical power. Also, the boundaries between professional groups are often blurred in community mental health centers because of the overlap of many of their functions (e.g., social workers and psychologists often both carry out psychotherapy with similar techniques) (Hasenfeld, 1992).

Concerning the study of strategy formation, these differences imply caution in applying concepts from settings that are different. Although it is not the goal *per se* of this research to compare different types of organizations, it is possible that there are differences in the way that actors design and use power strategies. Crozier, for example, has shown that four hospital units had considerable differences in their ways of working and social relations, despite the same structural conditions (in Hassard and Parker, 1993). It can be assumed therefore, that in comparing community mental health centers to larger institutions such as hospitals, it is possible that the strategies employed around professional expertise differ between the two types of organizations. These are just hypotheses that are not the object of this study, however. They would provide a rich ground for further study.

Thus, there are limits in using business concepts to study human service organizations. Since no context-specific literature is available concerning power strategy formation in mental health centers, however, the business literature will be examined as a starting point.

The following sections present the theoretical concepts used in this research. Power and strategy formation influence how struggles develop, are managed, and are resolved in organizations. The goal of this chapter is to elaborate on the nature of these concepts and on the linkages between power and strategy formation. We will first examine the nature of organizational power, and then discuss the way that power strategies are shaped. The chapter ends with a concluding summary of the literature.

2.2 WHAT IS "POWER"?

The literature identifies many definitions of power as it relates to systems such as organizations. Ouimet (1990), for example, finds that depending on their base discipline (political science, sociology, psychology, or management sciences), writers do not all view the term “power” in the same way. This has led to difficulties when comparing results of different studies on power because there is no common language. This lack of coherence reflects both the complexity of power and the divergent backgrounds of researchers on the subject. The approach in this chapter is to emphasize and integrate important insights from the general organizational literature and to come to an understanding of how it can be applied to the human services sector.

Before embarking on an overview of the concept of power, it is noteworthy that there are sometimes distinctions made between *power* and *influence*. As Frost (1987) states, confusion between the terms often leads to a “semantic jungle”. Kanter (1977), McCall (1979) and Mintzberg (1983), however, see little benefit in differentiating the terms because this provides little information in studying power. “It is an unrealistic separation of the phenomenon to consider the power a person has separately from the power (s)he actually uses” (McCall, 1979, p. 188). Following the lead of these writers, power and influence are viewed in a continuum according to the amount of pressure one is able to bring to bear on the target of his or her influence, not in terms of two separate processes. For the purposes of this research, there will be no further distinction between the two.

We will now discuss a typology of the diverse theoretical approaches dealing with power, partly based on Ouimet (1990), that will give a better understanding of the evolution and the meaning of the concept. There are two broad clusters of definitions of power, which are the *individual approach*, concentrating on the characteristics of individuals, and the *relational approach*, which puts the focus on the dynamics between individuals. Ouimet identifies a third cluster, the *systemic approach*, where power is not an individual nor a relational attribute but an attribute of a system. This third cluster has not been retained for several reasons. First, many of the dimensions in the systemic approach overlap dimensions in the other two perspectives, especially the relational approach. Second, power is not exercised by systems, as the systems approach would have us believe. Persons exercise it in a system. This approach also depersonalizes power by removing it from the human level. Individuals and groups are thus

ignored. Since the goal of this research is to examine the way individuals behave in organizations, it would not be appropriate to carry the discussion at a non-human level.

Thus, we will retain two principal clusters of definitions, the individual and relational approaches. Because researchers often build upon the findings of other studies, the dimensions of some of these approaches overlap one another. The categories are not mutually exclusive. Table 2 summarizes these dimensions.

Table 2
**CLASSIFICATION OF THE DIMENSIONS OF POWER
INTO TWO CLUSTERS**

PERSPECTIVES OF POWER AND THEIR PRINCIPAL DIMENSIONS	EXAMPLES OF LEADING RESEARCHERS
<u>The Individual-Psychological Perspective</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • power means the ability to affect the behavior of another person • power can be formal or informal • power is a function of personality and situational factors • power compensates for feelings of inferiority • power exists in actual and potential forms • power resides in the hands of its possessor • power is used to satisfy needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dahl (1957) • Mechanic (1962) • Kaplan (1964) • Adler (1966) • Wrong (1968) • Berle (1969) • McClelland (1970)
<u>The Relational Perspective</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • power originates in interpersonal exchanges • there are five bases of power: rewards, coercion, authority, expertise, reference • an individual's power rests on the possession, control, and tactical use of the five bases of power. • power derives from the contingencies facing an organization • power derives from the dependency of actors on others • power derives from manipulating zones of uncertainty between actors • sources of power must be scarce, essential, and non-substitutable • power reflects jockeying for control to advance interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lewin (1951) • French & Raven (1959) • Pettigrew (1975) • Salancik & Pfeffer (1977) • Bacharach & Lawler (1980) • Crozier & Friedberg (1977) • Mintzberg (1983, 1989) • Kanter, Stein & Jick (1992)

2.2.1 *The individual-psychological perspective of power*

The individual-psychological perspective (or the substantivist perspective as Friedberg, 1993, calls it) views power as being an attribute of the individual and that it is human nature to seek power. Power resides in the hands of its possessor (Berle, 1969). For some authors, the search for power is a compensatory mechanism that seeks to counterbalance feelings of inferiority (Adler, 1966). Power thus appears as a correction to a human deficiency. As Ouimet (1990) outlines, however, power is also defined as the capacity of an individual to manipulate his or her environment to obtain desired results. Various authors have written extensively on power in fields as diverse as systemic family therapy (Haley, 1969) and organizational study (Kanter, 1977), arguing that power is the capacity to obtain something, and this capacity depends on the understanding or perception that the detainer of power has of his or her environment.

Dahl (1957), who proposed one of the earliest definitions of power, saw the study of the concept of power as a “bottomless swamp” because of its complexity. Dahl nonetheless proposed a definition of power which today remains one of the most quoted definitions: “*A* has power over *B* to the extent that s/he can get *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do”. This definition leaves us with little tangible material to identify and to research issues around power, however. Also, in Dahl’s view, power seems to be exercised only when a person affects the behavior of the other, whether it be from a forceful way or from simple persuasion. Unused or potential power seems ignored. Another criticism that can be brought against Dahl’s definition of power is that power relationships involve more than individual or psychological characteristics. Power exercised by a group or department, for example, is ignored by Dahl.

Another often cited author, David Mechanic (1962), defines power as “any force that results in behavior that would not have occurred if the force had not been present” (p. 351). Based on Dahl’s work, Mechanic found that “lower participants” exercised considerable personal power and influence in their organizations even though they had no formal authority. Citing examples from many types of organizations, Mechanic theorized that power resulted not only from authority (“formal power”) but also from access and control over persons and information, replaceability of persons, and personal attributes (“informal power”). The no-

tion of informal power has been supported by other authors such as Bennis, Berkowitz, Afinito and Malone (1958), who pointed out that power does not always reside in established positions of authority in organizations. Power remains a characteristic of the individual in this perspective, however.

Kaplan (1964) is another author emphasizing the psychological aspects of power. Kaplan focuses on personality, and he argues that power can be reduced to acts of individuals, and that individual acts are always a function of personality. Kaplan introduces the notion of the environment by stating that situational factors can also influence power. The concept of relationship, however, is absent.

Wrong (1968), for his part, distinguishes between *potential* power and *actual* power. While a person can have actual power through authority or hierarchy, s/he also can have potential power, that is, power that exists without using it. Such power depends on the subjective perception of other persons that potential power can and will be used when necessary. Thus, not all power relationships are authority relationships. Power can exist even when left dormant, bringing to light the subjective perception of power. Wrong's contribution that an individual can control sources of power by examining the expectations and perceptions of others, is thus an important one. It is also important because it expands on the purely individual view to include some environmental elements.

Concerning other writings on power, the psychological and social-psychological literature on leadership, motivation, and satisfaction roots itself in the individual-psychological perspective that behavior is motivated and controlled by the quest for rewards and approval. McClelland (1970), for example, analyzes power in terms of needs satisfaction, implying that people have a need that can only be met by controlling or exerting influence on others. McClelland views power as having two contrasting aspects. The first aspect, the personal propensity of power, incites individuals to engage with others where gain is at the expense of others. This form of power shows a state of psychological immaturity where the individual is centered solely on himself or herself. The second aspect of power, its social or positive side, on the other hand, incites the individual to engage with others where all parties gain. The individual is concerned with collective gain because s/he puts at the disposition of others his or her power to help them reach their objectives. Winter (1973), for his part, finds that the propensity of individuals to satisfy needs is driven by the reach for objectives. This propen-

sity can be measured in individuals by examining their thoughts, visualizations and the themes that arise when they are confronted with the notion of power (Ouimet, 1990).

Thus, the individual-psychological perspective of power views power as within the individual, also as the capacity of an individual to obtain things from others. These lead to a principal criticism of this view, however, as it emphasizes that individuals simply possess power. Because power is viewed as an individual attribute, this approach overplays the importance of psychological factors, ignoring the effect of environmental factors such as strong political and economic constraints. We know little of the interaction between various levels of factors (individual, organizational, social, cultural, etc.) that combined, comprise power. This perspective also fails to discuss organizations as systems, implying that power exists only in a static dimension, not as something that is in a constant state of interaction and flux.

2.2.2 *The relational perspective of power*

While the individual-psychological perspective of power has received limited support in the past, much more has been written recently on the relational dimension of power. This perspective, which shows a significant shift from prior theories, identifies power as a social relationship (*between individuals*) rather than strictly an individual attribute (*within individuals*). Power is placed in a situation where there is interaction. For power to exist there must be at least two actors (Ouimet, 1990; Friedberg, 1993). Walsh *et al.* (1981) sum this up well:

“Power is not something that is formally distributed in the organization, embodied in its structure according to the hierarchy of authority, and possessed by individuals and groups. Power characterizes the relationships between individuals and groups; it is a characteristic of the patterns of interaction within an organization. It is something produced and exercised and not something possessed.” (p. 133)

As Ouimet (1990) describes, there are variations within the relational perspective of power, each with their own focus. The first is a school of thought inspired by Lewin’s (1951, 1952) force field theory, which sees power as originating in interpersonal exchanges. The second focuses on the dependent dimensions of relationships.

Among the first authors in the interpersonal exchange perspective were French & Raven (1959). These authors define power as the maximum influence that A can exert on B ,

with the influence being the result of two forces created by the actions of A and B. These are the force for change desired by A and the force of resistance of B.

French and Raven also identify five bases of power, which are what power holders control that permits them to influence or manipulate the behavior of others. These are reward power, coercive power, legitimate power (authority), power through possessing expertise, and referent power (identification through association with others who possess power). The authors examine the effects of these power bases on attraction (the recipient's sentiment toward the person who uses power) and resistance to the use of power. Their research shows that using power from different bases has different consequences. Reward power, for example, increases attraction and minimizes resistance. Coercive power, on the other hand, decreases attraction and causes high resistance. Raven (1965) later identified a sixth source of power, namely informational power as distinct from expert power. In more recent writings, Raven, Schwarzwald and Koslowsky (1998) further differentiated authority power into four distinct sources: position power; legitimate reciprocity power (where the target complies after the initiator has done something positive for the target); legitimate equity power (where compliance is demanded to compensate for hard work or harm inflicted on the initiator); and legitimate dependence power (based on a norm of social responsibility that obliges a person to assist another who is in need of assistance).

Other research has continued to make further distinctions between sources of power identified by Raven. Coercion and reward power, for example, have been sub-divided into personal and impersonal versions as it was found in some studies that men were more likely than women to use the more "impersonal" forms of power and coercion, while women were more likely to call upon social norms such as legitimate dependence. (Johnson, 1976; Raven, Schwarzwald, and Koslowsky, 1998).

Despite its earlier psychological leanings that focused on individuals possessing power rather than exerting it between two parties, French and Raven's typology remains widely used today in its variant forms. It is notable that French & Raven's (1959) typology of bases of power has been adapted to different settings and different disciplinary contexts such as familial relations (MacDonald, 1980), education (Erchul & Raven, 1997), marketing and consumer psychology (Gaski, 1986), and health and medicine (Raven 1988). These recent writings have expanded to include social and gender elements as dimensions of power, and

they have begun including relational elements. The relation between different sources of power and how strategies and counter-strategies are generated remains under-developed, however.

In research based on French and Raven's notion power, Pettigrew (1975) discusses the resources that individuals and groups have in organizations. The author outlines five potential power resources: expertise, control of information, political access and sensitivity, stature, and group support. The base of an individual's power rests on the possession, control, and tactical use of the five resources. Pettigrew goes further than French and Raven, however, by viewing power as not just something possessed by individuals, but as a relational phenomenon. "Power is generated, maintained and lost in the context of relationships with others... Power involves the ability of an actor to produce outcomes consonant with his perceived interests" (p. 195).

Salancik and Pfeffer (1977), for their part, define power as simply "the ability to get things done the way one wants them to be done" (p. 470). Power derives from the contingencies facing an organization, and when these contingencies change, so do the bases of power. Power also derives from activities of staffs who try to influence organizational decisions in their own favor, particularly when their own survival is threatened by the scarcity of resources critical to the organization. This goes along with the belief that persons in an organization are active determinants of their destiny within the organization, and that they are not merely passive beings (Friedberg, 1993).

The second school of thought in the relational perspective of power highlights the dependent nature of power relationships. Power is a common resource allowing both parties in a relationship to attain their objectives (Quimet, 1990). Emerson (1962), for example, outlines a dependency theory based on social exchange.

"Social exchange provides a parsimonious way to examine social relationships; moreover, power is a central aspect of an exchange approach to social relationships, and dependence or interdependence constitutes the point of departure of analyzing power." (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980, p. 19)

According to Emerson (1962), dependence is what makes exchange an important part of all social relationships. Without dependence, there is no need for exchange. This is built upon the assumption that dependence is a part of social life and that exchanges are

natural aspects of any social relationship. In this sense, the outcome of an actor's actions is not only dependent on his or her own behavior but also on what other actors do in response to his or her behavior.

Bacharach and Lawler (1980) build upon Emerson's power dependence theory and suggest that *dependence* is the foundation not only for social relationships, but also for each actor's power in a relationship. As the authors state, "It seems clear that dependence is inherent in social life. A strong case can be made for treating dependence as a formal dimension of power and making power a central concern of almost any sociological analysis" (1980, p. 21). Thus, power is a function of dependence. The greater the dependence of person A on person B, the greater B's power in the relationship. In terms of application to the study of power, dependency must be examined within a network of relationships, not only between two parties.

Bacharach and Lawler find that besides dependence, there are two other aspects of power that are important. The *relational aspect* of power implies looking at interactive situations in organizations by examining three types of groups: work groups, interest groups, and coalitions. Work groups are those formed by the structures of an organization, such as a department or through the hierarchy. Interest groups are defined as groups of persons (actors) who work toward a common goal and who do this work "beyond simply their interdependence with regard to the conduct of work" (1980, p. 8). Coalitions, for their part, are described as groupings of interest groups who are committed to achieving a common goal. These groupings are based on joint action against other interest groups. This notion of coalitions was examined as far back as 1959 by Dalton, who found that cliques were an important component of power systems because they formed across organizational lines. According to Dalton, cliques (coalitions) are formed to defend organizational members in the face of real or imagined threats to their security.

By examining the formation of interest groups into coalitions and the patterns of conflict between different coalitions, Bacharach and Lawler theorize about the process of bargaining and negotiations that occur between groups in organizations. They find, for example, that it is essential to study coalitions because these "can undermine, modify, or buttress the power relations formally established by the hierarchy of authority" (1980, p. 214). Therefore, to study power, one looks at power across groups and the tactics that these

groups employ. Coalitions and other groupings are important to our examination of organizations because they enforce the notions of interactions and relationships between groups.

Another important aspect of power is its *sanctioning* nature. This makes for a living or dynamic model of analysis. When one has the ability to manipulate rewards, punishments, or both, one can exert power over others.

In summary, there are three formal dimensions to any power relationship: the dependence aspect, the relational aspect, and the sanctioning aspect. These three dimensions must be used as a starting point for any analysis of power. Also, “power must be embedded in the social relationship and not treated as an attribute of a single person, group, or organization” (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980, p. 26).

What Bacharach and Lawler do not address, however, is individual or micro-level strategy-making at length. Not every strategic behavior of individuals aims to form coalitions or to grab power. Individuals sometimes act simply to preserve what they have, not to gain more power or to defeat rivals. Also, Bacharach and Lawler fail to describe coalitions in terms of groupings of individuals, concentrating instead on coalitions formed between corporate partners. Again, the human services sector is left out.

In the relational perspective of power, other authors have expanded on the above concepts. Based on the groundwork of French and Raven (1959), Crozier and Friedberg (1977) and Friedberg (1993) provide support for the notion that power is not something that individuals simply possess, but something that emerges from the relationship between actors. Power is not evenly distributed among actors in organizations. Some actors are more powerful than others are because they possess one or more types or sources of power, which is a relation of force from which one party can obtain more than the other. It is also the capacity of certain individuals to influence or act on other individuals, or to avoid being influenced or acted upon by them. Based on their study of French bureaucracies, the different sources of power that Crozier and Friedberg identify are: expertise or specialization of skills; control of the relations between an organization and its environment; control of the communication and information between different parts of the organization; and authority and rules, or formal or legal power.

These sources of power create *zones of uncertainty* for others in organizations because they are dependent on those who control the sources of power. This notion of dependency

of one person on another's sources of power is key to understanding the functioning of organizations. For Crozier and Friedberg, factors such as wealth, prestige, authority and strength, which French and Raven first identified, enter into play mainly by providing opportunities to widen their margin of freedom. They are not the determinants of power.

Crozier and Friedberg's concept of power is often quoted in the literature because of its dynamic view of organizations and because of its applicability to a wide range of organizations. It has its limits, however. Crozier and Friedberg minimize the role of psychological or emotional reactions to change. They also tend to ignore a person's past history and experiences in making decisions and in dealing with power. Sometimes, for example, decisions are made simply on impulse. These limits are not insurmountable, however, because Crozier and Friedberg have provided us with a strong framework for analyzing power in organizations. Crozier and Friedberg's strategic model of power strategy formation will be described later in this chapter.

Another prolific writer in the field, Jeffrey Pfeffer (1992) discusses power from a similar perspective. Pfeffer echoes Kanter's (1979) and Mintzberg's (1983) statements that people generally dislike the development and use of power in organizations. "It is as if we know that power and politics exist, and we even grudgingly admit that they are necessary to individual success, but we nevertheless don't like them" (p. 15). According to Pfeffer, power and politics are intertwined. Organizational politics are defined as "the exercise or use of power, with power being defined as a potential force" (p. 14). Also, not all decisions and actions of individuals and groups in organizations involve power to the same extent.

Pfeffer (1992b, p. 30) provides a definition of power that combines elements of structure, social psychology, and relationships between individuals:

"Power is the potential ability to influence behavior, to change the course of events, to overcome resistance, and to get people to do things that they would not otherwise do."

Because it combines several points of view in a dynamic way, this definition also reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the concept.

Pfeffer states that power is used more frequently under conditions of interdependence between individuals or groups, because when there is little interdependence there is no need to use power to influence others. Interdependence exists when "one actor does not

entirely control all of the conditions necessary for the achievement of an action or for obtaining the outcome desired from the action” (p. 38). In essence, whenever individuals need others to help them in their tasks, they create interdependence.

Interdependence also results from the scarcity of resources. When there are fewer resources, it is more difficult to obtain what one wants, and there is more need to develop power and influence in these situations. This is likely to occur in organizations where there are specialized tasks, and where people depend on the skills of others that they themselves do not possess.

Mintzberg (1983) is another much cited author who has brought together research from many sources over the years. Summarizing prior research, Mintzberg shows that there are four systems of power in organizations: *authority*, *ideology*, *expertise*, and *politics*. These resemble Crozier & Friedberg’s categories of power. Each system of power that Mintzberg identifies relies on elements that are not evenly distributed across an organization, such as expertise and authority, and that give rise to power games. Mintzberg’s review of the literature finds that systems of power depend on five bases or means of using power. The first three bases of power are control of resources, control of a technical skill, and control of a body of knowledge. These sources of power must be *essential* to the survival and activities of the organization, *scarce* or hard to find, and *non-substitutable* (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977). These characteristics make the organization dependent on the holders of the resources. The two remaining bases of power are the *legal right* to impose choices, and *access* to the holders of power in the organization.

Like Mechanic (1962), who refers to power as either formal or informal, Mintzberg (1983) uses the terms “legitimate” and “illegitimate” to describe power. Legitimate power is power obtained by virtue of office or through rules and regulations. Illegitimate power, which Mintzberg also describes as political power, refers to those powers that are informal and that bypass legitimate authority. Some staffs in professional organizations, for example, often have considerable discretionary power in their actions because their superiors cannot supervise everything they do. They also often engage in games that are designed to bypass the official hierarchy. Mintzberg’s review shows that power that is legitimate is often inadequate to deal with change because the illegitimate power systems often outpace the legitimate ones. As the author states, “the system of politics seems to be an almost inevitable compo-

ment in major organizational change” (p. 230). When an organization faces unexpected ambiguity or uncertainty, or what Mintzberg calls a “dynamic environment”, existing power relationships are destabilized, resulting in confusion and giving rise to politicized or illegitimate relationships. By “uncertainty”, we mean a lack of information about future events, so that alternatives and their outcomes are unpredictable (Hinings *et al.*, 1974). Mintzberg says that under circumstances of strong uncertainty, which are found in most organizations going through profound transitions, illegitimate power or strong politics are likely to emerge and take over until a new stability emerges. Conflict often follows under such circumstances, and the system of power is significantly and permanently altered. In Mintzberg’s (1983, p. 239) words, “shake the Jell-O vigorously enough, and the cherry will have to find a new resting place”.

In terms of strategic behavior in organizations, Mintzberg also shows that people at different levels of an organization use different tactics. Upper level management, for example, is more likely to use authority, privileged access to information, and political skill to bring change to a desired direction or outcome. Lower level staffs, on the other hand, will tend to rely on those tools more accessible to them, such as their hold on expertise and the possibility of regrouping as a unit against management. Many combinations of these power sources are possible, and these make up the games in an organization.

Thus, Mintzberg finds there is formal and informal power in organizations. He also reveals ways these power sources are used. In a lengthy summary of the literature on power in organizations, however, Mintzberg found no study that thoroughly examined the relationship between the different games played by the actors in organizations. Mintzberg also noted the lack of a conceptual framework to help understand the system of games that is found in all organizations. This provides further impetus for our research to study power strategy formation in organizations. While Mintzberg has probably written more than any other author has on the subject of power, he also has been criticized for his views. Friedberg (1993), for example, severely criticizes Mintzberg’s model of power as mechanical and static, that it defines power as simply the equilibrium between forces, and that it offers no explanation of how these forces maintain and reproduce themselves. Mintzberg also minimizes the cultural and psychological dimensions of power, thereby reducing his analysis of power to structural elements. Friedberg (1993) also finds that Mintzberg’s view of power in organizations “kills

imagination, curiosity, and the spirit of interrogation” (p. 188). Epistemologically speaking, this may induce researchers to think they understand the organization without really comprehending all its complex dynamics.

Kanter, Stein and Jick (1992) are other major authors worthy of mention concerning power in organizations. For these authors, power reflects the jockeying for control that occurs when groups of individuals try to advance their own interests and to claim some of an organization's resources. Jockeying for power, say the authors, sometimes results in shifts in control, where various parties challenge the leaders. A process of negotiations between the parties ensues. Thus, the official hierarchy in an organization does not solely determine power. It also depends on the agreements struck between interest groups. Bargaining, jockeying for position and alliance formation are elements that determine power to a large degree. When organizational change is large and when an organization becomes unstable, alliance or coalition formation processes are more noticeable. This is especially true in rapidly changing environments.

A striking gap in all the above writings is that there is no detailed discussion of power as it relates to non-profit organizations. The human services sector is certainly large enough to merit some attention by the major authors, but Pfeffer (1992b) and Kanter (1992), among other prolific writers, ignore it in their writings. Examples that Pfeffer takes from Xerox and General Motors are interesting, for example, but they are not really appropriate to the mental health context that is being studied in this research. Mintzberg (1989), for his part, does discuss these organizations, but he limits his review to examples such as the National Film Board of Canada and to universities, ignoring organizations such as community mental health centers. Therapists in mental health centers have expertise and skills that take years to develop and that are not easily or rapidly replaceable. In private corporations such as Xerox, the training process allows for much quicker replacement of workers. This implies that we cannot discuss scarcity of resources in the same terms for both types of organizations. Additionally, because of the hierarchical and status differences between professionals in human service organizations (e.g., doctors often have the most power in hospitals), concepts of power from the organizational and management literature cannot be applied directly to these types of organizations. In non-profit organizations, jockeying often revolves around professional concerns, whereas in the corporate world, power is often lim-

ited by economic concerns. The above writers in the industrial organizational literature do not adequately address these dynamics.

2.2.3 Summary and discussion on the concept of power

In summary, there are several dimensions to power. Our review has identified that individuals do not possess power, but they exploit it in a relationship with other persons or groups of persons. Individuals possess the resources behind power, however. They use these resources in attempts to have others behave in certain ways. Individuals do not have power but power relationships. Power is dynamic in nature, varying between situations and people.

No single theory about power adequately explains power processes in organizations. The most useful definition that can be attached to the concept of power is advanced by Pfeffer (1992), that power is the ability of one person or group of persons to influence the behaviors of others, to change the course of events, to overcome resistance, and to get people to do things they would not normally do. To this, we can add Friedberg's view of power that emphasizes the ability of actors to manipulate a relationship by exploiting constraints and opportunities in any given situation. This emphasizes that power has many facets. First, power can be at the individual level although it always involves more than one person. Second, power is used with a goal of trying to change some aspect of the behavior of another person or group of persons, or to change how things unfold. Third, power is not only multi-dimensional, but there are many standpoints from which power processes may be viewed. For example, departmental rules and regulations do not only bind a social worker. S/he also is bound by a set of professional norms and ethics that ensure such power will not be abused (Hasenfeld, 1992). This highlights the sometimes subtle and hidden nature of power in human service organizations. Fourth, individuals obtain authority (formal power) from their hierarchical position created by their organization. Individuals use more than hierarchical positions, however. They have psychological characteristics (e.g., leadership abilities, charisma), sources and bases of power, and opportunities that arise and where power can be exploited or developed.

What are the implications for the study of power in the human services sector? Taken separately, these dimensions do not correspond to the real life in organizations and explain only the foundations of power. To account for the dynamic nature of power, these

dimensions must be understood in relation to one another. The definition of power that guides this research emphasizes the unevenness or asymmetrical nature of the distribution of power. Human service organizations, characterized by professional bureaucracies are exemplary of this unevenness, and one can expect some power plays around this. Second, power has a dual nature, having visible and hidden elements. As Frost (1987) says, administrators asked to describe the power distribution in organizations have little trouble agreeing that it exists, and they can easily identify what it looks like. This is the visible side of power. In human service organizations, legitimate power that emanates from the hierarchy and structure is thus easy to identify in an organizational chart and in job descriptions. As for the hidden and subtler form of power, power derived from professional expertise (which is a scarce and hard-to-replace resource in the human service field) is at the root of some of the struggles, conflicts, and strained relationships that occur between staffs in these centers.

While professional bureaucracies such as the one being studied are strong examples of uneven power distribution, they also demonstrate the dependent nature between professionals. Social workers, for example, are often dependent on psychologists for psychological testing. Psychologists, for their part, are often dependent on social workers, who are particularly adept through their training at searching out and organizing community resources. Thus, even if they are on the same footing hierarchically, they each possess something that the other does not have, namely specialized skills. This is strongly emphasized in the writings of Crozier, Mintzberg, and Hasenfeld.

Finally, because power is relational, discussions about power strategy formation will have to account for relational dynamics while not ignoring individual dimensions. With these characteristics in mind, we now turn to the literature on strategy formation.

2.3 WHAT IS "POWER STRATEGY FORMATION"?

The concept of strategy formation has drawn much attention from researchers in different fields. Some authors have even called the field of strategy research a "crazy quilt" of perspectives because of the proliferation of theories, perspectives, and research (Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, 1992).

Despite the abundance of writings on the matter, much of the literature is far removed from the human services sector. In lengthy reviews of strategy formation, for exam-

ple, Euske & Roberts (1987), Zbaracki & Eisenhardt (1992), and Hart (1992), among others, totally ignore the human services sector. They review only industrial organizations and corporations. This is typical of the literature on strategy formation. Most of the literature also focuses on strategy formation as an upper management function, ignoring lower levels (Woolridge & Floyd, 1990).

In the last section, the definitions of power were divided into *individual* and *relational* clusters. We will now examine how power and strategy formation interrelate in organizations. Our contribution in this section is to synthesize theory and emergent debates, and to adapt the concepts found in the industrial literature to the human services sector.

As Henry Mintzberg (1989, 1994a) says, ask anyone what the word *strategy* means and s/he will probably define it as a kind of plan, a specific guide to future behavior. Mintzberg finds that when persons are asked to describe strategies they have used, they tend to describe them as patterns of action they have carried out over time, also as conceptions of how to deal with their environment for a time. Strategies are “patterns in a stream of decisions” (Mintzberg, 1994a).

Summer *et al.* (1990), for their part, define strategies as “the set of decisions and objectives regarding the range of businesses a firm chooses to operate and the competitive approaches used by these businesses”. Eisenhardt & Zbaracki (1992) refer to strategies as “those fundamental decisions which shape the course of a firm” (p. 16). This is supported by other authors such as Harvey & Brown (1988) who find that strategy is a course of action used to achieve major objectives, and Hax (1990) who views strategy as a “coherent, unifying, and integrative pattern of decisions” that a person or group of persons make.

Strategies also refer to actions that are new, complex, without predetermined outcomes, and important in terms of the resources needed and the impact on the future of the organization. Desrosiers (1982) defines strategies as “actions and decisions perceived by the actors as important in terms of their possible impact on the future of the organization” (p. 3). In addition, if business strategies can be emergent, as Mintzberg (1983) argues, it becomes impossible to determine if decisions that persons make are strategic or not without the benefit of afterthought and analysis. It is therefore necessary to refer to the individual perceptions and actions of the actors in their organization (Desrosiers, 1982; Crozier & Friedberg, 1977; Friedberg, 1993).

Kanter (1992) and Bacharach & Lawler (1980) offer a different focus with emphasis on process. Kanter, for example, finds that strategy relates to “identifying the need for change, creating a vision of the desired outcomes of change, deciding what change is feasible, and choosing who should sponsor and defend it” (p. 377). Persons making strategies “tune in” to their internal and external environment to assess change processes. Bacharach & Lawler (1980), offer a similar emphasis on process, but with bargaining and coalitions as central elements.

Strategy also is defined in other ways. Friedberg (1993) argues that strategy is an attempt to structure human relationships. Someone’s acting out of anger at his or her superior, for example, could be categorized as an impulsive act that is not thought through, but if repeated often, it can mask an attempt to structure a relationship. Friedberg’s definition strays from the majority of definitions by describing strategy in terms of *relationships*, while other authors prefer to concentrate on the wider-meaning term *process*.

A common thread of these definitions is that they refer to sets of decisions over time that have cohesion between them. They also emphasize patterns of actions between several players that guide future behavior. Because these patterns involve several players, relational elements come into play.

Three other characteristics are important to note. One is that strategies may be made and acted upon by individuals or groups of individuals on behalf of the organization. Another is that strategies most often involve a limited number of participants because they are sometimes confidential or are made by small numbers of persons at executive levels. A third characteristic is that strategies include many types of behaviors. In a study specifically aimed at human service organizations, Jansson and Simmons (1984) studied fifty hospital social work units. They identified many behaviors aimed at minimizing uncertainties within organizations and external funders, such as establishing affirmative action programs and creating ombudsman positions that buffer the organization from external pressures from government, the courts, and consumer groups. Other strategic behaviors that were identified included participation on high-level planning committees, making one’s department or unit indispensable to others being perceived as critical to a range of practical needs of the organization, and enhancing territorial boundaries for one’s unit to prevent overlap by other departments. In essence, strategies involve a whole range of actions by individuals and groups.

2.3.1 *Strategies versus tactics*

When one thinks of strategies, one also thinks of tactics. The Random House Dictionary (1980) defines tactics as “methods of achieving one’s goal” and “manoeuvres for gaining advantage or success”. Tactics refer to individual actions, whereas strategies are generally referred to as a series of actions over time. For the purposes of this research, we will define strategy and tactics as a single phenomenon along a continuum, with tactics referring to the actions not necessarily related to one another. Strategy refers to a larger stream of action, events, and decisions through which intents are realized, frustrated, or modified over time within a particular context.

Applying these definitions to power, strategies provide the means through which power can be organized, exercised, maintained, and enhanced. Strategies are sets of decisions over time that can be examined to study power processes. Sets of decisions made by organizational actors, therefore, are a manifestation of strategy formation or the manipulation or exercise of power (Frost, 1987; Friedberg, 1993).

2.3.2 *Strategy formation versus strategy formulation*

Mintzberg (1977, 1989) and Mintzberg & Waters (1982) distinguish between *strategy formation* and *strategy formulation*. *Formulation* of strategies means the conscious or explicit actions and thoughts by individuals to carry out a decision. Individuals may use formal planning and analytical techniques to formulate their strategies. *Formation* of strategies, on the other hand, is implicit rather than explicit, is not necessarily a conscious action, and refers to how decisions are generated. Formation of strategies is a process that assumes people learn as they go. The study of strategy formation thus requires hindsight by looking at past actions.

The distinction between the two terms is important because “formulation” of strategies is a misleading term that minimizes the fact that people learn with each action they engage in and adjust their future actions accordingly. When strategies are formed, they involve many types of behaviors that are not necessarily conscious or deliberate. This dissertation examines the process of formation of strategies rather than the formulation of the strategies and does not further distinguish between the two.

A review of strategy formation reveals that the concept has its origins in the decision-making and strategy implementation literature. Dufour (1991) has identified four clusters of decision-making and strategy implementation theories in the literature. We have borrowed liberally from his synthesis and will summarize the important points, as they are applicable to the present research. The four clusters are the classical model, the behavioral approach, the contingency approach, and the political approach. As Dufour points out, these perspectives are neither mutually exclusive nor independent. There is an overlap between several of these models, and they can be put together in any number of combinations to study strategy formation. They will be presented independently, however, as they are in the literature. Because other authors have expanded on these concepts, only an overview of their principal contributions will be presented. Table 3 summarizes these perspectives.

We have identified two additional clusters of approaches as they pertain to strategy formation. While Dufour integrates cultural dimensions into the behavioral perspective, the present analysis shows that the cultural perspective has generated sufficient literature to be a category in its own right. More importantly, the cultural perspective distinguishes itself from other perspectives by its unique focus on cultural elements. The cultural approach will be divided into two subsets, organizational culture and social culture.

The second additional cluster of theories that we have identified refers to the models that set out to combine various elements from other models. We have called these *multidimensional models*. The focus is away from single elements but towards single frameworks that attempt to envelop multiple elements. In keeping with the interdisciplinary nature of this dissertation, we will examine these models closely.

Table 3
**CLASSIFICATION OF THE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES
 OF POWER STRATEGY FORMATION**

PRINCIPAL PERSPECTIVES OF POWER STRATEGY FORMATION	EXAMPLES OF LEADING AUTHORS
<p><u>The Classical Perspective</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategy formation is a series of rational steps • Operational Research • strategy formation is an analytical process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrews (1971) • Andrews (1971) • Channon (1978); Ansoff (1978)
<p><u>The Behavioral Perspective</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bounded rationality • garbage can model • Organizational Development (OD) • strategy formation as a discontinuous process • logical incrementalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simon (1955) • Cohen, March & Olsen (1972) • Bennis (1969) • Hedberg & Jonsson (1978) • Quinn (1980)
<p><u>The Contingency Perspective</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Contingency approach • the “fit” approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katz & Kahn (1966); Salancik & Pfeffer (1977); Astley & Van de Ven (1983)
<p><u>The Cultural Perspective</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organizational or corporate culture model • societal or ethnographic culture model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allaire & Firsirotu (1985); Schein (1990) • Faucheux (1978)
<p><u>The Multidimensional Perspective</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creation of dilemmas; contextualist model • strategy involves cognitive, social and political processes • option lens model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pettigrew (1985); Dufour (1991) • Hax (1990) • Bowman & Hurry (1993)
<p><u>The Power Relations and Games Perspective</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategies are planned or emergent; strategies are organized into games • strategy formation as manipulation of zones of uncertainty • strategy formation as coalitions and alignments • strategy formation as leverage and co-optation • power strategies are formed at surface and deep levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mintzberg (1983, 1989, 1994a) • Crozier & Friedberg (1977); Friedberg (1993) • Bacharach & Lawler (1980); Summers (1986); Selvini-Palazzoli <i>et al.</i> (1984) • Garguilo (1993) • Frost (1987)

The Classical Perspective of Strategy Formation

The Classical Model of strategy formation is grounded in the principles of scientific management “as a comprehensive set of rational precepts to guide the administrative process” (Dufour, p. 22). The model holds that strategy formation and implementation is a technical, non-political activity driven by top management in organizations. In this sense, strategy formation is a sequential and methodical action by the organization to reach its goals. It also assumes a stable and predictable environment.

The foundation of the Classical perspective is the Rational model. According to this approach, decisions are made by following a series of rational steps. First, the decision-maker considers all available alternatives. Second, s/he identifies and evaluates the consequences of each alternative. The final steps is choosing the alternative that is preferable given the desired goals, and designing a course of action or plan to achieve those goals (Meyerson & Banfield, 1955; Ansoff, 1965; Andrews, 1971; Hofer & Schendel, 1978; Porter, 1980).

In addition to the Rational model, Operational Research (O.R.) fits under the classical perspective of strategy formation. O.R. uses mathematical simulations to find the best decisions and actions to take concerning desired outcomes. This model assumes that by controlling certain variables, the outcomes of decisions can be known. Strategies are thus formed accordingly because outcomes are predicted ahead of time. Channon (1978) has reviewed these statistical models of strategy formation, and he proposes that quantifiable analytical techniques now can be used to study decision processes, calling strategy formation an “analytic” process. Early attempts at using analytic techniques, such as Operations Research that used rational or logical analysis of economic or other goals, failed because management defined them and because they excluded human subjectivity (e.g., the personal values of those making decisions). Models that were developed later in the 1960’s and 1970’s incorporated the subjective values of managers. Ansoff (1978) for example, proposed several steps in the strategy planning process, starting from a first step of establishing measurable objectives at the outset, to generating plans and action programs that capitalize on opportunities and eliminate weaknesses, to a review and recycling procedure for further planning. This early analytical approach also encountered difficulties, however. Finance personnel who had little management experience and who concentrated on financial forecasts in their planning

staffed many strategy-planning units. This arrangement had little value in long-range forecasting and strategy making.

According to Channon, a contingency-oriented analytical approach to strategy planning has emerged since these early attempts, where middle-line and operational managers are now included instead of excluded from analysis. Also, less quantifiable elements such as political risk are now being included. Thus, strategy formation now includes more qualitative-type input from persons at lower levels of organizations. There is less emphasis on quantitative projections in planning and strategy formation.

A weakness of the analytic models is that they primarily use mathematical or statistical analysis through simulations and probabilistic models, thereby remaining at a mechanistic level. Human behavior is much too complex to be reduced to mathematical models and simulations. The analytical model does not discuss strategy formation as a relational process, and there is no discussion of power issues. We find out little about the dynamics of other employees such as therapists and clerical staffs in power strategies. Also, statistical planning and often-used terms like “strategic portfolio planning” do not apply to human service organizations. In essence, the analytical model has little application in the context that we wish to study.

Another problem with many of the classical models of strategy formation discussed above is that they assume that persons have complete knowledge of all facts, and that the manager’s task is to make sense of all these facts to make the best decisions. Some decisions are very rational and calculated (e.g., financial cutbacks), while others are not (e.g., spur-of-the-moment decisions when there is not enough time to analyze all alternatives). The empirical research shows that there are cognitive limits to the ability of humans to process and understand all that there is to know about given situations (Dufour, 1991). As Dufour points out, these theories tend to hold the environment as constant, predictable, and unchanging. Because the classical model of strategy formation assumes a stable environment, it cannot adequately explain the actions of persons and groups of persons in turbulent environments such as the one we are studying. While decision-making may follow patterned steps, it cycles through different decision phases, repeating and going along various and sometimes unpredictable paths (Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, 1993). In addition, by concentrating on strategy

formation as the purview of top management only, it fails to examine strategy formation of persons at lower levels of the organization and recognized their importance.

The classical models of strategy formation fail to take into account the political nature of many decisions. The classical model can also be criticized because of its passive view of human behavior. People do not simply respond like machines to directives from the top. They bring with them values, beliefs, and cultural interpretations to events. There are thus many dimensions to decision-making that are absent in the classical approach.

The Behavioral Approaches to Strategy Formation

As Dufour (1991) points out, more than just organizational structure and procedures must be manipulated in strategy formation. Human behavior must be influenced for strategies to take effect.

The Behavioral approach is based on the premise that organizational decision-making is less rational and mechanical than classical theorists had predicted (Simon, 1955). Because individuals cannot process all the information and options that are available about a situation, and because of biases in human judgment, they cannot make decisions optimally. Individuals can only attain limited or “bounded rationality”. Also, they rely on cognitive maps to organize issues and events into manageable categories (Dutton & Jackson, 1987; Schwenk, 1988 ; Hart, 1992). From the available information, decision-makers make the best assessment they can and come up with a satisfactory solution to the problem, therefore “satisficing” or making satisfactory rather than optimal decisions (Simon, 1955; March & Simon, 1958; Cyert & March, 1963).

In the Behavioral approach, resistance must be overcome for successful organizational change to occur. Individual motivation, commitment, and interpersonal co-operation, for example, are needed to overcome resistance, and personality traits and cognitive styles must be matched to strategies if the strategies are to be successful (Wissemma *et al.*, 1980; Szilagyi & Schweiger, 1984). Much of the literature in this approach thus focuses on individual characteristics such as psychological attitudes and behaviors of persons and groups.

Advocates of the individual characteristics approach emphasize that individual perceptions and attitudes can influence willingness to implement changes. Dufour cites studies carried out in this regard (Gupta & Govindarjian, 1983), and criticizes them for lacking a dy-

dynamic view of strategy formation, and for leading to a trait theory of behavior. The studies ignore the context in which the strategies occur.

As characterized by Dufour (1991), other models within the Behavioral perspective include the Strategy-Manager Matching approach, the Garbage Can model of strategy formation, the Diffusion of Innovation model, and the Organizational Development (O.D.) model. In the Strategy-Manager Matching approach, managers must be chosen according to their appropriateness to the organization's strategies. Careful matching of personality traits, cognitive styles, behavioral characteristics, and personal values of individuals is essential for success in implementing strategies. This is a weakness in the model because perfect matching of personal traits and strategies cannot be done in an accurate way because personality traits are so variable. The empirical validity of the claims of this approach is put into question. There also is considerable fuzziness in operationalizing the concepts for research, leading to questions of empirical validity (Dufour, 1991). Finally, the Strategy-Matching approach does not take into consideration that strategies may change as they are being carried out. The approach on its own has little real-life application in the industrial and human services sectors.

The Diffusion of Innovation model is another approach in this perspective, but it shifts from individual characteristics to the role and skills of implementing strategies (Nord & Tucker, 1987). As Dufour (1991) states, "it is generally assumed that the way changes are communicated to the people who are affected by them, and the role of the opinion leaders and 'product champions' ... are critical in facilitating or impeding change and use of innovation" (p. 41). The opinions and actions of leaders in organizations thus principally influence strategy formation. Some of the problems identified with this approach are that the findings are not easily transferable to human service settings because the research focuses on technological innovation strategies only. This approach fails to take into account structural and environmental factors by focusing on leaders only.

The Garbage Can perspective of strategy formation, for its part, finds that strategy emerges out of "organized anarchy" (Cohen, March & Olsen, 1972). This approach for analyzing how decisions are made and strategies formed comes from observations in universities that showed much ambiguity when people made decisions. Decision processes are characterized by "collections of choices looking for problems, issues and feelings looking for decision situations in which they may be aired, solutions looking for issues to which there might be an

answer, and decision makers looking for work” (Cohen, March & Olsen, 1972, p. 1). The behavior of individuals in organizations is thus often non-purposeful and random, because goals are unclear. Strategies flow from unpredictable sequences of events emerging from a “garbage can” mix of ideas and behaviors.

Some problems with the Garbage Can model are that individuals are assumed to be passive with regard to decision processes. Second, decisions tend to be studied outside of the original context, as if each decision could be studied apart from the others taken in a given context (Friedberg, 1993). The spillover effect of one decision on another is ignored, and the focus is almost entirely on random sequences of events, rather than on ones that are planned. The empirical research does not really support this perspective, and it is less empirically robust than some of the other approaches examined (Dufour, 1991; Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, 1992).

Organizational Development (OD) approaches also fall under the behavioral perspective of strategy formation. Pettigrew (1985) has extensively reviewed these and thus we will only present an overview here. This branch of organizational study applies findings from the behavioral sciences to the management of organizations and strategy formation. As Dufour (1991) says, while OD has been practiced in industrial organizations since the 1950’s, it is relatively new to human service organizations such as hospitals and mental health centers. Dufour divides the OD Perspective into two sub-categories. The Classical OD category holds that attitudes, interpersonal relations, and organizational climate are part-and-parcel of strategy making. It is a process for bringing about organizational change, and it assumes that successful strategies are more likely to be realized when people participate in them rather than being imposed on them. Strategy formation would thus have to involve persons at many levels of organizations. The second subcategory of Organization Development is the Contemporary version, which is still emerging according to Dufour. In this category, it is believed that contextual variables such as the social and economic environment constrain or facilitate the implementation of strategies. Exactly which variables are to be accounted for is not clear, however. As Dufour (1991) points out, empirical studies are still limited and exploratory in nature, and they remain at the descriptive level.

Among the criticisms of OD is that it puts the focus on human elements to the exclusion of structural, contextual, and temporal features (Dufour, 1991). The Behavioral Per-

spective also tends to ignore power and political issues, and structural change as a means to effect change is not examined. The role of conflict in strategy formation is overlooked, such as when existing ways of sharing resources are threatened, when resources decrease, or when people try to seize new opportunities.

Quinn (1980), for his part, has proposed “logical incrementalism” to explain strategy formation. In logical incrementalism, rather than trying to reach ideal goals as in the Rational perspective, top managers give a general sense of purpose and direction that guide the actions of members of the organization. Because organizations must adapt continuously to external forces that are often unpredictable and complex, they cannot rely on pre-planned strategies. They proceed incrementally, by making decisions and taking actions according to the needs of the moment.

The Behavioral approach comprises other models. Hedberg and Jonsson (1978) find that the emergence of strategies is greatly affected by the discontinuities in the environment, by crises, and by changes in organizational myths. This means that uncertainty and changes in the environment create uncertainty in decision-making, from which originates the term “discontinuous”. Transitions between strategies are considered as changes in the way members of organizations perceive and interpret the world. According to this perspective, strategies are “integrated sets of ideas and constructs through which problems are spotted and interpreted, and in the light of which actions are invented and selected” (p. 90). Strategies are sets of rules that guide an organization’s search for solutions to problems. These rules, which originate in the beliefs and myths that people have, provide the interpretations of reality upon which organizations act. Myths are explained as theories that provide a filter for understanding the world and motivation actions of individuals.

In terms of process, the main proposition in Hedberg and Jonsson’s model is that organizations develop over time through wave patterns of myths. They further suggest that the attitudes and behaviors of decision-makers are the most important factors behind this wave pattern of myths. There are spurts of enthusiasm, built largely on wishful thinking, followed by a decline in the directing force of the leading idea or myth. This decline is due to the *push-effect* of crises in the organization, leading to increasing uncertainty in the organization. The final decline ends in a crisis, where the organization often accepts a new strategy without struggle between the proponents of the new and old strategies. A new wave of proc-

esses takes over by inducing a *pull-effect* and reducing the amount of uncertainty that occurred during the decline of the former myth. New rules of the game are thus formulated.

Myths and rules are thus operationalized into strategies that provide the basis for action in organizations. Strategies serve a dual purpose. The first is gathering feedback into categories provided by the frames of reference or myths that people have of the way their world works. The second is a filtering function, that of screening out signals that are inconsistent with their myths. Through these functions, people work at reducing uncertainty in the environment through the use of strategies when stakes are high and they feel a sense of crisis.

The model the authors propose puts emphasis on the interaction between the environment and the perception that people have of that environment. It also implies that strategy-making has social and cultural elements, and that it is not just a rational process. The authors also put a focus on uncertainty by showing that it is central to the explanation of *discontinuities* in the strategy making process. When myths are shifting and when competing strategies develop out of different frameworks, for example, confusion is likely to result. Arguments in favor of the new strategy will have to be mainly emotional in nature because a shared cognitive or rational framework has not yet developed. When new myths become established and decision-makers share the same knowledge and frame of reference, strategy formation becomes a *continuous* process instead of a discontinuous one. A contribution of this theory is that it takes the focus of strategy formation away from the management level and makes it an organization-wide phenomenon. While the model proposed by Hedberg and Jonsson is interesting, it suffers from empirical application, especially in the human services. It focuses on cognitive and culture frames of reference, dealing little with the elements of power in strategy formation.

A common thread among the above behavioral models of strategy formation is that they use a larger view of strategy making than the Classical perspective which focuses mainly on managers. Reasons given for including people from different hierarchical levels in organizations in strategy formation include difficulties implementing strategies (Galbraith & Kazanjian, 1986; Hart, 1992) and high levels of change in the environment (Ansoff, 1979). Persons at other levels of the organization are thus included as having an influence on

strategies. This perspective thus provides a more realistic view of strategy formation than the classical or rational model described earlier.

Among the weaknesses already mentioned are that while this perspective includes non-management personnel, it still emphasizes the role of management in overcoming resistance to change. The top-down and managerial focus of the behavioral perspective ignores strategy formation at lower levels. It lacks the ability to distinguish between corporate strategies and the micro-strategies used by employees. The primary emphasis is on environmental variables at the expense of other factors such as power and politics.

The Contingency Perspective of Strategy Formation

The third perspective of strategy formation that Dufour (1991) identifies is the Contingency approach. With the growing realization that organizations were not entities in themselves but dealt with other organizations in a systemic way, researchers began examining the influence of the environment on organizations. This does not suggest that the environment was ignored earlier in the human relations movement of the 1940's and 1950's, but that the environment was secondary in focus to more individual and clinical orientations (Friedberg, 1993). These theories could not extend their analysis to the outside world. Strategy formation was explained through learning and socialization processes.

In the 1960's, environmental factors became the focus of research for about the next fifteen years and represented an important change in paradigms. The study of internal processes gave way to analysis of organizations in terms of formal structures. Changes in research methodologies included less emphasis on monographic analysis and more on statistical methods.

The Contingency Approach views organizations as open systems, and it examines the exchange relationships between organizations and their environment. As an open system, an organization acquires input from the environment, processes it, and then dispenses the output to the environment (Katz and Kahn, 1966). It expands on the Classical approach by emphasizing exchange relationships of the organization with its environment. Further assumptions of the Contingency approach are that “a mismatch between the organization and its environment may prove detrimental to the organization in either the short or long run”

(Dufour, 1991, p. 33). Strategies thus work to help realign the organization with its environment (Christensen, Andrews & Bower, 1978).

According to Dufour (1991), the Contingency approach is grounded in the same set of assumptions as the Classical approach in that strategy formation requires a series of technical, non-political and administrative activities. Dufour divides the Contingency perspective into two sub-categories: the Contingency approach, and the “fit” approach.

The Contingency approach views situational and contextual variables such as organizational size, uncertainty in the environment, and technology as important determinants of the structure of organizations: “Contingency theory assumes that contextual constraints have binding effects on organizational operations” (Astley & Van De Ven, 1983, p. 253). The emphasis of strategy formation is placed on assessing the attributes of the organization and the environment, then to fit the structure to the changing environment. The “fit” perspective, for its part, finds that key administrative and organizational mechanisms can be “fitted” to strategies to increase their effectiveness: “An important assumption underlying this perspective is that these elements can be consciously designed to constitute an internally consistent organizational form” (Dufour, 1991, p. 36).

Salancik and Pfeffer (1977) are two well-known proponents of the structural contingency model. They argue that power is “one of the few mechanisms available for aligning an organization with its own reality” (p. 470). They believe that institutionalized or “clean” forms of power — authority, legitimization, centralized control, regulations, and management information systems — often act to buffer organizations from reality and obscure the demands of their environments.

Citing studies from various public and private organizations, namely universities, research firms, factories, banks, and retailers, Salancik and Pfeffer found that to understand how power is used, one must look outside organizations towards the environment to find which contingencies are critical or what groups mediate the organization’s outcomes. In terms of process, *scarcity*, *criticality*, and *uncertainty* are three conditions that are strongly tied to strategy formation. When resources in the environment are *scarce*, individuals may strategize around controlling or maintaining these resources because they are important to others. When these resources are *critical* to the organization, strategies will revolve around holding onto them or obtaining them. Strategy formation also is tied to *uncertainty* in the environ-

ment. Under conditions of uncertainty, there often exists little consensus about what to do, and thus individuals and groups will use these opportunities to engage in strategies to get things done their way.

According to the structural contingency theory of power, power derives from conditions or contingencies that face an organization. When the contingencies change, so do the bases for power, particularly when survival is affected by the scarcity of critical resources. This affects strategy formation in several ways. First, those who hold power will not give up their positions easily. They will pursue policies that guarantee their continued dominance over certain elements, such as naming certain functions that are critical to the organization, and making rules, procedures, and information systems that limit the potential power of others. Second, individuals or groups may work purposefully toward *misaligning* the organization with its environment through the same mechanism, “ensuring that the organization will never be completely in phase with its environment or its needs” (p. 483). This creates uncertainty and forces others to adjust continually to new circumstances.

In essence, to understand strategy formation in an organization, one needs to look outside it, to its environment, to examine the characteristics of the context and the problems arising from it.

A frequent criticism of the contingency approach is that it is essentially determinist. Environmental factors such as uncertainty, technology and organizational size are viewed as determining the structure of organizations, leaving little room for power issues and internal political processes that might influence strategy formation. There also is little empirical support for a simple deterministic relationship between strategy, structure, and environment. To paraphrase Friedberg (1993), structural contingency theorists remain prisoners of a perspective that considers the environment and the context as impersonal factors that the organization must adapt to. In addition, as Dufour states, “depending on which body of empirical evidence is used and on which part of the strategic process is observed, both ‘structure follows strategy’ and ‘strategy follows structure’ can be valid propositions” (1991, p. 37). Another difficulty is that the Contingency perspective cannot explain why similar organizations in different environments often function or perform similarly. Strategy formation thus cannot be entirely explained by the environment.

The Cultural Influence Perspective of Strategy Formation

To paraphrase Dufour (1991), the Cultural perspective of strategy formation is one of the latest waves of explanation for strategy formation. While Dufour includes this perspective in the Behavioral perspective discussed earlier, the present review splits it into its own section because it is analytically useful to understanding the less tangible and informal characteristics of organizations.

In the present literature review, we identified two separate applications of the concept of culture to strategy formation. The first application of the term culture pertains to the *corporate culture* of organizations, or the set of beliefs, representations, views, norms and values shared by individuals in organizations about how they should conduct their business (Schein, 1985; Lorsch, 1986) and that distinguishes one organization from another (Harvey & Brown, 1988). As Schein (1990) puts it, any definable group with a shared history can have a culture. If the organization as a whole has shared experiences, there can be what Schein calls a “total” organizational culture. The idea behind this model is that corporate culture influences the way that strategies are devised. In a more precise definition, Schein defines corporate culture as, (a) a pattern of basic assumptions, (b) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, (c) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, (d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore (e) is to be taught to new members (f) as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

Harvey & Brown (1988) summarize five characteristics that describe an organization’s culture: *individual autonomy* — the degree of responsibility, independence, and the opportunities for exercising initiative for members of the organization; *structure* — the degree of rules and regulations, and amount of direct supervision used to control member behavior; *support* — the degree of assistance and warmth provided by managers; *performance incentives* — the degree to which incentives in the organization (i.e., salary increases, promotions) are based on member performance; *risk behavior* — the degree to which members are encouraged to be aggressive, innovative, and risk seeking.

“By combining each one of these characteristics, a composite picture of the organization’s culture is formed. The culture becomes the basis for the shared understanding that members have about the organization, how things

are done and the way members are supposed to behave.” (Harvey & Brown, 1988, p. 386)

Corporate culture can thus be described as patterns of assumptions and behaviors that try to deal with the changing environment.

In terms of strategy formation, deeply held assumptions often start out historically as values, then gradually are taken for granted and take on the character of assumptions. These assumptions are a potential source of resistance or an “invisible barrier” to change (Lorsch, 1986; Allaire & Firsirotu, 1985). Conversely, corporate culture can be a “lever that could be used to mobilize and channel the energies of organizational members” (Dufour, 1991, p. 43). In this way, managers integrate cultural considerations into their strategies. These assumptions are based on the study of practices in successful Japanese and American organizations.

Some of the ways that corporate culture is studied are through ethnographic analysis of organizational stories, rituals and rites, and symbolic manifestations, also through analysis of survey research using Likert-type scales, and studying the history of the organization in longitudinal analysis.

In terms of direct application to organizations going through major change, Schein (1990, 1996) identifies several strategies that leaders can use to produce desired changes in culture. Leaders may highlight threats to the organization if no change occurs, while encouraging change as desirable. Rewarding the adoption of new directions while punishing old ways of thinking can be part of this. Leaders can articulate a new set of assumptions by providing a new role model. Leaders can appoint new persons to key positions in the organization because these persons can bring in new assumptions. Seduction and coercion can be used to adopt new ways of behaving that are more consistent with the new directions of the organization. Some leaders create visible scandals “to discredit sacred cows [and] to explode myths that preserve non-desired traditions” (p. 117). Finally, leaders can create new emotionally charged rituals concerning the new directions.

A weakness in Schein’s discussion is that it focuses on leaders taking the responsibility for change. It gives only slight notice to change that originates at lower levels. Additionally, we cannot assume that all organizations have an over-arching culture, because members do not always have a common history from which culture develops (Schein, 1990). Also, the

corporate culture model of strategy formation is sometimes applied in a mechanical way. Quoting Smircich (1983, in Dufour, 1991),

“The talk about corporate culture tends to be optimistic ... about top managers molding cultures to suit their strategic ends. The notion of corporate culture runs the risk of being as disappointing a managerial tool as the more technical and quantitative tools that were faddish in the 1970s.” (p. 45)

Another difficulty with cultural models is that they are usually researched with qualitative methods that make it difficult to generalize to other settings. This leads to considerable debate over the validity of corporate culture studies (Dufour, 1991).

The second application of the concept of culture that we identified in the literature relates not to organizational culture in the traditional sense, but to culture as it pertains to ethnic identity and larger societal groups. Faucheux (1978), for example, suggests that we can understand strategy formation by studying the national, cultural, and societal context of people. The author contrasts assumptions concerning strategy formation implicit in the Anglo-Saxon and Latin cultures. While Anglo-Saxon culture tries to minimize social conflict by cooperation and consensus (bottom-up management), the Latin culture tends to employ a “top-down” approach. “Latin culture prefers to exacerbate conflicts of an ideological nature in order to avoid working together” (p. 136).

By examining these differences, Faucheux finds that Latin culture is accustomed to centralized control based “on the exercise of a single power and a hierarchic authority”, whereas Anglo-Saxon culture attempts to obtain consensus and use common value systems when designing strategies. In terms of application, Anglo-Saxon managers tend to delegate and include levels of participation of their staffs in their strategy making more than Latin managers. Culture would thus be an important dimension of strategy formation.

Faucheux’s discussion of strategy formation as a cultural process is weak in that he does not discuss it as a process, nor does he include other concepts of organizations. We do not know what aspects of culture are influential. His ideas also suffer from little empirical study, and his examples are principally from examining historical periods. Some authors have noted that national culture is not a sufficient explanation for differences in performance between companies in different countries (Ouchi, 1981; Pascale & Athos, 1981). It is not clear whether something as abstract as culture can be measured to determine its influence on

strategy formation, and application to the human services sector is absent. Although this approach opens up new ways of thinking about strategy formation and provides food for thought, it remains too fuzzy to be applied in a scientific way.

The Multidimensional Perspective of Strategy Formation

Hart (1992) writes that strategy formation has been examined from many angles.

“These varying approaches have spawned a bewildering array of competing or overlapping conceptual models. Indeed, during the past three decades, authors have developed scores of different strategy-making typologies.” (p. 327)

The author also finds that “associated empirical work has covered such a wide range of considerations that little cumulative knowledge has resulted. A conceptualization that is capable of providing a framework for ongoing research is lacking” (p. 327). The Multidimensional Perspective includes research that attempts to integrate elements from different perspectives into a framework rather than focusing on single elements.

Hax (1990) is an author who has addressed the concept of strategy formation in this perspective. Hax defines strategy as a coherent, unifying, and integrative pattern of decisions that a company makes. Strategies give rise to plans to reach long-term goals, action programs, and priorities for allocating resources, and they engage all levels of the firm. According to Hax, strategy formation is the result of combining three different processes: 1) the cognitive processes of individuals who understand the external environment of the firm and its internal capabilities; 2) the social and organizational processes that contribute to internal communications and the consensus of opinion; and 3) the political processes that address the creation, retention, and transfer of power within the organization. Strategy formation is an evolutionary process that emerges from what an organization’s members do. In terms of analyzing strategies in organizations, strategies “are discovered by following the footprints of the major steps a firm has taken in the past. Often this path of strategic footprints ... indicates the organization’s future destination” (p. 35). Defined this way, strategy formation becomes a balance between past learning and trying to shape new directions that may lead an organization away from the past.

Hax also contrasts two approaches to strategy formation. The first is the formal analytical view that regards strategy formation as a formal process aimed at identifying all corporate, business and functional strategies of the organization. An opposite view, the power behavioral model, regards behavioral theory as better describing what occurs in strategy formation. In this latter approach, strategies originate in the goals and structures of the organization, the politics of making decisions, bargaining and negotiation, the role of coalitions, and “muddling through”. Hax argues that neither of these opposite approaches by themselves fully explain strategy formation because strategy is often “murkily communicated and practiced covertly” (p. 34). A combination of the two approaches is thus necessary to fully grasp strategy formation.

One problem with Hax’s view of strategy formation is that there are difficulties in applying it to human service organizations. Terms such as *growth*, *diversification*, and *divestment* that the author uses are intended more for private industry and the competitive financial domain than for human service organizations such as mental health centers. Mental health organizations, for example, do not have to position themselves within the “marketplace” as do private corporations. Another problem is that strategies are not only aimed at long-term goals. Micro-level strategies are ignored. Finally, Hax’s model sees the Chief Executive Officer of an organization as the person responsible for administering strategy formation processes. While this may be correct for some organizations, Hax ignores the contributions that other employees of organizations make to the strategy formation process and that they are often at the head of directional changes in an organization. Professional bureaucracies, for example, often put much power in the hands of their employees by including them in the strategy processes of the organization. Managers, therapists, and support personnel thus all have a role in strategy formation processes because they also are strategy makers.

Pettigrew (1978), for his part, views strategy formation as made up of social and political decision-making processes, which he integrates into a “contextual model”. The contextual model provides a historically bound, processual and contextual report of events to understand strategy formation. The author defines strategies as “choices that are made involving individuals and subgroupings of individuals at various organizational levels, that develop into the pattern of thinking about the world, evaluating that world, and acting upon that world” (p. 78). Strategy making, for its part, is defined as “a flow of events, values, and

actions running through a context” (p. 79). As Pettigrew explains, analysis of strategy formation must be contextually based. It must be based on the location of a strategy in time and in context, which includes the culture, environment, structure, internal politics, and history of the organization.

For Pettigrew, the study of strategy formation involves the analysis of identifiable and also more discrete decision events, the pathways to those events, and the connections between successive decisions over time. Studying the context surrounding decisions is very important, which means understanding the location of strategy in time, the culture of the organization, its environment, the organization’s tasks and structure, and the leadership and internal political system of the organization. Historical antecedents to events are very important in understanding how strategies are formed.

“Yesterday’s strategies will provide some of the pathways to and inputs for today’s strategies; and today’s strategies will have a concept of the future built into them.” (Pettigrew, 1978, p. 79)

Pettigrew explains that at any point in time, an organization will face dilemmas that require the organization to make choices. The process of resolving these dilemmas is strategy-making, and it is influenced by organizational factors, culture, tasks, leadership, and internal political factors. Strategies emanate from the decision processes concerning which dilemmas and which ways of resolving these dilemmas will be selected. As new dilemmas are brought to the attention of the organization, or old dilemmas are kept at the forefront, various parties in the organization place demands on the resources of the organization. Analysis of strategy formation thus depends not only on what demands are made, but also on how the parties mobilize power around their demands. Strategy formation can thus be extended to all parties in an organization.

Dilemmas are likely to be pushed forward for discussion and decision on the basis of firmly held value positions about the organization’s future direction. They also may come into play in the belief that the resolution of those dilemmas will have a consequence on the activities, roles, and power of individuals or subgroups. The dilemmas faced by different organizational members will depend on several factors. The structure of subgroupings in the organization, the complexity and uncertainty of the dilemmas, the importance of the dilemmas for various parties, the existence of value positions and problem solving styles, external

pressure, and the history of the relationship (and of personal likes and dislikes) within the organization will affect the types of demands. As Pettigrew says, for some people, a strategy may simply be a case of “If he’s for it, I’m against it.”

Finally, strategies concerning the dilemmas faced by organizations evolve from the attempts of the different parties in an organization to mobilize power in support of their demands. For strategy formation, it is not just the possession of power or the resources surrounding power that is important, but also the ability to use the power, and the relevance of the power resources to others in the organization.

Further, key elements for analyzing the meaning of demands to the different actors are values, language, beliefs, and myths. The presentation of demands on the organization can be observed through the use of metaphors and myths, which are devices for simplifying and giving meaning to complex issues that evoke concern to the participants.

“Myths serve as ways of legitimizing the present (demands) in terms of a perhaps glorious past, of reconciling apparent dilemmas, and of explaining away the discrepancies that may exist between what is happening and what ought to be happening. As such, myths provide part of the social cement that links old strategies with new strategies and that justifies the very existence of the new strategy.” (p. 86)

Values and myths are important to the study of power strategy formation because, as Pettigrew argues, different parts of an organization may see the dilemmas and opportunities in a different light. Dufour (1991) and Pfeffer (1981) have carried out further discussion of this theme. The Symbolic Action perspective, categorized by Dufour as a political approach, discusses these in terms of strategy formation. As Dufour states, the symbolic action perspective emphasizes the importance of political language and symbols in implementing decisions and in forming strategies. On this, Pfeffer (1981, p. 211) says,

“Political language and symbolic action can have consequences for mobilization and motivation of support, for cooling off or placating opposition either inside or outside the organization and for organizing activity within the organization around the issue of implementation.”

One of the advantages of Pettigrew’s contextualist model outlined above is that it goes “beyond the analysis of change and [begins] to theorize about changing” (Pettigrew, 1985, p. 15). It places strategy formation within a context, and it examines it as a process involving the emergence of demands and problems. It also enforces the study of the historical

antecedents to events within organizations. Also, the dilemmas that Pettigrew discusses are compatible with the emergence of problems that led to power games within organizations. Dilemmas force individuals and groups to make choices about what they want to do according to their subjective perception of the world. The study of myths and beliefs behind organizational problems is also emphasized.

Other authors have continued in the line of Pettigrew's Contextualist thinking. Waema and Walsham (1990) provide some support to Pettigrew's concepts to strategy making in the information systems field. These authors view strategy making as a continuous process occurring in a constantly changing context. They find that traditional logical approaches to strategy formation ignore the context of process by concentrating only on formal steps. The authors emphasize that it is essential to understand organizational, social, and political contexts in which a system is to be analyzed. Changes in one of these levels (e.g., in the socio-economic level of the organization) affect contexts at other levels (e.g., the corporate culture).

While Waema and Walsham provide little empirical support to their arguments, they nonetheless carry Pettigrew's model away from the purely "managerial" world to the information systems field. Application to the human service field remains absent, however.

Dufour (1991) has provided support for Pettigrew's Contextual model with application to the human services sector, finding that a mixture of behavioral and political models "had the best potential value in describing and explaining the processes and outcomes of implementation investigated" (p. 498). In a qualitative study examining the closure of hospital maternity units in England, Dufour found that a set of three interacting groups of factors affected the implementation and rate and pace of change: the nature of the locale, leadership, and the quality of the proposal for change.

The nature of locale refers to the geography surrounding the organization, the number of competing organizations in the area, the rate and pace of change in the local population, the socio-economic status of the area, and access to support from local interest groups. Other factors included perceptions and attitudes of the local population about their hospitals, the timing of the change proposals versus the national climate of opinion, and the culture of the locality. These factors are important because they contribute to the power sources of the groups involved.

Together with the nature of geography, leadership was another factor important to the implementation of strategies. The role of leadership, however, was found to be much less dramatic than the literature often portrays: “[The] view that leadership behavior in managing organizational change has much to do with routine processes as opposed to extraordinary episodes of imagination, persistence or skill” (Dufour, 1991, p. 455).

Leading a change proposal can be accomplished through *legitimizing strategies* such as influencing how people feel about change outcomes, creating a climate conducive to change by genuine consultation and by creating credibility for management, and by strategically reducing service levels prior to the actual closure of maternity units.

Enforcing strategies represent another way of leading change proposals. By using power and legal authority to defeat opposition, leaders are able to push ahead with their proposals regardless of the strength of the local opposition. Consultations with those affected remain symbolic rather than genuine or are used simply to inform them of the coming changes.

Leading proposals for change can also take the form of *bargaining/negotiating strategies*. These strategies are employed to “get something done”, not to prevent resistance or to defeat opposition — even if it is at the expense of some of the original intentions. To ensure the approval of change, strategies used include reducing expectations to acceptable levels before consultation takes place. Another strategy includes splitting potential opposition by promoting new developments allowed by the change (e.g., providing additional hospital beds in a second community hospital to minimize the impact of total closure of the first).

The third crucial factor to implementation of strategies that Dufour (1991) identified was the quality of proposals for change. While managers may provide impassioned pleas and guarantees that the organizational changes will be for the better, “the need to develop a solid case ... based on sound facts and well-reasoned argument is clearly supported in the literature” (p. 473). Strategy formation by providing accurate facts and information includes sharing analysis of these facts with conflicting interest groups, especially when proposed organizational changes are controversial.

“The more decision making power is shared between people who do not quite trust one another, the more formal analysis tends to become important. Formal analysis is often done to obtain information ... but people also use it for communication, direction and control, and for its symbolic value in conveying messages of rationality, concern and willingness to act. Analysis may

help to determine the content of decisions, but it also acts as glue — binding the decisions of different individuals together to create an organizational decision. To understand the role of formal analysis in organizations, we must understand how it is related to the social interactive context.” (A. Langley, 1989, cited in Dufour, 1991, p. 476)

Despite presenting recent qualitative research in the human services sector, Dufour does not study employees at all levels of the organization. He focuses on the implementation of strategies (closure of hospital maternity units) from a management level only, leaving out strategy formation from other employees. Dufour’s focus on maternity units also is problematic for our purposes because of the institutional focus of the study. Applicability of his findings to the present research (a community mental health center) will require caution because of the different types of organizations studied. Dufour’s research nonetheless remains one of the few empirical studies carried out in settings other than corporate organizations. The concepts he proposes will thus be retained for further consideration.

Eisenhardt and Zbaracki (1992) present another attempt at a multidimensional model of strategy formation. These authors define strategic decision-making as “the fundamental decision which shapes the course of a firm” (p. 17). According to the authors, the literature on strategic decision-making resembles a “crazy quilt” of perspectives. The authors find that traditional literature on decision-making rests on tired debates about single goals and perfect rationality, and on unrealistic assumptions about how people think, behave, and feel.

Eisenhardt and Zbaracki review the traditional paradigms of strategy making. They find that organizations are accurately portrayed as political systems where there is conflict between the objectives that people have within the organization. They also find some truth in the bounded rationality perspective of decision-making, which finds that individuals have limited ability to process information. The authors find that existing debates about which theory best explains decision-making are tired and constraining, however, and that debates should go beyond what exists in the literature. The garbage can model, for its part, has little relevance to modern organizations and has little empirical support. A combination of the boundedly rational and political perspectives makes more sense according to the authors.

The Option Lens model is another model that attempts to integrate findings from other research. According to Bowman and Hurry (1993), there are four important theoretical

themes in strategy formation: resource allocation, strategic positioning, sense-making, and organizational learning. The first two themes, resource allocation and strategic positioning (e.g., taking actions now to provide future benefit) assume rational decision-making by managers, and are more suited to economic analysis than behavior analysis. They also concentrate on planning for future opportunities. Sense making and learning, on the other hand, are themes found in behavioral process theories and assume that strategies emerge out of situations. In sense making, managers interpret events, and their intuitive beliefs influence the decisions they take. The values, assumptions, and beliefs that they hold are influenced by their life experiences, and they focus more on the future than on immediate behavior.

The authors bring together the themes in an “option lens” model that provides additional insights into strategy formation. Grounded in the basic intuition that people seek to “keep options open” in situations that involve an unforeseeable future, and supported by theories of financial economics, this view integrates resource allocation, sense-making, organizational learning, and strategic positioning. For example, managers follow some degree of rationality in the way they make decisions by using statistical and financial analysis. They also use sense making, in that intuition sometimes plays a role in unstructured or chaotic environments by giving “the next best thing to a gut feeling” (p. 774). In this sense, planned strategies are not always helpful during turbulence because planned goals can change as opportunities change. According to the option lens model, people always keep their options open (e.g., they may choose not to engage in risky strategies during turbulent periods of organizational change.)

A weakness of this model is that it offers little in terms of analyzing dynamics in organizations. It remains at the descriptive level and does not really address the strategy process or methodology. Empirical application is thus weak. As with many other articles on strategy formation, it addresses industrial corporations only and focuses exclusively on financial investment.

A conclusion that can be drawn from this review of the principal multi-dimensional models is that while many models claim to be integrative, few successfully bring all the elements under a single umbrella. This is presumably because of the very complex nature of multi-dimensional models. What lacks is a central focus that would assemble the different models. As Van de Ven (1992) states, research on strategy formation is diverse and cannot

be contained within a single paradigm. Except for Dufour's work, which offers empirical evidence and methodology to support the Contextual model, most multi-dimensional models above are weak at providing the tools with which complex strategy formation can be studied.

While the study of strategy formation is seen as one way of solving major problems across different levels of organizations, its focus remains on senior management. A related weakness is that much of the literature on strategy formation stems from the private or corporate domain, not from the human service field. The literature refers a great deal to "strategies for competitive advantage", "strategies for growth", "retailing strategies for positioning products" and so on, which are far removed from the world of human services organizations.

It may thus be unrealistic to have a model linking all aspects and variables. Such a model would be unspeakably complex and would require a very difficult conceptual effort. We now turn to another perspective of strategy formation that spans several elements in organizations by focusing on relational issues and how they are used in strategy formation.

The Power Relations and Games Perspective of Strategy Formation

Politics are usually considered negative but unavoidable elements of organizations. According to Summers (1986), however, "politics" does not have to be a dirty word meaning corruption and opportunism by members of an organization even if these appear occasionally. Rather, the power relations and games perspective views organizational members as "players" or "actors" with distinctive points of view and interests, who work in and outside of the formal system in attempts to change the organization. The actors attempt to exercise control and influence the course of organizational events, both as individuals and collectively.

This perspective describes people as having the ability to choose because they hold some form of power. It also assumes that people engage in at least some politics or games in their organization. *Politics* are defined as observable, sometimes covert, actions by people to enhance their power in a situation (Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, 1992). *Games*, for their part, are defined as mechanisms that actors use to structure and regulate their power relations while preserving some freedom to act in their own best interests (Crozier & Friedberg, 1977). This

perspective has generated enormous amounts of literature because it is intimately tied to the concept of power.

As discussed earlier, conflict relations are part-and-parcel of organizations, but the emphasis of strategies is not only on resolving dysfunctional conflicts. It also focuses on the tactics used by individuals and groups to make the best of conflict (Dufour, 1991; Friedberg, 1993). Some authors in this approach identify power through attempts to control resources (Pettigrew, 1973), others on coalition formation (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980; Summer, 1986) while others put the focus on the manipulation of “zones of uncertainty” (Crozier & Friedberg, 1977; Friedberg, 1993).

Mintzberg (1989) is an author who has recognized that strategy formation occurs not only at the top of organizations, but also at all other levels. Strategies should not just be the responsibility of upper management but also of all members in an organization:

“The notion that strategy is something that should happen way up there, far removed from the details of running an organization on a daily basis, is one of the great fallacies of conventional management.” (p. 31)

This would, in part, explain why strategy formation focused only on management fails. Many top-level executives function under the assumption that all actions must be planned ahead of time and that strategies are predictable, instead of realizing that they must deal with other persons’ strategies that often emerge unexpectedly or without clear intention. Thus, in terms of the process of strategy formation, individual actions turn into patterns of action. While not all actions of individuals are strategies, often a series of behaviors or actions will turn into a strategy when examined retrospectively. In this way, strategy often becomes evident or explicit only after the fact (Mintzberg, 1994).

Mintzberg also finds that strategy involves more than just planning actions for the future. Mintzberg holds that strategies either are *planned* or *emergent*. Planned or formulated strategies are those that have intended actions behind them and that are brought about deliberately. Thus, in the case of planned strategy, there is formulation of strategy, then implementation of strategy. Emergent strategies, on the other hand, are those that form in response to evolving events or situations, and that are not necessarily planned or thought of ahead of time. They represent a convergent pattern that forms among the different actions taken by members of the organization, one at a time, and can develop inadvertently, without

the conscious intention of persons, often through a process of learning (Mintzberg, 1994). Following this thinking, planned and emergent strategies represent the two end points of a continuum, with all strategy formation being somewhere along that continuum. This implies that power and games can be either planned or emergent.

Applying these views to power strategy formation, Mintzberg criticizes the old view of strategy formation as being “equated with planning, with deliberate, premeditated strategies which are then implemented” (Mintzberg, 1985, p. 317). The old view of strategy formation is restrictive because it does not reflect the dynamic and sometimes unpredictable nature of organizations and their environment today. Power strategy formation, according to the author, must reflect both conventional strategy making (e.g., management must make strategies around staff cutbacks) and non-conventional strategy making, (e.g., one-time decisions, which are meant to be *ad hoc*, becoming precedents that create patterns and then turn into strategies). This leads to what Mintzberg calls a grass-roots model of strategy formation characterized by six principles:

- “Strategies grow initially like weeds in a garden; they are not cultivated like tomatoes in a hothouse” (Mintzberg and McHugh, 1985, p. 194). This implies that strategies are often unpredictable in the way they will arise and evolve.
- Strategies can take root in any kind of situation. Sometimes the environment imposes patterns of strategies on organizations. In other cases, managers simply “fumble” into strategies that develop in their minds and later emerge in a form that makes everyone believe they were planned.
- Strategies become organizational when they become collective and displace more established strategies. Patterns of actions sometimes simply spread and become collective strategies.
- The process by which strategies work their way through organizations may be conscious but need not be. Patterns of actions may be recognized only after they have become collective.
- The spreading of new strategies tends to occur in periods of divergence with established or prevalent strategies. This is supported by research by Miller and Friesen (1980, in Mintzberg and McHugh, 1985) that shows change functioning in cycles of convergence and divergence. New strategies sometimes replace established strategies in such cases.

- To manage the strategy process properly is to recognize emergent strategies and to “create a climate within which a wide variety of strategies can grow ... and then to watch what does in fact come up” (Mintzberg and McHugh, 1985, p. 195).

To paraphrase Mintzberg (1977) further, strategy formation is not a regular, nicely sequenced process running through time. An organization may function in a stable environment for months or years and suddenly find itself in a turbulent environment where no strategy is successful to counteract the rapid changes that occur.

As mentioned earlier, games are defined as mechanisms that actors use to structure and regulate their power relations while preserving some freedom to act in their own best interests (Crozier & Friedberg, 1977). Mintzberg applies this definition to power and strategy formation in the following way. Based on systems of power (authority, ideology, expertise, and politics), Mintzberg describes five groups of games that are commonly found in organizations. These are the ways that individuals organize their strategies:

- *games to resist authority* (e.g., activities ranging from mild protest by lower-level employees by delaying implementation of programs, sabotaging them, or disobeying orders outright);
- *games to counter resistance to authority* (e.g., senior managers making legitimate and illegitimate use of information (controlling access) to try to persuade lower level employees to accept plans for change);
- *games to build power bases* (e.g., building alliances by attaching oneself to someone well-placed in the organization, and using the cloak of professionalism). Rosabeth Kanter (in Mintzberg, 1983) even suggests that individuals and groups use these games to build power bases because “people without sponsors, without peer connections, or without promising subordinates [remain] in the situation of bureaucratic uncertainty” (p. 193). Strategies include secrecy, denying an outsider’s competence, protection of one’s knowledge base through control of training, and building mythologies around skills and expertise;
- *games to defeat rivals* (e.g., a top executive can pit line managers against staff specialists to divide and weaken their power as a group);
- *games to effect organizational change* (e.g., going to influential persons outside the organization to blow the whistle on certain behaviors or activities deemed as inappropriate).

Applied to professional bureaucracies (Mintzberg, 1989) such as mental health centers, there are several key areas that are important to strategy formation. First, Mintzberg believes that games will revolve around the basic mission of the organization (e.g., concerning the services it offers). In mental health centers, this mission is controlled by social mandate and by individual professionals because the organization relies on the skills and knowledge of their professionals or specialists to function. The professionals work relatively independently, but at the same time, they are dependent on one another for their specialized skills and expertise. Professionals are left to make their own decisions regarding their work because “years of training have ensured they will decide in ways generally accepted in their professions” (p. 184). Their “professional judgment” is informed judgment influenced by professional training and affiliation.

Another focus for games in professional bureaucracies includes *inputs to the system*, principally around the selection of professional staffs, the determination of clients, and the raising of external moneys. An organization would not likely hire a Psychologist, for example, without consulting other Psychologists about the candidate’s credentials and experience.

Professionals also hold power and strategize around the *means to perform the basic mission* of the organization, notably in the purchase of equipment and in the design of facilities. Two-way observation mirrors are examples of this, where therapists have insisted that observation rooms be included as essential equipment to perform their work.

Mintzberg adds that the *structure and form of governance* of the professional organization, such as the formation of committees, are influenced by the formation of strategies by the different parties involved. Committee issues often revolve around issues of power.

As Mintzberg suggests, the cloak of professionalism is an important strategy tool in professional organizations. As a result, professionals in these organizations control much of their own work, leading to what Mintzberg describes as an inverse pyramid of power with the professionals up top and the administrators down below to serve them.

The games described earlier inevitably lead to several types of problems in organizations: problems of co-ordination, problems of discretion, and problems of innovation. Problems of co-ordination exist because professionals often act very independently from other professionals and support staffs in the organization. This leads to conflict and continual re-assessment of programs when individuals do not agree with the basic structures of these

programs. This also leads to problems of discretion when professionals “ignore not only the needs of their clients but also those of the organization itself. Many professionals focus their loyalty only to their profession, not on the place where they happen to practice it” (1990, p. 190). Problems of co-ordination and of discretion also relate to another type of problem, those of innovation, because innovations in social service organizations sometimes cut across different professions. Programs are most often designed to function in stable environments, and innovation may disturb this by creating unanticipated needs and pressures. Professionals thus often resist innovation by forcing new problems into old “pigeonholes” or ways of functioning because they do not want to break away from established routines or standards. This makes it very difficult for organizations to come up with creative solutions.

When professionals are subjected to strong pressures to solve these problems with bureaucratic solutions, and when they feel powerless to maintain their professional independence, a common strategy is to form a united front by unionizing.

“[W]e have a vicious circle of dysfunction. Bottom-up professional organizations are progressively transformed through increasing technocratic controls and administrative centralization into top-down machine ones; the response of the professionals is to seek unionization, which instead of arresting the process, only accelerates it.” (Mintzberg, 1989, p. 193)

Unionization may have the paradoxical effect of increasing a group’s power but at the same time undermining individual control over issues. Unionized professionals act through representatives they elect, bargaining directly with the administration of the organization. As a result, union representatives and senior administration often bypass middle-level administrators. “[O]nce these wedges are driven in and held fast by collective bargaining, the likelihood of removing them becomes remote” (p. 194). While professionals have a united front to represent their interests, they lose some individual autonomy or control over their work.

In summary, Mintzberg relates power to strategies by defining the different types of groups and activities that individuals engage in when facing organizational challenges in their organizations. Concerning professional organizations such as mental health centers, he finds that certain types of power and strategies (e.g., actions revolving around expertise) are more prevalent because of the nature of the work in these organizations. Administrators in profes-

sional organizations are likely to have to deal with strategies revolving around the cloak of professionalism and unionization.

A weakness in Mintzberg's model of strategy formation is that it is based principally on corporate organizations with only limited attention to professional organizations. In terms of applicability to human service organizations, it is difficult to confirm Mintzberg's findings because he did not examine small-scale or micro-level strategy formation of employees. We do not know, for example, what factors will influence strategy formation of small groups of employees. Finally, Mintzberg's examination focuses on large-scale historical reconstructions of strategy in organizations other than the human services sector.

Friedberg (1993) has criticized Mintzberg's categories as too mechanical and removed from reality because the focal point is on structure rather than on action. Mintzberg's categories would thus answer the question "To which category does this strategy belong?" rather than "How does this strategy work?" Also, power plays are understood as equilibrium of forces, which is a static and mechanical view of power relations. Whether or not one agrees with these criticisms, however, Mintzberg has pioneered the study of strategies by taking them away from the purely theoretical level and bringing them to the front of the stage of organizations.

The Power Relations and Games perspective includes the Strategic Model proposed by Crozier and Friedberg (1977; Friedberg, 1988, 1993). This paradigm of organizations brings together and articulates well the notions of power and strategy formation in organizations. Unlike the American origins of many perspectives, the strategic model originated in France, and it has become a widely accepted model of organizations. The authors believe that focusing on individual and group temperament, which is the mainstay of the human relations approach to organizations, cannot adequately explain manifestations such as work slowdowns. The authors criticize the human relations perspective of organizations for seeing the behavior of individuals as passive and led by forces beyond their control, and not seeing them as active makers of their destiny. In other words, Crozier and Friedberg see an organization's members as actively creating the reality they inhabit.

Crozier and Friedberg suggest that relationships exist at different levels. First, individuals are in relation to one another in organizations. Evidence of this is shown through their emotional and psychological involvement such as tension, aggressive behavior, and in

collaborative behavior. The formation of informal groups that often bypass the official hierarchy or structure of an organization also shows the existence of individual relationships. Besides being in relation psychologically and socially, individuals are in relation to one another through their job functions. Subordinate-superior relations are examples of this. Further, individuals will attempt to modify their job functions, within the constraints imposed by the rules of the organization, to avoid or escape the pressures or expectations of their colleagues and to maintain their margin of freedom.

Relationships also exist between the individual and the organization. The formal hierarchy and regulations of the organization, or its formal structure, place constraints on what individuals may and may not do. Individuals, for their part, also place certain constraints on the organization by controlling relations with its environment. Trade unions and professional associations that represent the employees of the agency and that put pressures on the agency concerning job security and professional issues are examples of relationships between individuals and the organization.

A third level of relationships exists between the organization and its environment. The environment comprises all elements not directly under the control of the organization but those nonetheless enter relationships with it. Pressure from the community or from funding sources such as the provincial government to establish certain intervention programs in human service agencies is an example of this. In the children's mental health center that is being studied here, evidence of a relationship with the environment is found in the pressures that various community groups put on the agency to have their cultural groups represented on the board of directors. Details will be presented in Chapter 4.

The three levels of relationships we have outlined above are the key to understanding power strategy formation. They can be analyzed using four key elements of organizations: *collective action*, *games*, *sources of uncertainty*, and *power* that were described earlier. First, organizations are seen as systems in which individuals and groups of individuals actively determine their own destiny. Second, the actors are collectively involved in a series of power games in which they evolve strategies that govern what they do. By *games*, the authors mean strategies that actors use to engage and manipulate resources and means, and that are used to control power relations while preserving some freedom to act. When exercising power, actors generate games. The actors use these strategies to gain whatever advantage is possible within the

constraining rules of the game. The authors call this a *concrete action system*, a containing system where games take place, and where conflicts, negotiations, alliances and interactions occur. Thus, there are games, rules for the games, and mechanisms of regulation.

Also, actors playing out the games in organizations are not equal. Some are more powerful than others because power is not evenly distributed. Power is defined by Crozier & Friedberg as the capacity of certain individuals to influence or act on other individuals, or to avoid being influenced or acted upon by them. The different sources of power that Crozier and Friedberg identify are:

- expertise or specialization of skills;
- control of the relations between an organization and its environment;
- control of the communication and information between different parts of the organization;
- authority and rules; formal or legal power.

These sources of power are *sources of uncertainty* because persons or groups in the organization are dependent on the individuals or groups who control these various sources of uncertainty. Thus, all strategies inevitably deal with an uncertain future because people don't have full knowledge of other persons' resources and motives (Friedberg, 1993). Thus, power strategies are closely related to the sources of uncertainty in an organization.

The notion of dependence mentioned above has received much attention and support from several authors (Mechanic, 1962; Jacobs, 1974; Pettigrew, 1975; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977; Kotter, 1979; Bacharach and Lawler, 1980; Pfeffer, 1992) and is tied to the notions of criticality, scarcity, and non-substitutability of resources and skills we discussed earlier.

In essence, the formal structure or hierarchy of an organization does not necessarily reflect the true nature of the power relationships within it. Informal processes also play a large role. An understanding of both is required.

In terms of operationalizing their model, Crozier & Friedberg's Strategic Model suggest that power relationships and strategy formation may be examined through four principal areas in an organization:

- who occupies the system's critical functions;

- the dominant forms of communication (i.e., secrecy and rumors, are often used to control or divert communication);
- the structure of the various games, or the ways in which games interact with one another;
- the emergence of problems or dilemmas that lead to temporary but highly active power games.

Through the elements mentioned above, the strategic model provides a useful way of examining what happens inside organizations by examining them from a relational point of view. Analysis of the organizational relationship provides a means to describe how an organization functions in terms of power relationships.

Linking relationships to change, Crozier & Friedberg explain change as an opportunity for strengthening or developing new relationships. These new relationships form new power games that are related to the four sources of power in organizations (expertise, control of relations with the environment, control of communication and information, and authority and rules). For the participants of the power games, these changes can be felt as dangerous because they modify or eliminate their tactics, strategies, sources of power and areas of uncertainty, thereby limiting their choice of actions and margin of freedom. Turbulent change can therefore be a threat to one's stability and power in a system because it continually displaces the sources of uncertainty, making the future very unpredictable for all actors.

Concerning change, Crozier and Friedberg (1977; Friedberg, 1993) find that strategy processes can be understood through the following principles:

- actors in organizations rarely have clear objectives in mind. They alter, remove, and discover new objectives as they go because of unpredictable consequences of their actions and those of others.
- actors are active in their strategies and are not directly determined by them. As Crozier and Friedberg state, even passivity can be the result of choices.
- while actors rarely have clear and unchangeable objectives in mind, this does not mean they behave irrationally. Instead of pursuing rational objectives, actors constantly pursue new opportunities when they engage in relationships.

- strategy has both offensive and defensive characteristics. Strategy is offensive when actors try to take advantage of opportunities to improve their situation. Strategy is defensive when actors try to maintain their margin of freedom.

Thus, strategy can include a wide variety of behaviors. For Crozier and Friedberg, strategy can be applied to most behaviors and situations because of these characteristics. The behavior of actors in a given situation relates to two principal dimensions. The first is the actor's personal history, referring to the experiences the actor has had that influenced his or her cognitive development, perceptions, and ways of entering into relationships. The second dimension concerns the constraints and the opportunities that come from participating in structured games in an environment of interdependence. These dimensions are tied into strategy formation because each actor estimates his or her chances of gaining or losing. Actors may adopt a losing strategy temporarily when faced with change, hoping that the game will turn in their favor in the longer term.

Change does not always imply negative events, however. As Crozier & Friedberg (1977) and Loye & Eisler (1987) state, change and turbulence do not just represent the destruction of what exists, but they also imply new growth. This means new opportunities for an organization to change and to realign power, and to learn new ways of dealing with change in the future (Leifer, 1989). By capitalizing on periods of turbulence, some actors in an organization may even gain advantage over others by taking risks they would not normally consider under non-turbulent conditions.

Examples of strategies that Crozier and Friedberg have identified in their research on organizations in France are the short-circuiting of communications, withholding and “doctoring” information, working-to-rule, disrupting operations, and claiming autonomy by using the cloak of professional expertise. These strategies can have profound effects on an organization's capacity to act on its goals of change. In Scheff's words (in Mintzberg, 1983, p. 192), these strategies can “stalemate a vigorous program of reform” in an organization.

In essence, Crozier and Friedberg's strategic model of change shifts the focus away from the individual (the focus of many of the perspectives of organizational change we have examined earlier) to the changing relationships and strategies that accompany transformations in organizations. Change involves much more than new boxes in an organizational chart. Change means that people learn new games and restructure their power relationships.

In other words, because actors behave differently during turbulent change, the games or strategies that they employ are key elements in understanding change.

Instead of starting from preconceived ideas about human nature under given conditions or contexts, the strategic action model allows us to explore the nature of the games played by individuals and groups yet discover the elements that organize a given context, whether they be cultural, affective, or material elements.

A criticism of Crozier and Friedberg's work is that it is not clear about how to study the games that people play in smaller organizations because it focuses on larger bureaucracies such as governments. Also, the authors do not expand on change from the point of view of turbulence (e.g., tumultuous events). They do not clarify how uncertainty relates to power in such circumstances, except to say there is manipulation of sources of uncertainty. This incites us to explore their theory further concerning how people use strategies in dealing with change, with a particular focus on uncertainty and turbulence.

Despite these limits, Crozier & Friedberg's model of organizations has received widespread support from several other researchers. Mintzberg (1983), for example, has expanded on some of Crozier & Friedberg's work by examining other types of organizations than French bureaucracies to provide further evidence strategy processes relate to the organizational games. Salancik & Pfeffer (1977) also have carried out research that supports these concepts, although their research focuses on industrial organizations. Further evidence of strategy formation supporting Mintzberg's and Crozier & Friedberg's models is found in coalition models (Bacharach & Lawler, 1980; Summers, 1986; Mannix, 1993; Garguilo, 1993) and in the field of family therapy (Selvini-Palazzoli, 1984). The principal models will be reviewed here to demonstrate how these concepts are useful to the study of strategy formation.

As explained earlier in this chapter, Bacharach & Lawler (1980) build on the resource dependency model first proposed by Emerson (1962) to focus on strategy formation on coalitions in organizations. Coalitions are groupings of persons or interest groups who are committed to a common goal, and that are based on joint action against other interest groups. Summers (1986), for his part, defines coalitions with the focus on resources: "a coalition is ... a temporary alliance of parties that involves the joint use of resources for promoting a common organizational interest" (p. 2). Mannix (1993, p. 2) explains coalitions as

“any subset of a group that polls its resources or units as a single voice to determine a decision for the entire group”. In essence, coalitions are collective vehicles for making decisions and exercising power.

Coalitions are formed to defend against real or imagined threats to one’s security, and as such represent one of the manifestations of power strategy formation. Summers (1986) studied coalition formation in management groups and found that strategic actions around coalition building can be viewed in three stages. First, a manager becomes a stakeholder in an issue, taking on the role of “organizer” by attracting others to participate in a collaborative effort or power game. As Bacharach and Lawler (1980) emphasize, the manager thus enters a new relationship or activates old ones. There are many reasons for becoming a stakeholder in an issue, such as an obligation of one’s position, a direct order, a critical event, entrepreneurial behavior of the manager, rewards and payoffs, or accidental conditions originating in the organization’s environment. Thus, a manager may build a coalition from self-interest or be pushed into forming one.

The second stage in coalition formation is the identification of potential coalition members. Managers may seek out others with complementary interests for the purpose of flowing resources, demands, or influence. The interdependent nature of the relationship is evident when we consider that power will be involved in this stage.

The third stage of coalition building occurs when managers begin mobilizing the coalition towards action. Because strategy formation in terms of coalitions occurs through the exchange between individuals, mobilizing members takes place through inducements across lateral and vertical levels of an organization (Summers, 1986). This use of power may include influence and persuasion to contribute to one’s coalition. Potential coalition partners may thus gain certain resources or access to them by joining the coalition.

Certain factors may affect the degree to which managers may mobilize potential partners. The structure of the organization is important in that the “taller” the hierarchy, the further away lower level actors are from persons who normally control resources and information and access to them. In organizations with a flatter organizational hierarchy, middle managers have wider access to members outside their immediate job areas because they are closer to most forms of power.

More recent and detailed studies of coalition building processes have revealed that groups with an unequal power balance between them are more likely to form coalitions than groups that are more equally balanced in terms of power (Mannix, 1993). Also found, however, was that unbalanced groups in terms of power had more difficulty reaching agreements than power balanced groups. Low power players in these groups tended to focus on protecting their position, while higher power players focused on demanding their “deserved” outcome. This led away from a group focus, reducing the likelihood of an integrative agreement for the group. Applied to professional organizations, this implies that therapists, who generally hold equal power when compared to one another, might form stronger units than groups comprising different hierarchical positions or levels. This also implies that coalitions may sometimes have a damaging effect to a group’s goals, thereby leading to further strategy formation.

A criticism that is leveled against coalition research is that coalitions are aimed more at the study of lateral relationships than of supervisor-subordinate relationships (e.g., coalitions are more likely to form between persons at the same level in an organization). Also, while coalitions may be studied readily in large organizations, their empirical application is less clear in smaller organizations such as community mental health centers because of the reduced number of actors and possibilities for forming coalitions. Additionally, the clearly managerial bias of the coalition studies leaves us in the dark concerning this type of strategy formation at other levels of organizations. While these weaknesses imply caution, however, we have no reason to believe that the concept of coalition formation cannot be adapted in some form or other to our study.

While studies on coalition formation provide input on strategy formation processes, there are other types of research focusing on power relations and games that merit attention here. Garguilo (1993) focuses on structural analysis to examine the different types of leverage or co-optation that actors use over others in organizations. The author examines one aspect of strategy formation, which he calls “two-step leverage” or “strategic co-optation”, which means that in some situations, actors use not only direct co-optation of other actors (through application of direct power such as authority over subordinates), but also indirect co-optation.

Gargiulo proposes a continuum of four types of co-optation that actors use in organizations. In *complex co-optation*, person A cultivates co-optation ties with person B, but s/he also cultivates co-optive ties with person C as a way of further securing control over B. *Two-step co-optation*, occurs when person A builds co-optive ties with person C as a way of controlling or constraining person B through indirect means. *Direct co-optation* occurs when person A builds relationships with B and does not involve a third person. Finally, *avoiding co-optation* occurs when person A performs his or her functions without building co-optive relationships with either person B or C, basically avoiding co-optive ties altogether.

In practice, Gargiulo suggests that two-step strategies are more likely to be observed in periods that are marked by conflict in an organization. In such situations, two-step maneuvers may be unavoidable because “once interdependent players ... start expressing conflicting views on crucial policy decisions, a smooth co-optive relationship between them is unlikely to arise (or to endure)” (p. 17). As to the types of organizations in which two-step co-optation is more likely to occur, the author suggests that it is a general phenomenon that varies across types of organizations. He adds that organizations that have a high degree of organizational politics, such as those that contain highly discretionary positions that do not fall under hierarchical rules, are more likely to see two-step leverage strategies. This would seem to imply that members of professional organizations such as community mental health centers are likely to involve this in their strategy formation.

Co-optation tells us several things about strategy formation. First, it supports what other authors have said about hierarchy in organizations. There are some positions that are not regulated by hierarchical rules, implying that power cuts across the boundaries and lines officially drawn by organizations. This would imply that strategy formation is not only a managerial activity and that attention must be given to other levels of organizations. Second, the existence of co-optation confirms that people will use both direct and indirect means of power on others. This means that some maneuvering takes place in concealed fashion or in ways that are not immediately apparent because they involve third parties. Third, human service organizations, which are often characterized by high levels of professional discretion that crosses hierarchical boundaries, are likely candidates for co-optation.

As with most other research reviewed so far, empirical application to the human service context is absent. Gargiulo examined co-optive relationships only in an agricultural

business firm in South America. Another weakness is that power strategy formation involves more than just coalition building and co-optation. The importance of the past history of members in the organization, the types of changes that occurred in the organization, and the importance of the context of the changes are minimized. Nonetheless, the concept of co-optation is an interesting one that should be explored further.

While most studies of coalition formation have taken place in corporate organizations, the field of family therapy (through the disciplines of psychology, social work, and sociology) has extended the concept of coalitions to families as organizations. The systemic family therapy model is particularly useful to analysis of power dynamics because it is based on methods in family therapy designed to foster change in dysfunctional family systems, despite multiple power struggles and strong resistance to change. As Kets de Vries and Miller (1984) say, “much of what has been written about dysfunctional family interaction and family communication patterns is directly relevant for providing insights into faulty superior/subordinate relationships in organizations” (p. 95). This implies that there may be parallels between family systems and business/mental health organizations. The work carried out by Selvini-Palazzoli *et al.* (1984) is particularly interesting because it extends the concept of coalition to include *alignments* between organizational members. It also goes beyond the boundaries of family therapy because the author has applied the concept to systems such as schools.

Selvini-Palazzoli is the leader of the Milan school of family therapy, which defines an organization as a structured system characterized by the functioning of its parts that can be differentiated from other organizations by the *games* it plays. At the risk of over-simplifying, Selvini-Palazzoli defines games as the relationships that coordinate the different parts of an organization. This is similar to Crozier and Friedberg’s (1977) and Mintzberg’s (1983) view of games that we discussed earlier. In this sense, all organizations, whether they are as small as families or as large as government agencies, are looked upon not just by their demographic characteristics but by their structures, rules, and games. Games are revealing of the way in which a group functions, and this is where the richness of this approach lies.

Organizations will always face a certain degree of instability or disorder. When this disorder stays within tolerable limits, the system will function properly and behavior patterns will remain predictable. As clinical research has shown, however, the stability of a system

often occurs at the great discomfort of one or more of its members, which creates relational problems within the family. For some families, this instability becomes part of their normal functioning and sometimes is desired by members because it becomes a coping mechanism. It keeps members who normally hold power, “on their toes”. In essence, we can find evidence of power games in families.

In terms of observing power relationships, we can sometimes find a “symptom” (e.g., anger, blaming, conflict) in one individual or a group of persons that represents a dysfunctional interaction somewhere else in the system (Minuchin, 1974; Selvini-Palazzoli *et al.*, 1984).

Selvini-Palazzoli *et al.* apply these concepts to larger systems such as human service organizations, and they provide a framework to examine clues as to how they function by looking at the power relationship between the members. People group and regroup during turbulent change. *Alignments* are examples of this. Alignments are defined by the way system members join or oppose one another in carrying out their functions, and they refer to how supportive or non-supportive of one another members are. *Coalitions* are alignments and occur when individuals engage with sympathetic persons against opponents to minimize or eliminate powerful resistance. *Triangulation* (Minuchin, 1974) is also a form of alignment and occurs when each of two persons draws in a third to ally with him or her against the other. Every movement that this third person makes causes one or the other partner to feel ganged upon. Because problems fail to be worked out between the first two persons, the third becomes part of the problem-solution process. In essence, it is through these types of alignments or regroupings that individuals strengthen their efforts against a formal and informal structure that they cannot handle alone. Thus, these different patterns of behavior provide evidence for the types of power relationships that individuals engage in. The literature across several disciplines is abundant in its support of the concept of alignments, especially of the formation of coalitions (Mechanic, 1962; Bacharach & Lawler, 1980; Pfeffer, 1981; Mintzberg, 1983; Summers, 1986; Mills & Murgatroyd, 1991; Kanter, 1992; Garguilo, 1993).

These patterns of behavior also are linked to the formal and informal rules, myths and beliefs that individuals have of the organization as a whole (Pettigrew, 1978; Kets de Vries and Miller, 1984; Mills & Murgatroyd, 1991; Hart, 1992), and to the rituals they engage in (Imber-Black, 1988, 1990). By examining the structural boundaries around people and

groups, also their rules, myths and beliefs that are an everyday part of organizational existence, these authors find that we can gain useful insight into the engagement of individuals with one another, and thus how they structure their relationships and games. Just as families have “rules” regarding interaction within the family, members of organizations also have “rules” about interaction within the organization. One common rule guiding managers, for example, is to place a boundary and rarely to talk about their management and personal problems with subordinates. This is based on the belief by some managers that talking about problems would weaken their position in the eyes of others, especially if these persons are subordinates. Conversely, subordinates may not be inclined to show their weak points to higher managers, even though they may discuss these openly with their peers. Another commonly held belief that guides behavior is that managers don’t know and understand the work of front-line staffs. Thus, rules and beliefs can influence coalition formation in organizations.

Selvini-Palazzoli’s approach examines the types of alignments that organizational members engage in. The emergence of alignments is evidence that individuals are trying to stabilize turbulence and uncertainty through games and power strategies. The model also emphasizes the importance of placing manifestations of strategy formation, or alignments, within a structural, social and cultural context. The family therapy perspective includes many of the elements discussed previously concerning strategy formation. It helps operationalize strategy formation by providing several levels of analysis. At the macro level, it examines the place of a group within the larger system, within the community, and within the societal context. At the micro level, it provides accurate descriptions of the actions and behaviors of individuals and groups. It also helps understand the dynamics between the visible and not-visible nature of power without hunting for psychological motives for the behavior. Thus, applied to organizations such as mental health centers, this model recognizes political and relational processes. Unfortunately, empirical application to organizations other than family systems and some school settings is lacking.

One further model in the Power Relations and Games perspective merits attention here because of the way it builds upon many of the concepts already mentioned, while maintaining a central focus on power and games. Based largely on Crozier & Friedberg (1977) and Mintzberg (1983), Frost (1987) focuses on the games that actors play at different levels

of organizations to explain power and politics. In the following section, we will borrow liberally from Frost's writings because of the comprehensive nature of his model.

Frost supports Crozier & Friedberg's view of organizational games as involving "social actors, payoffs, and a set of interpretive strategies that specify the rules, data, and successful outcomes in the game" (p. 527). Power games are more likely where conflict over control, struggles for collaboration, and uncertainty exist. This makes Frost's model particularly useful to the present research because of the closeness of these characteristics to the setting that is being studied.

There are four assumptions leading Frost's discussion about strategy formation:

- 1) organizational life is significantly influenced by the exercise of power by organizational actors;
- 2) power exists both on the surface level of organizational activity and deep within the structure of the organization;
- 3) communication plays a vital role in the development of power relations and the exercise of power;
- 4) the manipulation and exercise of power is expressed as organizational games or relational dynamics; power is embedded in organizational games.

Organizational games on the *surface level* of organizations involve the exercise of power by actors to get what they want from decisions, negotiations, and interpersonal interactions. This involves strategies by actors to confront others to gain their compliance, strategies to avoid resistance and to prevent the emergence of controversial issues, and strategies to resist the influence of others. These strategies can be used in downward relationships (e.g., interactions between supervisors and their subordinates), lateral relationships (e.g., interactions with peers), and upward relationships (e.g., interactions with persons at higher levels of organizations). Based on the resource dependency model discussed earlier, strategies revolve around resources that are *irreplaceable*, that are *central* to the work carried out in the organization, that are *pervasive* in that they are linked to the activities of many other actors in the organization, and that have *immediate impact* on the organization when the resources are withdrawn (Hinings, Hickson, Pennings, & Schneck, 1974).

Frost has compiled several types of strategies from prior research that demonstrates manipulation of power at the surface level. Kipnis, Schmidt and Wilkinson (1980), for ex-

ample, provide empirical evidence of seven power strategies related to surface games. These include reasoning (using facts to support an argument), coalition building (mobilizing people around a central issue), ingratiation (impressing leaders by adhering to behaviors and values thought to be desirable by them, using flattery, creating goodwill), bargaining (negotiating through exchange of benefits), assertiveness (using a forceful approach), using higher authority (gaining the support of people higher up in the organization), and sanctions (using rewards and punishments derived from the organization). Other power strategies that Frost has identified in the literature include appeals to altruism (“do it for the good of the company”), deceit (Wiseman & Schenck-Hamlin, 1981), and exploitation of one’s charisma. These have been supported by recent research carried out in the industrial context. (Yukl and Falbe, 1990; Barry and Shapiro, 1992; Falbe and Yukl, 1992; Yukl and Tracey, 1992; Guerin, 1995; Yukl, Kim and Falbe, 1996)

Regarding how games are played between different hierarchical levels, Frost indicates that actors involved in downward (supervisor-subordinate) power relationships tend to use assertiveness and sanctions to a high degree, and moderate use of ingratiation, bargaining, and appeals to higher authorities. Strategies are often dependent on the objectives of the supervisor, however.

“Supervisors report the use of ingratiation when assigning work to others, reasoning and assertiveness when trying to improve the performance of others, and reasoning tactics to gain acceptance of change.” (p. 523)

Members involved in upward (subordinate-supervisor) power relationships, on the other hand, have more limited power resources at their disposal when they want to influence persons higher-up.

“Actors are likely to engage in manipulative persuasion (the actor is open about the existence of his or her influence attempt but hides the true objective) or to use manipulation (the actor conceals both the intent and the fact that he or she is making an influence attempt). Strategies of reason, ingratiation, and coalition are likely to be used to get things accomplished.” (p. 524)

A reason for lower use of assertiveness in upward relationships is that managers view it as inappropriate and respond negatively to assertiveness strategies. (Yukl and Falbe, 1990) Research has shown that these tend to be associated with lower supervisor performance assessments and the subordinate’s promotability. (Thacker and Wayne, 1995)

There is evidence, on the other hand, that more neutral strategies such as reasoning in interactions with supervisors may lead to the supervisors inferring that reasoning is associated with effective interpersonal skills. Kipnis and Schmidt (1988) and Yukl and Tracey (1992), for example, find that a manager may consider an employee who provides logical arguments, presents factual evidence, and offers clear explanations to support his or her point of view as having effective interpersonal skills.

Thus, sanctions (taken in the liberal sense of working to rule and withholding or delaying services) are not likely to be used by lower levels because they are usually not available to them as a source of power, and because they may not have the desired effect when they are used.

Middle managers, for their part, might be described as having upward-downward power relationships because they must simultaneously manage subordinates and deal with persons at higher levels. They are often in a difficult position because their strategies are aimed at multiple levels in different directions. As Frost states, middle managers must often “go to bat” for their subordinates to maintain influence over them, all the while carrying out the orders from above. Frost provides no specific examples of strategies used by middle managers in upward-downward power relationships, although recent research has shown that strategies of risk taking and risk aversion may be linked to low aspirations or hopes of success. (March, 1988; Thaler & Johnson, 1990; Bolton, 1993; Greve, 1998)

Organizational members involved in lateral (peer-peer) power relationships tend to establish networks with peers (Kotter, 1985) and develop coalitions (Kanter, Stein & Jick, 1992). Strategies may invoke the use of reason by appealing to established rules to persuade members to settle differences, and appealing to higher authorities.

Organizational power games in *deeper levels* of organizations, for their part, are coded in cultural values, beliefs, and practices in and around organizations. This type of power is thus a real but mostly unperceived part of organizational functioning. Frost believes that manipulating deep power is not easily accomplished because it originates in relationships between actors at an earlier point in the history of the organization. It is difficult to predict and control cultural aspects of an organization, for example, when the culture of an organization has been evolving for some time. Deep level strategies are associated with language, ceremonies, symbols and settings (p. 523). Actors may consciously attempt to use these strategies to

disguise power relationships, to increase the legitimacy of their decisions, and to encourage others to share in the meaning they wish to convey about their actions.

Some aspects of deep level power are difficult to use in strategy formation, because they are so deep within the organization.

“Deep level power is embedded in complex terrain... Furthermore, some aspects of this kind of power are likely to be so deeply buried that they cannot be understood, tapped, and manipulated from the surface of organizations. We may be able to explicate deep structure power, but there may be some residual that is so much a part of us that we cannot gain enough ‘distance’ to discover and understand it all.” (p. 525)

Strategies and games regarding deep structure power thus remain difficult to pin down, and this is compounded by the fact that little literature has probed the question (Frost, 1987). Nonetheless, some research exists that leads us to understand the basic nature of these games. Deetz (1985) and Conrad & Ryan (1985), for example, find that naturalization, neutralization, legitimation, and socialization are political dynamics occurring at deep levels. *Naturalization* serves to “depict existing relations as the natural outgrowth of events, as part of natural law, and prevents discussion of them” (Frost, 1987, p. 533). *Neutralization*, on the other hand, is a way of embedding or hiding one’s values by treating one’s position as if it were value-free. Assessing another person’s activities through quantitative formulations that are defined as rational, value free, and thus neutral, is an example of this. *Legitimation*, for its part, includes using higher-order explanations that cannot be questioned. By invoking loyalty to the organization or sacrifice for the good of the organization, for example, power holders are able to advance their ideas and manipulate other persons, even if the ideas are not in the best interests of these persons. Finally, *socialization* is the fourth dynamic of deep structure games, which is accomplished through “mechanisms of learning and orientation that shape desired attitudes, behaviors, and interpretive schemes of some players to the benefit of others” (p. 533). Raven, Schwarzwald and Koslowky (1998) support the notion of deep level dynamics when discussing issues of fairness, reciprocity (“You owe something to me because I have done something for you”), and equity (“I have really put a lot of myself into this.”)

In essence, the key to Frost’s model is that games may occur at surface and deeper levels, and that actors sometimes tap both levels in forming strategies. Frost cites an example

from an ethnographic study carried out by Rosen (1985) in an advertising agency, where senior management manipulated the language, gestures, and the context of a breakfast ritual (deep structure) to ensure acceptance of the structure, goals and practices of the organization (surface structure) by employees. In this case, the executive favored one social reality over others and tried to impart this view of the world to others through strategies at the surface and deep levels. Others such as Raven, Schwarzwald and Koslowski (1998) have equally examined power sources and strategies that are not apparent at the surface level but that invoke the use of norms to increase social pressure. The experimental aspect of Raven, Schwarzwald and Koslowski's study and its leanings toward purely psychological definitions of power, however, make it difficult to apply directly to the context of the present research.

In summary, Frost's model builds upon many of the important elements described earlier while maintaining a focus on power in organizations. This model allows us to understand the interplay between power and strategies at different levels of organizations by examining the games that are played. An advantage is that the model allows us to locate games by specifying the different types of strategies within them, thereby helping us examine the process of strategy formation as it unfolds. Another strength is that there is a clear focus on power relationship across organizations, not only from the top. Strategy formation is thus conceptualized as an organization-wide phenomenon and process, and the model proposed by Frost provides theoretical and methodological tools that allow us to search for evidence on how strategies relate or mesh between levels.

Some questions remain unanswered in Frost's explanation of strategy processes, however. While we know that at the surface level, different tiers of an organization may possess different types of power, and that consequently they manipulate power in different ways, there is little empirical evidence to compare use of deep level power by actors at different levels.

Another weakness in Frost's approach is that it has little empirical application to the human services sector. As with most other studies on strategy formation, the focus is clearly on industrial types of organizations that are quite different from human services organizations, as was argued earlier. While the model is largely based on a compilation of prior industrial research, it nonetheless provides a basic framework for operationalizing existing theory in the human services domain. This opens the door for the present research to examine

some of the differences in using power at different hierarchical levels, with specific application to human service organizations.

2.4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The literature review outlined in this chapter indicates there has been extensive conceptual development in the area of strategy-formation. To paraphrase Dufour (1991), the number of perspectives presented above is explained by the diversity of processes at play in strategy formation. It is noteworthy, however, that the field remains fragmented despite the richness of the literature, and no single model adequately explains everything about strategy formation. Also, most prior literature has focused on one set of actors (top management) and one general type of organization (industrial/corporate) much to the exclusion of others. There has been little application to the human services sector.

Different factors may explain these gaps in the literature. First, each approach tends to focus on different variables, and this makes an overall view difficult to achieve. Also, some concepts relating to power span disciplinary boundaries and have application in several fields of study. We have seen examples that strategy formation is a cultural phenomenon, an analytic process, a historical process, a political process, a leverage process, and so on. Each perspective has sought to develop a vocabulary and concepts proper to its group. This has led to some incompatibility between perspectives, not only in vocabulary but often in philosophy.

While the management literature has been traditionally strong in describing the contents and effects of change, it remains weak in operationalizing such concepts and analyzing the processes behind change. Only recently has there been evidence of research with the focus on processes. The literature also shows a weakness in studying processes other than at the management level. The applied study of surface and deep structure power that we will carry out in the present research will thus begin to fill this gap.

Despite varied in its explanations of strategy processes in the literature, there are nonetheless several common threads that Frost's model pulls together. Not all theories focus on power, but most recognize that power is an inherent element in organizations, and that conflict and collaboration are part-and-parcel of the way people function in them. *Power* is the ability of persons to influence the behaviors of others, to change the course of events, to

overcome resistance, and to get people to do things they would not normally do. *Strategies* are sets of decisions and actions over time that are aimed at gaining something, minimizing losses, or maintaining the status quo. *Power strategy formation* refers to the ways that strategies are used to manipulate power sources and situations of uncertainty. Power and strategy formation are intimately tied through the relationships that people engage in. Power is an integral part of life in organizations, and strategy formation is an important manifestation that power exists.

Three characteristics are deemed necessary for power to exist: a source of power must be essential to others in the organization, scarce, and not easily replaceable. Additionally, there are three dimensions to all sources of power: dependency, relationships, and sanctions. These are the starting points for any analysis of power.

Another important element is that persons are primarily active determinants of their destiny. In terms of power, this means that they are not passive beings experiencing power. They are active in the formation of power, its structures, and its environment. It follows that they actively work at making strategies and discovering others. In essence, everyone influences everyone in an organization. We believe this is equally true in non-profit organizations and in industrial/corporate organizations.

Strategy formation must be examined in a relational sense. Attempts to focus solely on individual characteristics cannot provide adequate explanations for what occurs in terms of power strategy formation. In essence, power only arises and can be observed through social interactions, whether among individuals or social units such as coalitions. At a fundamental level, power strategy formation should be understood as the activation of persons who are in interaction around the manipulation of sources of power in different levels of organizations.

The context in which strategies take shape is very important to understanding processes that are happening. As emphasized by Pettigrew (1985), Waema & Walsham (1990), and Dufour (1991), “context” must include the internal and social context of organizations, historical antecedents, the content of what is happening, and processes that are occurring within the context of the strategies.

While not all behaviors of individuals and groups are strategic in organizations, most actions can be tied in some way to a pattern of action over time. Additionally, as Friedberg

(1993) and Mintzberg (1983) have explained, it is illusory to think that strategy formation is completely calculated through objectives that are planned ahead of time. Sometimes, behavior is only considered strategic after the fact. The study of power strategy formation therefore includes the study of behaviors of people, whether or not they consider their behavior as strategic at the time.

No single discipline can explain fully the strategy formation processes occurring in organizations. The interdisciplinary model proposed by Frost transcends this problem, at least to some degree, by examining relational issues and incorporating many key elements discussed above. The model thus tries to bridge the gap between disciplines, and as a result, leads to a better understanding of the power processes in human service organizations. It also allows us to study power strategy formation from an applied perspective that is grounded in the day-to-day life of organizations, as opposed to a purely theoretical or laboratory approach.

Concerning the present study, the fact that the literature focuses principally on industrial organizations does not imply that the findings cannot be applied to human service organizations. It is more likely that the concepts have some value and that they shed some light on the processes occurring within them. This research examines how these concepts can be applied to the human service field.

Thus, through a power relations and games model of power strategy formation, this research examines what the bases of individual and group power are in a human service organization, what power games exist, how these games are played, and how the games relate to one another at different hierarchical levels. Covering about three years in the history of the selected organization, this dissertation analyzes data from a mental health center that has gone through turbulent change and that is still feeling the effects of these changes. From a combination of twenty-eight initial interviews and several follow-up interviews, observations, and reviews of the organization's documents, data were available on how staffs at all levels perceived the changes and acted upon them. The next chapter describes the methodological design used to reach the research objectives.

Chapter Three

Research Methods

“There are neither good nor bad methods but only methods that are more or less effective under circumstances in reaching objectives on the way to a distant goal.”
(George Homans, 1949)

Studying the relational experiences of employees in a turbulent organizational context poses several methodological problems for the field researcher. These problems arise from the complexity of the concept of power strategy formation and from the difficulty of studying organizations in general. In the following section, the general research approach of this study will be presented. Data collection will be described, followed by the approach for presenting results and data analysis. There will be a discussion regarding dealing with potential biases.

3.0 RESEARCH APPROACH

An issue faced at the beginning of the research was whether power strategy formation should be studied using quantitative or qualitative methods, or both. Because the goal was to describe the unfolding power strategy formation, a research strategy that emphasized

the points of view of the employees involved and the nuances of how they deal with turbulent change was selected. The research also needed to focus on what significance the employees gave to their actions and those of others, and also to interpret these in the historical context of the organization. While qualitative and quantitative research methods are not mutually exclusive (Friedberg, 1993; Van Maanen, 1979), the focus was principally on a qualitative exploratory research approach.

Quantitative methods are by far the most frequently used in the field of strategy research. A survey of top management journals (*Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Journal of Management*, *Management Science*, *Strategic Management Journal*, for example) showed that the overwhelming majority of studies use quantitative methods (Schwenk and Dalton, 1991). The qualitative approach to research, on the other hand, is being used more and more in the field of management and organizations (Podsakoff and Dalton, 1987; Demers, 1990; Gummesson, 1991). This is surprising given that qualitative methods have been employed in other fields for decades. This may be a holdover from earlier decades when qualitative research was either “not theoretical enough or the theories were too ‘impressionistic’ ” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.15). Even from early work in the field, nonetheless, qualitative research was recognized for its “sensitivity in picking up everyday facts about social structures and social systems” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.15). Also, the “qualitative method was the only way to obtain data on many areas of social life not amenable to the techniques for collecting quantitative data” (p.17). Furthermore, “qualitative researchers tend to lay considerable emphasis on situational and often structural contexts, in contrast to many quantitative researchers, whose work is multivariate but often weak on context” (Strauss, 1987, p.2).

A few authors are notable for their contributions to qualitative research. Several well-known authors, such as Mintzberg (1979, 1983), Morgan (1986), Pettigrew (1973), and Chanlat (1990), to name a few, have sought to establish a qualitative approach in its own right in the study of organizations.

Thus, this research is essentially qualitative. To paraphrase Dufour (1991), the researcher’s personal interests in understanding the daily life of social service organizations from a front-line perspective led the choice of the broad research question and the research

strategy. As stated earlier, the research seeks to understand the relational experiences of employees in an organization, with emphasis on power strategy formation in a turbulent organizational context. This research goal was selected after having reviewed the literature on the subject, and also after pondering questions about personal experiences with such an organization.

Given the general objective of this study to explore and develop concepts, insights, and understanding from patterns in the data rather than to test hypotheses, a qualitative analysis was chosen because it is highly appropriate, practical and effective for this kind of study (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984; Yin, 1989). The selected research strategy is capable of capturing some intangible aspects of the process of power strategy formation, the points of view of the actors involved, the nuances of how they deal with turbulent change, and the context in which events occurred. As such, the research is at least partly “grounded” in the data and not necessarily in prior theory (Friedberg, 1993; Strauss, 1987; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). At the risk of oversimplifying the term, “grounded theory” refers to a general style of research “without any particular commitment to specific kinds of data, lines of research, or theoretical interests”. It uses techniques such as coding to generate conceptual categories from the data (as opposed to verifying only if data fit into pre-existing conceptual categories), as well as writing researcher memos about preliminary findings, opinions and initial conclusions (even if these initial conclusions seem to be remote), and constant comparison of data as analysis progresses (Strauss, 1987, p. 5). The researcher thus has an obligation to compare on an ongoing basis all overlaps, associations, similarities and differences within single sources of data and between them. If data do not fit into existing categories or explanations, then categories are modified or new ones created instead of discarding data that do not “fit”. This process continues as data are “checked out during succeeding phases of inquiry” (p.17). When the researcher arrives at a point where analysis no longer contributes to discovering anything new about a category, then that category is said to be “saturated”, and analysis continues until saturation in other categories. This ensures “conceptual development and density” (p. 5). Thus, the process is one not only of organizing data but also of organizing ideas or concepts that emerge from the data analysis.

In essence, inductive qualitative methods such as grounded theory start from the actor's experiences to reconstruct the particular characteristics of the field. Priority is thus put on discovering what is in the field and on developing descriptive and interpretative models that “stick” to the characteristics of this field. (Friedberg 1993)

The following sections will discuss the application of this qualitative approach to the organization studied. The points that are addressed are the following:

- the development of the research topic
- the methods of collecting the data
- the selection of the study site and persons who were interviewed
- the methods of analyzing the data
- the possible sources of bias and limits of this research.

3.1 STEPS IN COLLECTING THE DATA

Selection of the research site

The Northern Mental Health Centre¹ was chosen as a study site for several reasons. First, it is an organization whose employees have recently experienced turbulent change due to a structural transformation, a split from a psychiatric hospital, a new community mandate, and severe economic constraints. Second, an initial inquiry made with potential candidates ensured at least twenty to twenty-five participants.

For practical reasons, a single site was chosen because of issues of consistency of the information gathered. Only a limited number of persons could be interviewed because of the complexity of the subject. Analysis of a larger number of interviews and accompanying observations, materials and notes would not have been practical for a single researcher. Also, the researcher was able to use his personal influence as a former employee in the organization to “dig into” that site, making access to the significance of the data higher than it would have been in an unfamiliar site.

The history and context of the organization ensure that there is ample variability between subjects within the single site. The Northern Mental Health Centre is physically and operationally divided into five separate units, four of them clinical (Anglophone #1, Anglo-

¹ The name has been changed to maintain anonymity.

phone #2, Francophone, and Native), the other an administrative unit. Each of these units, or clinical teams as they are called in the organization, has their own history, context and way of functioning. The Francophone team, for example, has historically been apart from the other units physically and in terms of clinical orientation. The Francophone team has seen the greatest changes in terms of clinical approach and programming over the years. Some of its former personnel, for example, spurred the community in 1987 into demanding independent Francophone services geared to their culture. It is also the only unit that maintained a community day-treatment program during the turbulent changes that occurred in 1990. Anglophone team #1, on the other hand, comprises the staffs that have worked with the organization the longest. It is by far the most senior unit in terms of history with the organization. Anglophone team #2, for its part, is distinguished by having the largest number of junior staffs in terms of union seniority. The Native unit, unlike the other teams, comprises only two staff members for the moment. It came onstream only in 1992. Presently it is on the same site as administration. It does not have the turbulent history of the other units, although it is as driven by political and cultural forces as are the others.

In addition to differences between the teams in the organization, there are also differences between the staffs in general. About half of the employees (about twenty) of the Northern Mental Health Centre were employed by the former psychiatric hospital before the organizational split in 1990. The other half of the employees, ranging from upper administration to therapists to clerical staffs, were hired after 1990 and have a shorter experience in the organization. Thus, there are differences in the levels of turbulence that employees have experienced. The researcher used these differences to advantage when comparing and analyzing the data. These differences will become apparent in Chapters Five and Six when comparing different groups of staffs in terms of power strategy formation.

In essence, there was ample variability in terms of employment history, relationships with management, and levels of turbulence in the organization to warrant study of a single site. Also, as stated earlier, practical issues meant that the number of interviews had to be limited. Perhaps most important in the choice of a study site was the researcher's own familiarity with the history of the agency, its personnel, and the changes that had occurred prior to the study. While participation was voluntary, the researcher's personal knowledge of

the participants and their experiences increased participation and sped the process of establishing trust as a researcher in the setting.

Participants in this type of research must be able to verbalize about the phenomenon being studied, to identify it, to agree to explore and to share their personal experiences for research purposes (Lapalme, 1991). From an epistemological point of view, the participants in this study were not naive informers, but equals with the researcher in terms of reconstructing and reflecting on their experiences.

Another practical reason for choosing the Northern Mental Health Centre was the availability of written material about the site. The researcher had obtained several government documents about the proposed design and functioning of the new mental health centre during his employment at the psychiatric hospital.

Thus, personal knowledge, access to documents, access to staffs and the ability to relate to and understand the events were important principal factors in choosing the site.

Gaining entry to the research site

As Taylor and Bogdan (1984) state, gaining access to an organization is often one of the difficult and long steps a researcher undertakes in a study. Van de Ven (1987, p.333) also emphasizes this in his writings: “If organizational participants perceive little potential use of a study’s findings, there is little to motivate their providing access and information to an investigator.” Gaining access to the mental health centre in the present study was not guaranteed nor immediate, despite knowing many of the employees personally and having first-hand knowledge of the issues they faced.

In May 1990, while still an employee of the psychiatric hospital, and just six months before the transfer of staffs between the old and new organizations took place, the researcher wrote a letter to the executive director of the new organization asking permission to study his agency. Permission was granted on the condition that before the data collection phase, discussion take place with the management of the organization about the research.

In August 1992, after a telephone conference with a group of senior and middle managers, entry into the organization was granted. It was noteworthy that during the telephone conference, several questions were raised concerning the possible effect of the re-

search on the staffs. Given that the researcher had personal relationships with many staffs and that he had intimate knowledge of the organization, some managers feared this would “resurrect buried skeletons”, “stir up old emotions”, or “revive old wounds”, to use their own words. They also stated that “much energy had been put into working through or putting aside past conflicts and fears”. There was even a suggestion that someone else carry out the interviews in the researcher’s place.

These concerns were addressed by ensuring that the content of the interviews would probably be enhanced because of the researcher’s personal knowledge of the organization. The study could benefit them because it might help staffs understand the difficulties the organization was going through. In this regard, the research would be useful because it would allow staffs to vent their feelings concerning emotionally charged issues to an outsider who understood their difficulties. The management team was reassured that the researcher would be sensitive about reviving the past. Full access to the organization was then granted.

Data collection

The importance of having several sources of evidence for data collection in qualitative studies to increase the validity of the findings is well documented (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Miles and Huberman, 1984; Yin, 1989; Grawitz, 1990). Data collection in the present research relied on four sources.

Personal recall of events: The first method was the researcher’s personal recall of the events that had occurred between 1984 and 1990, while an employee of the psychiatric hospital. While in the last months of employment at the hospital, the researcher began jotting down some of the historical events that had been important to him as a therapist and then as a manager. Dates, names, and details of events that were thought to be important to a potential research were written in a personal logbook. This information helped put together facts around the twists and turns of the organization during the divestment of the mental health centre.

Review of official documents: The second method of data collection was an examination of official documents relating to the organization’s structure, mandate, and history of the turbulent changes. This included a historical reconstruction of events, which has been

used successfully by other researchers in organizations (e.g., Mintzberg, 1985; Demers, 1990).

The researcher began collecting documents before leaving the organization in 1990, and made copies of public documents believed helpful in reconstructing the historical and political context of the organization. Also, the researcher was given a variety of documents such as annual reports, service plans, job descriptions, a Board of Directors training manual, a working document on leadership in organizations, and a few memorandums from the Ministry of Community and Social Services at the beginning of the interviews in 1993. Although this method of data collection was not as comprehensive as the other methods used (interviews and participant observation), it was necessary to enhance understanding of the context of the turbulent changes. It also helped structure the interviews in that participants were asked to provide explanations of their understanding of these documents. Review of these documents thus helped corroborate and augment evidence from other sources such as interviews. When documentary evidence was contradictory to other sources instead of corroboratory, this pushed the researcher to explore the differences further (Yin, 1989).

In-depth interviews: The third and primary method of gathering or “producing” data (Rhéaume & Sévigny, 1988) involved in-depth semi-structured interviews and follow-up telephone calls. As Crozier and Friedberg (1977) state, analysis of power strategies in an organization requires that primary emphasis be put on the experiences of the participants. It was pointless in this study to examine power relationships without talking to those who experienced them.

The interviews were semi-structured as they directed the participants to certain subject material. An interview guide helped keep a focal point. A fixed questionnaire was eliminated in order to get as close to the participants as possible, and to grasp the essence and nuances of their experiences. This left room for key data to emerge and to explore any unusual data.

While having some structure, the interviews nonetheless focused on the experiences of the participants as they wished to relay them. This allowed the participants to express in their own words how they experienced turbulent change and how they maintained or modified their power relationships within the organization. This type of interview had the advan-

tage of not being limited to preset and unchangeable standardized questions, thus allowing exploration of unexpected issues that arose. We did not expect that issues relating to the past, for example, would arise so frequently and with so much emotion.

Flexibility in the interviews allowed exploration of this in some detail, inciting the interviewees to think about and discuss the process of turbulent change. It also allowed them to elaborate on material *they* felt was important about this issue. A list of questions that framed the interviews are presented in Appendix B. These questions are based on prior personal knowledge of the organization, on the literature concerning the process of strategy formation, on a review of documents about the agency and its political context, and on questions other researchers have used in their own studies (e.g., Dufour, 1991).

Participants in the study included staffs who had been employed with the new mental health centre for at least six months and who had gone through at least one recent turbulent period in the organization's life. They included persons at all levels of the agency, from upper and middle administration, to therapists and clerical support staffs. In keeping with the findings of the literature review, which found that much of the existing research focused primarily on management, non-management employees were included because they experienced the turbulent changes as much as managerial staffs. As Mintzberg (1989) has shown, employees at all levels of the organization holding power and playing games characterize professional bureaucracies. Including non-management personnel in the research was thus very important to understanding strategy formation.

Regarding "turbulent change", the term means change that has a disruptive, profound, and permanent effect on the structures and power relationships of an organization, thus introducing great uncertainty in an organization and its environment. Turbulent change is characterized by its menacing nature to employees (e.g., job security, role, working conditions, leeway in job), and the inability of these employees to formulate clear short-term and long-term goals and to define the means to attain these goals.

By keeping the cut-off point for participation in the research at a minimum six months of employment with the organization, the participants had time to experience change within the organization and to gain a sufficient grasp of its functioning to be able to relate to the research objectives. This period was based on prior discussions with some par-

ticipants, who said that it took about six months in the organization before they began understanding the pace and nature of the changes.

At the time of the data collection, the organization that was studied comprised forty-eight (48) employees divided into one administrative unit and four clinical teams. The administrative team consisted of the Executive Director, the Clinical Director, a finance director, and a person in charge of clerical or support staffs in administration and across the organization. Each of the other four units were clinics situated in offices across the city, and each was comprised of one team leader reporting to the Executive Director, seven to ten clinical staffs and one or two support staffs/secretaries. While most clinical staffs were therapists, others were attached to special mental health programs such as prevention.

Twenty-eight individual interviews were carried out during a three-week period in January 1993. The reason for choosing this time frame was that it was a turbulent period and was convenient for the participants. The Clinical Co-ordinator of the organization, who was the contact person for the research, had circulated the research summary to all staffs and canvassed them about their willingness and availability to participate in the research. Twenty-eight staffs agreed to participate. Because of scheduling difficulties, one interview was carried out by telephone after leaving the research site. Participants included three senior managers, three middle managers, eighteen therapists, and four clerical staffs.

The interviews lasted from 1 to 2½ hours, with the average being 1½ hours, and they were held in each participant's office. Two of the interviews also included professionals who were former employees prior to the divestment, who had been with the organization for many years, and who helped put the history of events leading up to the divestment into perspective. Their interviews provided information from an outside perspective.

Each interview began with a brief reminder of the goals of the research and the confidential aspects of the study. Each participant signed a "Consent for Tape Recording" (Appendix A) and then taping began with a tape recorder. One participant refused to be recorded on tape. For this interview, the participant permitted written notes as the interview progressed.

The first question in all interviews was about the participant's current job functions and title. This allowed the researcher to place the interviewees in their current context and

also to break the ice for those participants who did not know the researcher prior to the interview. Each interview then continued with a start-up question: *“If you were to describe your organization’s functioning in a few words, what three words would you use?”* This start-up question helped to frame the research for the interviewees, to stimulate discussion, and to begin exploration of their experiences.

Participants were occasionally prompted with additional comments or questions when clarification or more information were needed, or to explore important issues that arose during the interview. In line with ensuring that the participants reflected on their experiences, the researcher viewed his role as one of allowing the interviewee a great deal of latitude in expressing themselves, but nonetheless one where the researcher was active and moved the process forward. Even though the interviews were taped, notes also were taken to help as memory aids during later research phases.

After each interview, a one-half page summary of the interview was prepared which addressed five key questions:

- What persons, events, or situation were involved?
- What were the main themes or issues in the interview?
- Which research questions were central to the interview?
- What new hypotheses, speculations, or guesses were suggested by the interview?
- Where should energy be placed in the next interview, and what sorts of information should be sought? What are the target questions for the next interview?

This procedure is based on Miles and Huberman’s (1984) work that allows cycling back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new data. Miles and Huberman see this as a “healthy” method because it allows correction of blind spots that may arise as the research progresses. These sheets were not meant to be exhaustive, but they represented a first reduction of the data that would allow retrieval of information quickly and act as a guide for the following interviews.

Also after each interview, notes and impressions of the interview were converted into “write-ups” of the session to help preserve and clarify their meaning and context. As Miles and Huberman state, it is important to write these notes as close as possible to the in-

terview because general field notes contain only one-half or less of the actual content of the session.

One of the sources of bias introduced by personal interviews is poor recall of events and inaccurate articulation (Yin, 1989; Dufour, 1991). While a few of the interviewees had minor difficulties remembering exact dates of events, they generally described most events quite easily because many events had occurred in the months prior to the interviews. Recalling events thus did not present any problems because in most cases, memories of organizational changes that had occurred were still vivid, making it easy to come up with examples.

Participant observation. A fourth source of data was loosely based on participant observation, which provided additional insight into the dynamics of the organization. This helped the researcher gain access to events that would have been otherwise inaccessible, and it also provided some opportunity of perceiving reality from the viewpoint of someone *inside* the organization instead of external to it (Yin, 1989). As Patton (1990) states,

“The participant observer is fully engaged in experiencing the setting under study while also trying to understand that setting through personal experience, observations, and talking with other participants about what is happening.” (p. 207)

When possible, the researcher interacted with staffs outside the formal interview context and took notes of formal and informal interactions among staffs. This occurred during the three-week interview period in January 1993. In observing their activity, the researcher noted who was involved, what was being done and said by staffs, and how they went about what they normally do. This information was useful in learning about the formal and informal patterns of communication, the dominant forms of communication, who occupies the critical functions of the organization, and how rules, myths, and beliefs play in power relationships. This supplemented information that was gathered through the review of the official documents and individual interviews. Personal information from personal experience with the history of the organization also was used. Staffs were fully aware of the role of the researcher in the organization. As with notes taken during individual interviews, notes taken from participant observation became an integral part of the analysis.

Personal knowledge of the organization and acquaintance with many of the employees eased the researcher’s integration into the work setting. Nevertheless, to paraphrase Pat-

ton (1990), the researcher had to avoid being so intrusive or predictable in his observations that every time someone saw him coming they knew what was going to be asked. To counteract this, natural opportunities were sought to engage the participants in informal interviews to find out from them what had been occurring in the agency and what significance they attached to events. There also was social chitchat with employees who had not seen the researcher for more than two years, asking questions concerning the doctoral studies. This was a very normal process that was encouraged. Thus, unstructured times in lunchrooms, at coffee breaks with the employees, and in the hallways were considered valid sources of information. Additionally, through direct involvement with participants in formal and informal ways, the researcher observed not only the structured activity of the organization but also what took place on the periphery of formal activity.

There are potential biases introduced by participant observation. The researcher was careful to avoid certain dynamics, such as assuming certain attitudes or being forced into a position of advocacy, which would have been contrary to the original intention of carrying out an exploratory study. Under such circumstances, research has shown that some participant observers become so involved in the dynamics of the organization that they become a supporter of a group of persons in the organization (Yin, 1989). This would have been quite easy given the researcher's personal acquaintance with many staffs. Patton (1990), for his part, warns that people behave differently when they are being observed or evaluated than they would if no observation were taking place.

Several steps were taken to counter these biases. First, the researcher's role and expectations, and how data were to be used, were explained to the participants. Also, while engaging in discussions concerning highly charged issues with some staffs, the researcher avoided letting his own opinions lead the interviews. This was verified through the verbatim transcripts. Second, the researcher used a personal logbook or journal to describe daily experiences in their context. This helped increase awareness of personal biases when analyzing the data (Miles and Huberman, 1984; Yin, 1989).

3.2 METHODS OF ANALYZING THE DATA

As in many other research projects, presenting the findings for this study offered several challenges. The first challenge was the huge volume of the data of more than one thousand pages of transcripts, notes, documents and other materials gathered during the research process.

A first run-through of the data produced 87 coding categories, combined from prior theoretical categories and adding new categories as data analysis progressed. This was reduced to approximately 40 categories in a second analysis of the transcripts because some codes were combined with others that were similar or were eliminated because they were less relevant to the study than first thought.

While this study does not focus on quantitative analysis of the interviews, there were nonetheless about 600 references to the sources of power in the transcripts. Additionally, there were over 1000 references to strategies that staffs had used or perceived that others had used. These high numbers are not surprising given the fact that power was such a fact of life for the participants, in some cases on a daily basis for several years. The investment that the participants had in power issues in the organization was considerable, as described by one participant:

“I think that this agency, more than a lot or more than most, has been consumed with just this topic for about three or more years. It’s something that we talk a lot about, so it’s something that we kind of developed a fluency or some degree of comfort about conceptualizing about power.” (*Therapist*)

A second challenge was organizing all the data and coded material into a coherent explanation of the process of power strategy formation. As Pfeffer (1992) states, there is no final or correct way of doing this, even when a single organization is studied. As power was integral to the day-to-day organizational life of the participants, comparisons were made through different ‘slices’ of the data to provide crosschecks for analysis. From the data, it seemed important to compare staffs who had been employed with the psychiatric hospital prior to the organizational split in 1990 and who transferred to the new organization, with staffs that were hired by the new organization in or after 1990. This level of comparison was important because it helped contrast the experiences of the participants who had gone through the organizational change with those who did not have a long history with the or-

ganization. For reasons of clarity and brevity, staffs hired before the organizational split in 1990 will be referred to as “veterans”, while employees hired in or after 1990 will be called “newcomers”. Participants included thirteen newcomers and eighteen veterans.

A second level of comparison was based on the researcher’s review of the literature, which showed differential use of power sources and strategies along hierarchical lines. In the present study, this has been operationalized in terms of comparing senior administrators (n=3), team leaders (n=3), therapists (n=18), and clerical staffs (n=4) in their power sources and strategies. Such groupings maintained the anonymity of the participants, who would otherwise have been identified through their individual comments.

A third level of comparison of strategies was between the different satellite teams comprising the organization, which is divided into four separate physical sites. Comparing data across these three levels (length of employment as measured by a cutoff point, position within the organization, and physical work site) thus permitted analysis from several angles.

The method of analysis was based on Miles and Huberman’s (1984) and Strauss’ (1987) methods of qualitative analysis because this represented a practical way of reducing the large amount of data to a more manageable size. These authors have written extensively on the topic and are regarded as leading experts on this kind of analysis.

Collecting four sources of data meant that a large amount of data was gathered. The tape recordings of the interviews were typed verbatim. Each participant’s typed transcript was sent to them in sealed envelopes because many of them had asked for a copy of their interview. None of the participants asked for corrections to the transcripts, but several called to describe further events that had occurred since the end of the interviews. These follow-up conversations were not taped but were recorded as notes and added to the log.

Each interview was summarized into one or two-page synopses. Tables about the different strategies that individuals and groups had identified during the interviews were made to collate information and transform it into visual format. This stage of analysis remained at a descriptive level. All themes relating to relationships, power, and strategies that appeared in the transcripts were noted, no matter how tightly or loosely connected. Special attention was paid to perceptions, myths and beliefs about the organization, attitudes, opinions, actions taken, references to turbulence, strategies, and uncertainty concerning power

relationships. We chose these as elements of analysis for several reasons. First, as Crozier and Friedberg (1977; Friedberg, 1993) state, these elements provide the essence of how employees are engaged in power relationships and how they are experiencing turbulent change. Second, as Imber-Black (1988, 1990) and Mills and Murgatroyd (1991) state, beliefs, myths and rules offer insight into people's thinking and actions about given subjects. They provide essential information on the functioning of an organization, and on the processes driving power strategy formation in individuals.

The interviews and other written materials were coded using descriptive codes (e.g., “senior administrator/manager” was coded “admin”) to be able to sort and retrieve the information more quickly when needed. We used a computer program (*AQUAD 4.0*) to help speed retrieval of information through coding and also to help find the existence of patterns in the thousand or so pages of data. Guided by a hybrid of inductive approaches to analysis, we had prepared a list of codes before analysis of the data. We added, modified, or deleted certain codes to fit the data as the coding progressed. The purpose of the computer coding was not to count categories but to help find and organize emerging themes.

Several such iterations through the transcripts and summaries were necessary to exhaust the themes and clusters of ideas that arose. When there were no significant new themes or clusters of ideas, we knew this was approaching saturation of the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987), which then led to another stage for a higher level of abstraction.

Analysis of the data thus involved more than just simple reduction. Based on the summaries and coded transcriptions, we used visual displays (charts and tables) to put themes in relation to one another. A computer program was used to speed this process. Mapping, by using symbols such as double lines, arrows, and encircling certain areas of the visual displays, helped understand visually how the different themes were related or unrelated to one another. This method of using visual displays is long familiar to family therapists and sociologists who draw sociograms to show the relationships between different parts of a system. This made the narrative text less cumbersome and more organized, and it allowed easier comparison of resemblances and contrasts between the interviews. As Miles and Huberman (1984, p.79) state, “the chances of drawing and verifying valid conclusions [by

using visual displays] are very much greater than for narrative text”. The last step thus involved examining how each theme played on others in the visual displays, tables and charts.

Following Glaser and Strauss’ (1967) and Miles and Huberman’s (1984) suggestions, we made it a point to write impressions, hunches, and speculations in a logbook. Writing down these impressions and hunches helped avoid early judgements about the material.

3.3 MINIMIZING SOURCES OF ERROR, AND ENHANCING THE VALIDITY OF THE FINDINGS

One of the strengths of the inductive approach also is ironically one of its weaknesses. The sheer abundance and complexity of the data collected in qualitative studies can leave the researcher with little more than a pile of transcribed notes that have no meaning. Also, because verbal means were used to gather much of the data, participants needed to be articulate and interested in the theme being studied. This issue was not an important factor, however, because we studied professionals who are articulate through their profession, and who have invested much time and energy in the changes that have occurred in their organization.

There are several potential sources of error to consider. The first recalls the epistemological debate of objectivity versus subjectivity in research. The subjective nature of interviews undoubtedly extends into data analysis because words have different meanings in different contexts, and because subjectivity is inevitable (Patton, 1990; Haworth, 1991). Haworth (1991) says this well: “no matter how much we pretend otherwise, subjectivity and inter-subjectivity precede investigation of data, and the choice of what to study is a value choice.” As Crozier and Friedberg (1977) and Madisson *et al.* (1980) state, however, it is less important to have the data reflect the “objective” reality than to understand that the data reflect the way the interviewees subjectively perceive and experience that reality. Perceptions are important “whether or not they are misperceptions of what ‘actually’ happens.” (Madisson *et al.*, 1980) Thus, the data were treated as indicators of the subjective choices made by the actors in the organization. What the participants said was taken as an expression of their strategies and games or of their perceptions of the actions of others. In this way, we were as close as possible to the meaning of the experiences of the participants.

A potential bias was the researcher's familiarity with the research setting. Having worked for six years in the local psychiatric hospital until its organizational split in 1990 and having worked with some of the participants of this research, we were mindful of subjective bias interfering with the data collection, also of jumping to early conclusions about what participants said and did. Several elements helped control personal biases in this research. First, we had not been involved with either the psychiatric hospital or the new mental health centre for two-and-one-half years and had neither future employment nor financial link or obligation with either organization. Also, the researcher had been physically away from the city and had at most limited contact with a few of the employees. In this sense, it was easier to examine the organization from a distance and for interviewees to be freer in their responses without fear of repercussions.

Related to this is the fact that respondents may select answers or distort information to conform to certain norms or expectations generated by the research. This form of bias was controlled by informing all respondents that their answers were confidential. We used neutral probes or comments when participants requested clarification of any questions or statements.

Concerning these biases, Emerson (1988) says that the goal of qualitative research is *not* to eliminate biases but to consider them as part of the field being studied. Other researchers (Taylor and Bogdan, 1975); Douglas, 1976; Bachelor and Joshi, 1986) also come to similar conclusions that the methods used must not eliminate subjectivity, but they must show how the subjective experiences of participants are useful in understanding their relationship with the world (Lapalme, 1991).

Strauss (1987) also defends the use of personal knowledge:

“[A]nalysts bring experiences of various kinds. If not new to the research game, then they bring research skills and savvy to their analyses. What is in their heads also in the way of social science literature also affects their analyses... Equally important is the utilization of experiential data, which consists not only of analysts' technical knowledge and experience derived from research, but also their personal experiences... These experiential data should not be ignored because of the usual canons governing research (which regard personal experience and data as likely to bias the research), for those canons lead to the squashing of valuable experiential data... Experiential data are essential data ... because they not only give added theoretical sensitivity but

provide a wealth of provisional suggestions for making comparisons, finding variations, and sampling widely on theoretical grounds.” (p. 11)

Nonetheless, Strauss adds that this is not “a license to run wild” when carrying out research and that careful control of data collection, coding, and memoing are necessary.

Thus, researchers are able to carry out studies of familiar settings when they use different types of resources: knowledge of the experiences of other researchers, a reflective attitude toward the act of research itself, being aware of how one’s perspective influences fieldwork, comparing different perspectives or points of view (Chapoulie, 1984), carefully documenting all procedures so that others can review methods for bias, and being open in describing the limitations of the adopted perspective (Patton, 1990). In this sense, personal knowledge does not necessarily create an insurmountable obstacle to the study if handled prudently. On this point, we agree with Scriven who emphasizes the importance of being *factual* about events instead of trying to be *distant* from them: “Distance does not guarantee objectivity; it merely guarantees distance” (in Patton, 1990, p.480).

Personal knowledge thus was beneficial to this study. It provided certain hunches and insights during and after the interviews, and for the analysis of the data. Thus, it often became the basis for exploration that might not otherwise have happened. In many instances it lent the researcher credibility in the eyes of the participants. The researcher’s prior knowledge of the setting and of many of the participants was, in Smaling’s (1992) words, not so much of a hindrance as an *entrance* into the field. It may be said, therefore, that familiarity with the organization enhanced the validity of the findings.

The tape recording process may have introduced bias. Research shows that tape recording inhibits the expressiveness and warmth of communication for some participants. (Guilbault, 1984) Participants in these cases appear more formal and serious than they normally would. For the present research, however, the participants were comfortable with the recording process. The researcher’s personal knowledge of many participants aided this process. Questions of trust were therefore less important than they would have been with a stranger. Secondly, most of the participants were accustomed to videotaping themselves during therapy sessions they conducted with clients. They were thus familiar with being observed and having people judge their work. Only one person refused to allow the tape

recording of the interview. Having no prior acquaintance with this person prior to the interview may have contributed to her reticence.

In terms of bias that could have been introduced by the technical process of recording, there were very few problems concerning tape jamming, loss of material when cassettes were turned over, background noise and inaudible voices on the tapes. Only a few words of the interview were lost when cassettes were turned over. More problematic were those cassettes where participants spoke softly, making transcribing the interviews more difficult. References in the notepad helped reconstruct the missing words. Where words could not be identified, they were indicated by “ ??? ” in the transcripts.

Another source of bias in this study includes relying on memory to recall past events and distorting information. Certain steps were taken to minimize problems of reconstruction and recall error. Because of the ongoing nature of the changes in the mental health centre, narratives were compared for actions that had occurred more recently with that closer to the time of the organizational split in 1990. Comparing ongoing accounts to past accounts provided a check on recall to determine if the recent data were richer in detail and perhaps more accurate in terms of information and structure about the organization. Probing also was used to clarify vague information or stimulate recall, which is a standard technique in this form of data collection (Summers, 1986).

Concerning the distortion of information, it is not unusual for respondents in most types of interviews to oversimplify reports, minimize the tentative nature of their actions at the time of the event, and place themselves at the centre of the activity (Summers, 1986). We tried to minimize this bias during the interviews by focusing on both context and specific behaviors around power strategy formation, such as acquiring resources, gathering information, and mobilizing support from others. This helped identify the characteristics of their situation.

Information about key events and other actors involved in the organizational changes also was sought at several times during the interview. Participants were asked to provide: 1) a general summary of the organizational changes that had occurred; 2) a chronology of events (recall is often facilitated by placing events in proper sequence); and 3) answers to specific questions about acquiring resources and information, and the sources to these

elements. This format encouraged recall, helped participants to decompose their own accounts, and tested reliability. If the answers to similar questions were different, we asked the participant to clarify the answers.

Additionally, we cross-referenced the accounts of the participants to provide an enhanced picture of the organization. This helped provide a check on the accuracy of the data. Thus, potential problems due to recall error were minimal, and the accounts of power strategy formation were as reliable as they could be using this type of research method and data.

Concerning the validity of the findings, we used multiple sources of evidence or “slices of data” (Strauss, 1987) — documents, personal knowledge, multiple individual interviews using a common semi-structured format, a variant of participant observation, and follow-up telephone calls to the interviews — to enhance the likelihood that the findings represented the power dynamics in the organization (Miles and Huberman, 1984; Yin, 1989; Patton, 1990). Interview material was cross-checked between the interviews themselves and against documents provided by the organization. We examined the data for patterns between the participants, the different sources of information (interviews, meetings, observations, documents, log book, memos, informal notes), the content of the interviews (perceptions, opinions, attitudes, actions taken by participants), and also the circumstances surrounding the opinions and actions of the participants (levels of turbulence, length and type of experience with the organization). Thus, validity was enhanced by placing emphasis on how interpretations of the various participants meshed or conflicted with each other and with other sources of data.

External validity is an issue that can be important in single-site research, but as Bower (in Demers, 1990) states, this problem is less important when one is developing theory, as opposed to testing it. Nonetheless, one cannot escape the issue of whether the study is representative of other organizations or of an atypical population. (Demers, 1990) No claims are made from this research as to its external validity (whether its findings are applicable to other contexts or settings). Having worked in several organizations and having studied many others, however, we believe there are no reasons that make the mental health centre that was studied very different from other such centres having undergone large change.

Finally, the methods employed may not have fully grasped the reality of the experiences of the participants. In addition, because of the limited number of persons being studied and the limits inherent to using any research method, the findings presented in this research may not fully be representative of what goes on in other centres going through turbulent change. These are normal limits of most types of research. Further research examining other case examples is necessary to explore strategy formation in other contexts.

This dissertation does not call for new methodology. Clearly, no single method of investigation is appropriate to all issues that can be studied in an organization. This is a limit that all researchers must face. In this sense, it is not our goal that the findings form a definitive or fully objective description of the strategy formation processes occurring in organizations. The emphasis is on illumination and understanding of power strategy formation rather than on quantitative explanation. We regard the findings as a step toward a broader understanding of the process of strategy formation, and particularly the role of power strategy formation in turbulent contexts.

Chapter Four

Historical Context of the Organization

“I find it really hard that as a group of human service providers who know an awful lot about systemic change in families, we never apply the theories to our own kind. I find that outrageous.”
(Therapist)

“You're either a person who perceives power as good or perceives power as bad. You can never be neutral about power.”
(Therapist)

“Turbulence is having eighteen bosses in one year.”
(Therapist)

Chapters Four, Five, and Six form the empirical core of this study. Chapter Four describes historical events leading to the organizational split of the mental health centre from its parent psychiatric hospital. Information about this will be paraphrased liberally from the “New Directions” report prepared by a local Steering Committee (1988) which designed and implemented the organizational changes. Following a description of the historical context, the structure of the new organization is presented. The chapter ends with a discussion of events that the participants described as particularly turbulent and that created much uncertainty for them in the organization. Chapter Five, for its part, describes the sources of power emphasized by the participants, and Chapter Six describes the strategies used to deal with the turbulent changes and uncertainty that staffs experienced.

4.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

4.1.1 Provincial legislation for community services

In the mid 1980's, several circumstances culminated in a decision by the Minister of Community and Social Services of Ontario to establish a new mental health facility in Northern Ontario. Two important events occurred at the provincial level. The first was the proclamation of the Child and Family Services Act, which designated a new organizational framework for delivering services to children under the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The second event was a study commissioned by the Ministry of Health of Ontario, which recommended that mental health services be divided into two distinct branches, institutional and community.

4.1.2 Local audit of the psychiatric hospital's children's services

Important events also occurred at the local level. An audit of the local psychiatric hospital, completed in the Fall of 1986, recommended the development of a community-oriented children's mental health centre, as opposed to a hospital-based model. During the same period, a local Francophone advocacy group began demanding control over social services to their culture. The director of the Francophone Children's Mental Health Centre resigned from the hospital to protest the slowness of the hospital in recognizing Francophone interests in mental health services. He also claimed that being employed at the psychiatric hospital and being Francophone were incompatible. In the weeks following his resignation, the Director mounted a large media campaign that was highly critical of the hospital for what he claimed was its anti-Francophone attitude. A slew of letters-to-the-editor in local newspapers and heated discussions on the issue followed. This left the remaining Francophone workers at the hospital in the unenviable position of being caught between supporting Francophone rights and culture, and criticizing their employer. This led to a split among some of the Francophone staffs as to their allegiance.

4.1.3 Pressures for recognition of cultural identity in services

Following the resignation of the director of the Francophone children's mental health centre in 1986, pressure continued to mount on the hospital and on the ministry to institute a model that respected culture, but more importantly, that provided control over decision-making by cultural groups. The strategy of the advocacy group was clear from 1986 to 1990: to create pressure points at every opportunity by using the media, attacking the credibility of the hospital as incapable of offering quality services, and invoking the right to self-determination as a cultural group.

The Francophone advocacy group continued its strategy of pressure and submitted a proposal to the Ministry requesting transfer of control of Francophone mental health services to its group. The proposal called for a distinct and organizationally separate mental health service in the community for this group. This ultimately led to a meeting with the Minister of Community and Social Services in November 1986, as requested by the advocacy group. At the meeting, the Minister stated his intention to support culturally appropriate services, but not in separate organizations as called for by the Francophone group.

Five principles were to guide the new organization:

- the establishment of a new and separate bilingual child and family intervention corporation;
- the establishment of clear lines of authority between the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the new Corporation for the total management and control of funds for the delivery of Child and Family Intervention Services;
- the establishment of distinct service streams under the new Corporation for both the Francophone and non-Francophone populations in the catchment area;
- the establishment of mechanisms permitting split governing jurisdictions by this new Board over the management of culturally appropriate services streams;
- the organizational separation of a medical and non-medical service delivery system.

In August, 1987, the Minister appointed seven local persons to a Steering Committee to develop an action plan around the development of the new children's mental health cor-

poration. These seven persons were chosen based on the diversity of their backgrounds, ranging from the practice of law to administering a multi-cultural centre.

4.1.4 Community consultations and input

After an initial orientation as to the mandate and five principles guiding the new corporation, the Committee went about a phased-in approach involving extensive community consultations. The Steering Committee requested input from seventy-six community groups and organizations. There were public announcements of scheduled meetings and open forums to seek maximum participation and input from the community. Twenty-six groups or organizations and twelve individuals responded with written and oral presentations. Community consultations took place from January through May 1988 to gather concerns and recommendations.

4.1.5 Limited funding

Concerns from community groups revolved around several themes. The first theme related to limited funding. Most submissions alluded to the fact that some programs, such as prevention and in-home counseling, were not being implemented because existing funds did not allow them to carry out “effective child treatment.” (Steering Committee, 1988, p. 40) Related to limited funding was another common theme, insufficient staffing for the mental health needs of the area. Service providers, consumers and referring agencies such as school boards identified waiting lists as a key issue. The Steering Committee recognized the under-allocation of resources of the region as compared to other areas of the province, and it recommended a slightly higher per-capita allocation to maintain culturally and linguistically appropriate services.

4.1.6 Poor connection with the community

Additionally, service providers in the community did not feel the existing system of mental health delivery through the psychiatric hospital was responsive to their needs. They felt poorly connected to the hospital, which some described as physically and philosophically distant.

Poor awareness of the wide range of existing children’s mental health issues and services was frequently cited. This was in part due to the inconvenient physical location of the psychiatric hospital (a former tuberculosis sanatorium) away from the main arteries of the city, and of a lack of understanding of mental health issues in general by consumers.

A related theme was the need for a community-based organization, located and operated by the community. This would enhance access and outreach to those in need, place the focus of treatment in the consumer’s normal environment, and it would increase networking between professionals. The establishment of prevention and early identification programs were cited as possible benefits of a community approach.

While local Francophone advocacy groups were calling for a separate system of mental health delivery for their culture, there was substantial opposition to this concept from other groups.

“Some discussants expressed the concern that a system of parallel services could lead to a less than efficient delivery system and that the development of a multi-disciplinary clinical approach would be compromised. Moreover, the aforementioned shortage of resources would suggest that, at least at present, any attempt to effectively provide all the required services in both languages is infeasible.” (*Original emphasis*) (Steering Committee, 1988, p. 41)

Nonetheless, the Committee felt that appropriate linguistic and cultural representation at the Board of Directors level of the new organization was essential to create an atmosphere of respect for the language rights and cultural background of individuals.

“The example of the Native person in our community who has no one with whom she can communicate in her native tongue, much less comprehend non-verbal communication or understand her circumstances, is a compelling example to the need for change. The service is grossly inadequate.” (Steering Committee, 1988, p. 45)

The above applied equally to the Native and Francophone populations.

4.1.7 Disagreements around proposed structure and model of service delivery

Other themes emerging from community consultations included resistance to the proposed “non-medical” model of intervention. Some felt the separation from the psychiatric hospital would be an artificial one given that the new organization would still have to rely

on the psychiatric hospital for many of its inpatient and consulting services. Others felt that co-ordination of services with other community organizations was sorely lacking.

Thus, a list of interrelated concerns and recommendations emerged from consultations with the community. Despite the common nature of the concerns expressed by community groups and organizations, however, the Steering Committee was aware of the controversy that some of the recommendations would create. Early on, the Steering Committee recognized that,

“global acceptance of any set of recommendations was highly unlikely, given the presence of various heterogeneous groups, each with their own particular agendas and preconceived notions about how the perspective bilingual Corporation ought to be structured. Indeed, we would be remiss if we did not point out that certain of the five guiding principles of this Corporation have been subject to serious questioning during the information gathering phase.” (Steering Committee, 1988, p. 40)

This dynamic was particularly important in the design of the new organization because lack of recognition of the different cultural groups in the community would have amounted to political suicide.

4.1.8 Employees' perceptions of having no input

It is important to note that most staffs felt they were given little opportunity for input into the design of the new corporation despite the public forums that were held. Some staffs accused the Steering Committee of purposefully avoiding them and not wanting to “contaminate” the new model of service delivery with old ideas. As a result, the directors of the two children’s mental health centres of the hospital and a group of staffs met for several intensive sessions to design a model of their own that would be more in line with their thoughts and beliefs about a new children’s mental health centre for the community. While they submitted this alternative proposal to the Ministry of Community and Social Services, however, it had no impact on the final model.

Thus, the milestones described above led to the establishment of a new children’s mental health centre.

4.2 THE NEW ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

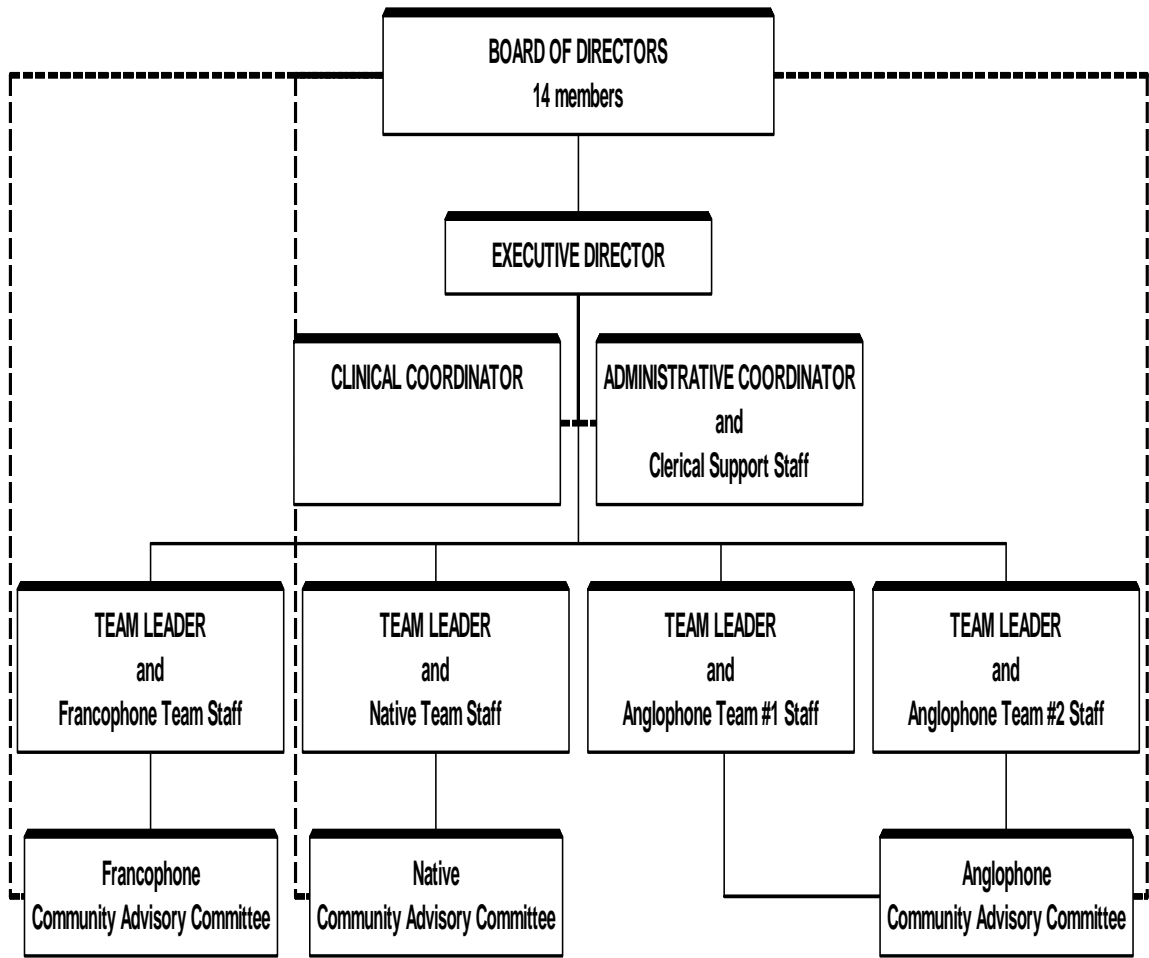
Because the children's mental health organization was mandated to deliver culturally appropriate services to the different cultural groups in the community, the new structure incorporated a matrix model with two levels of input to the Board of Directors. The first level is that of the administrative hierarchy with an executive director who manages a group of clinical teams and support services. The second level is a group of community committees that provide input directly to each of four clinical teams. Each committee has representation on the main board of directors. Table 4 is a representation of the organizational chart.

The organization has a traditional hierarchy with a central board of directors, an executive director and professional staffs. The principal differences between the new structure and the old psychiatric hospital lie in the community advisory communities. Whereas the hospital comprised two mental health centres, one Francophone and one Anglophone, each reporting through the hierarchy to a central board, the three community advisory committees of the new organization have power and responsibilities of their own.

The Board of Directors of the new organization has fourteen members: eight from the Community Advisory Committees, and the remaining six elected at large from the community. Three board members are from the Francophone Community Advisory Committee, two from the Native Advisory Committee, and three from the third Community Advisory Committee. The Board has ultimate authority for all matters of the organization. Each Community Advisory Committee, on the other hand, is designed to be responsive to client needs, to provide input and advice, to set priorities, and to design programs in a culturally appropriate way.

Table 4

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF THE NEW CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH CENTRE



Note 1: Anglophone Teams #1 and #2 share a single Community Advisory Committee. *Source:* Steering Committee (1988), Exhibit B.

Note 2: The Community Advisory Committees are placed below the Team Leaders for clarity only.

The senior administrative tier of the organization comprises the Executive Director, the Clinical Co-ordinator, and the Administrative Co-ordinator. This tier occupies the traditional roles found in human service organizations, with the Executive Director acting as the bridge between the board and other members of the organization. The Clinical Coordinator oversees clinical matters and supervision for the entire agency, while the Administrative Co-ordinator ensures the smooth functioning of the financial and support aspects of the agency. Senior management is located in a central office downtown. Meetings of the board of directors are held on a rotating basis in the four satellite clinics that comprise the organization and that are situated throughout the city.

Below the senior administrative level is the middle management tier. The middle management level of the organization comprises four team leaders, who have full authority and responsibility for the cases being handled by their teams. Team leaders not only provide guidance and supervision to therapists reporting to them but are responsible with their Community Advisory Committees for planning and implementing services that are culturally appropriate to their community. Each Community Advisory Committee does not have full authority over their team leader, but they are expected to work in close co-operation.

Each of the four teams is designed to be somewhat *independent* in terms of providing culturally appropriate services to their clientele. They are encouraged to be *interdependent* by interacting with one another and receiving their central direction from senior administration and the board of directors. Teams comprise seven to ten staffs, including secretaries. They are situated in areas of the city that are consistent with their primary target group. The Francophone team, for example, is located in an area of the city where there is a heavy concentration of Francophone residents.

Thus, there are four levels in the new organization: 1) a central Board of Directors, 2) the Executive Director and two senior Co-ordinators, 3) four teams led by team leaders who represent the middle management level and who supervise therapists, and 4) three Community Advisory Committees that provide advice to each of their respective teams.

To bring these levels together and make the divisions of responsibility work effectively, the Executive Director and the two Co-ordinators have a responsibility for providing central direction while respecting cultural diversity:

“It is understood that the Executive Director and the Clinical Co-ordinator would be expected to cultivate an atmosphere conducive to inter-team co-operation and joint consultation. This is considered a prerequisite to the multi-disciplinary approach to treatment which enables the case manager, in this case the team leader, to readily access the specialized skills available to the organization.” (Steering Committee, 1988, p.12)

The children’s mental health centre opened officially in December 1990, with staffs divided into four satellite teams that moved out of the hospital in phases over the next two years. The present research was carried out approximately six months after the last group had left the hospital.

When the Executive Director was hired in February, 1990, he was placed in offices which were several miles from the staffs at the psychiatric hospital (staffs who would in the coming months fall under his authority). While the directors of the two mental health centres raised some concerns about the physical distance between the new executive director and the staffs, they received little in terms of answers. Their desire was to have the executive director work with staffs and feel what they felt, so that he would have a better understanding of their daily successes and problems. They surmised that the distance was more than just coincidence or lack of space at the hospital site. They felt that the new board of directors wanted their new executive to remain as distant as possible from the daily functioning of the hospital to avoid being “contaminated” by hospital politics. Staffs were able to meet with the new Executive Director only a few times from February, 1990, to the end of the summer that year.

Another important issue during the transition was the possibility of financial cut-backs to the organization. At the time of the organizational separation from the hospital in 1990, funding was set aside for the new organization in terms of office space, equipment, and ongoing maintenance. As the organization took shape, however, it became apparent that there would be financial problems in the near future.

“What was established when we took over was a Francophone and an Anglophone wing. They existed as wings, if you will... As government comes along and sets this up and does not give us all of the protected base dollars we need to operate this agency with the three components, so they recognize that it requires three million dollars to operate this place, to allow the Native entity to come into place as it was meant to come into place, they don’t pro-

vide us the dollars on an ongoing, repetitive, year-by-year guaranteed dollar allocation. ... They know it's three million dollars. As they look into their coffers, they had 2.5 million of guaranteed repetitive dollars that I can count on year by year, base dollars, protected base dollars. They have the other five hundred thousand in a one-shot allocation based on the fonds-de-tiroir, what they're left with... Well, if you look at the economic times we're in, we're sitting here, and at what point do we rush out and hire all these people with one shot dollars and maybe have to turn around and lay them off possibly in the same fiscal year when your guaranteed dollars come in at the last minute if they come in at all." (*Senior manager*)

In summary, divesting or separating existing children's services from the local psychiatric hospital created a new children's mental health centre. This followed several years of often-bitter conflict between community groups and the hospital. The new organization faced financial shortfalls within the first few months of operation.

4.3 DESCRIPTIONS THAT THE PARTICIPANTS GAVE ABOUT UNCERTAINTY AND TURBULENCE IN THEIR ORGANIZATION

"It was always stressful because there was more than one thing. We didn't know where our offices would be. We didn't really know what kind of work we'd be doing. We knew there would be a new approach to intervention, but we didn't know practically how we'd work. We didn't know if we'd even have a job. We were being threatened with layoffs. There were many things all at once." (*Therapist*)

As described above, uncertainty related to several elements in the organization. Before examining the different sources of power in Chapter Five, it will be helpful to examine briefly how the participants described uncertainty and turbulence in their organization. This will lay out the context for the power sources and strategies described in the next two chapters.

As discussed in Chapter One, *uncertainty* is the inability to predict results or outcomes of an action or series of actions. Thus, there is uncertainty in situations where there is a lack of information about future actions or events, or where organizational members feel that future plans are indefinite, vague or doubtful. *Turbulence*, which is intimately tied to the theme

of certainty/uncertainty, is defined as events that may range from a situation where actions and outcomes are entirely predictable, to a situation where nothing is predictable.

Uncertainty was described in several ways by different groups of participants in this study. More particularly, there were differences in the amount of references to uncertainty between newcomers and veterans. Veteran staffs referred to uncertainty four times as often as junior staffs. This may be explained in part by the greater amount of experience of veteran staffs with the organization and its transition when compared to new staffs. One also might hypothesize that veteran staffs were more invested in the transition between organizations, having more to lose, thus having a keener interest in discussing it.

There also were qualitative differences between newcomers and veterans in terms of their descriptions of turbulence and uncertainty. Five themes seemed particularly important to the participants: the lack of clear policies and procedures, unmet expectations during the transition, job security, financial cutbacks, and uncertainty around the continuation of specific intervention programs.

4.3.1 Lack of clear policies and procedures

The lack of clear policies and procedures was troublesome for several staffs during the transition. As they were setting up the new organization, senior management staffs (who are all newcomers) and team leaders particularly found that policies and procedures were often inadequate and poorly fitted to current organizational needs because of the rapid pace of change. Senior management staffs were forced to deal with this in unusual ways.

“We were creating systems, and as we were doing things, we would make procedures, not the policy but the procedure, so that we had things in place, and then eventually I would take those procedures and worked with them to create a policy. So I did things kind of backwards.” (*Senior manager*)

The confusion around policies and procedures was compounded by what several staffs described as the lack of leadership. All senior management personnel were new, and all but one of the team leaders was new to the organization. Their knowledge of past ways of functioning and of the players was therefore limited. Difficulties in attempting to design policies and procedures from the bottom-up, and avoiding referring to older hospital poli-

cies, were compounded by urgent time pressures to quickly come up with minimum standards which staffs could adhere to.

“We were very focused on interpreting the new policies which at times were at odds with what had gone on before... A lot of attempting to correct glitches, little things that went wrong because we were literally creating a system and interpreting it and dealing with the problems on it all at the same time, because the policy we would be talking about tomorrow is probably one we developed yesterday. There was a very short period between thinking and implementing.” (*Team leader*)

Veteran staffs described the void in policies and procedures somewhat differently than new staffs. Rather than focusing mainly on the pressing need for designing new policies and procedures, some veteran staffs felt that much of what had been set up and accomplished in past years was purposefully being ignored or discarded:

“Nobody ever understood what the hell we were doing in this organization. We were making it up as we went along... There’s a new boss coming through every month. In the one meeting he’s going to have time to have with me, he’s not going to be able to figure out what I do let alone tell me to do it differently... Turbulence was when I went to my team leader for the first time in his capacity as my boss and he said ‘Oh, I think it’s so exciting to begin creating this agency from nothing’. I said something like, ‘That’s an interesting perspective on it’. He overlooked the fact that I’ve been working at the job for twenty years.” (*Therapist*)

This was reflected by several veteran staffs, who felt that senior management increased uncertainty by ignoring policies and procedures that were used at the former psychiatric hospital and the experiences of veteran staffs for ways of dealing with problems. There was evidence of differing viewpoints in terms of policies and procedures. New senior and middle managers wanted to start from a clean slate to ensure policies matched the needs of the new organization without being duly influenced by past ways of functioning. Veteran therapists felt their long years of experience in working with policies and procedures were being ignored.

4.3.2 High expectations for better working conditions

Expectations that veterans had for improvement of working conditions also were tied to uncertainty and turbulence. While new staffs were not in a position to describe what

it was like to experience the transition between the two organizations, it was clear they observed the effects in veteran staffs who had experienced the divestment.

“I’m not really a part of this, but one of my senses about turbulent change is that the people who came from the old organization, many of them, had a clear set of expectations about what they were going to be doing in the jobs, who they were meant to be, and so on.” (*Therapist*)

This was echoed by several veteran staffs, who began realizing that while they may have had jobs with the new organization, they would not obtain all they thought they would get.

“All the while, I’m having to look at worst-case, best-case scenarios, and that’s another definition of turbulence as far as I’m concerned... During that transition those parameters were very strained. I was envisioning everything from unemployment for all of us, to the best-case scenario obviously being full employment, maybe even improved wages, maybe even a better contract negotiation. Those opportunities were there too... We didn’t come over to a huge pile of money that we could negotiate better wages from. It didn’t turn into a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, but we still have our jobs.” (*Therapist*)

“I think we were made a lot of promises to and given a lot of reassurances prior to divestment that things of course would be better. Of course, they would be better. How could they possibly be as bad as they were at the psychiatric hospital?” (*Therapist*)

Thus, veteran staffs had expectations for outcomes of the divestment from the psychiatric hospital. For some participants, there was a huge letdown in terms of expectations for improvement in working conditions. There also was a general expectation that past history would somehow fade as the new organization took on employees from the psychiatric hospital. Veterans particularly were left wondering when the new organization would find its much-wanted new identity.

“I don’t quite know where it’s coming from, you know, suddenly out of nowhere you feel you get something coming up to do with old history, so old history lives more in the present. I think that is turbulent. I think another aspect of turbulence is for the agency to find a new identity to kind of shed the identity of being part of the psychiatric set-up and to find a new identity in the community. The children’s mental health centre was part of the psychiatric hospital. It’s now got to find a new identity within the community.” (*Therapist*)

4.3.3 *Letdowns concerning a new organizational identity*

Letdowns about creating and adopting a new identity that staffs could attach to were a key issue. There is evidence that some of the expectations for change were very high to begin with.

“I think we made many attributions about the steering committee that I don’t think were accurate. I think we believed them to be much more in charge and knowing much more about what they intended to do, and what they wanted to do, than what they really did... We wanted it to be well thought out, we wanted it to be more concrete and more planned and directed than what it actually was. In actual fact, my sense of it, once I began to meet directly with those people in negotiations was, for the most part, they didn’t know what the hell they were doing either. They were like blind people feeling their way around an unfamiliar room too.” (*Therapist*)

In essence, the task of designing an entirely new organization to replace an old model of service delivery and be more responsive to staffs’ needs was indeed a large one from the outset. Uncertainty and turbulence were key dynamics. It is not surprising that the overflow of enthusiasm for the design of a new organization, and the accompanying high expectations placed on management personnel could not be met, and that disappointments followed. There were feelings of betrayal around this issue.

“There is a sense of being betrayed by some of the older staff. They felt betrayed by the psychiatric hospital and the players there and the present administration, and I’m not sure what that means, why people feel betrayed or confused or whatever, but there is a lot of feeling there and I have been very aware of it.” (*Therapist*)

Along with feelings of betrayal, there were strong feelings of abandonment expressed by the participants in the study. Veteran employees described their relationship with the psychiatric hospital as strained throughout the divestment period.

“One agency was using the strategy of ‘They’re not ours anymore, you take over the responsibility’, and the other agency was using the strategy ‘We’re not ready yet’. It was like parents fighting over the custody of their children, but meanwhile who didn’t realize their children were left alone.” (*Therapist*)

4.3.4 *Perception of non-interest, distance, and abandonment from the psychiatric hospital during the turbulence*

There also was limited support from the hospital's board of directors leading to and during the divestment period. For many years, employees at the hospital had complained that their administration was distant from them and their concerns. The board of directors met only once with staffs concerning the possible separation of the outpatient children's treatment services from the hospital, even though staffs solicited such meetings on several occasions throughout the divestment period. Staffs thus felt little support and did not feel hospital management was fighting to protect them through this process or making the transition easier.

Many therapists felt that the Steering Committee was purposefully being distant, much as hospital management was described.

“I think the standing committee attempted to meet with us on several occasions, but a lot of it was nice and glossy work.” (*Therapist*)

There are several other examples of feelings of distance and non-interest on the part of senior management in both organizations. Staffs often said that for years their children's outpatient department was located in a run-down building on the hospital campus that received only minimal repairs when needed. When the final decision to separate from the hospital was rendered by the Ministry, the hospital delayed further repairs to the children's outpatient building because it was believed the staffs would move out soon into new quarters in the community. Once empty, the buildings were to be abandoned. As it was, staffs moved out of the hospital grounds in phases, despite initial reassurances that all would move out at the same time. The Francophone team left in July 1991, the second team (Anglophone) in August 1991, and the final team (Anglophone) in May 1992. Thus, the final group of staffs remained more than one-and-one-half years in the old building after the separation of the department from the psychiatric hospital.

One of the participants described his feelings with much emotion concerning the effects this had on staffs:

“... that awful building... You know, you watch those old western movies and you get those shots of ghost towns in the west, a tumble of hay going

down the road, the doors just sort of creak and there's no sound. That's what that building was like after a while. Half the lights didn't work. That building was bad enough being in, but where there was nobody else in it but six of us... A lot of the people at the hospital didn't even know we were there. Even the people I'd worked with in the hospital's back cottages thought that we'd gone... They didn't know we were still in that building even though there were clients coming and going.” (*Therapist*)

Staffs felt abandoned at several stages of the separation process, increasing their questioning of the whole divestment process and giving them the feeling of ‘hanging’ with no real answers, nor ownership, nor leadership.

4.3.5 *Job security*

Job security was another key issue for staffs. As might be expected, financial concerns were important for staffs given financial shortages and cutbacks in the organization. Newcomers and veterans related to job security differently, however.

First, veterans were preoccupied by the possibility of not having their union recognized and the existing contract transferred to the new organization. This was particularly difficult for a member of the union negotiating team:

“I saw myself not just in contract negotiations but in contract negotiations that had a nasty flavor to them, which was that there was a very high potential for the new administration to not recognize the union... In other words, the offer could have been ‘If you want to come and work for us, you’re certainly invited to come along, but not as union members’. That potential was very much there and until we had what we called a recognition agreement signed by the new administration... That time was tremendously turbulent for me.” (*Therapist*)

Despite years of service with the former organization, many members were facing the real possibility of not having jobs with the new organization, or at least not having existing rights recognized.

As the final days for signing a recognition agreement were approaching, veteran staffs were faced with more turbulence and uncertainty, namely having to choose whether they would stay as employees of the psychiatric hospital and exercising their union bumping rights, or choosing to go as employees of the new organization. On the last day before the

agreement was signed, staffs were told to make a final decision, but many claim the hospital purposefully did not provide information about what jobs they would retain if they stayed with the psychiatric hospital. This led to accusations of favoritism when some staffs discovered at the last minute that three or four staff members remained with the psychiatric hospital when they were offered new positions there. All of these actions meant ongoing uncertainty and turbulence, with employees feeling no real sense of direction.

“Although the words were being said, some of the actions were not occurring, you know, that delay in signing the contract, delays in obtaining information from the psychiatric hospital. I think we were feeling in a no-man’s land.” (*Therapist*)

4.3.6 *Financial cutbacks*

Financial cutbacks also became part of the reality of the organization within the first year of operation. The way that this information was circulated to staffs was particularly troublesome for some members.

“The Executive Director came to us just before the Christmas holidays and dropped a bomb with all that was going to happen with the new budget, that there were going to be cutbacks, how we were going to survive. Everybody was in a panic. That put a lot of pressure on us. Staff reacted and became anxious, and they didn’t know what was going to happen with the cutbacks. We didn’t want to lose staff like L... and D... on our team... The Executive Director started in a really explosive way.” (*Therapist*)

While veterans because of seniority were more assured than new staff members of keeping their jobs, they were nonetheless very concerned about what the changes would mean in terms of job functions. A new staff explained this well:

“The organization now has changed. It’s now recruiting different kinds of people, probably more highly trained people than some of the people who were there at the start many years ago, and I think that’s been very threatening to a lot of the older staff from the old organization. Times change, and one needs to become more highly trained and qualified...” (*Therapist*)

Thus, it may be that some veteran staffs felt threatened by newer employees who came to the organization with more academic qualifications and preparation. This undoubtedly would have increased uncertainty in the eyes of the veteran staffs.

4.3.7 Perception by therapists that skills and experience were not valued

The feeling of many employees that their former employer, the psychiatric hospital, did not appear to value their services, experience or skills compounded uncertainty.

“The hospital was not courting anybody in terms of ‘Geez, you guys have done excellent work. We’d like to find places for as many of you as possible’, or anything along that line. Nothing was done... Well, they sort of pointed to a couple of people and got them. They offered them positions, which was fine. The writing was on the wall — I’m of no value.” (*Therapist*)

This sentiment was echoed by most of the veteran staffs. They felt not only that their jobs and union rights were on the line, but that their skills and years of experience were not being valued by the old and new organizations.

4.3.8 Uncertainty around the continuation of intervention programs

Uncertainty around the continuation of intervention programs also was an issue related to the turbulence that the agency’s employees experienced, particularly for veteran staffs. Programs that were long-standing or pilot projects thought to be “safe” from cut-backs were now being questioned due to the transition between the two organizations. Part of the problem for the Executive Director at the time of divestment is that the team leaders (middle managers) were still in the process of being hired. Staffs were looking for assurances of the continuation of existing intervention programs, but the Executive Director did not want to bind future middle managers to specific programs.

“As we were going through divestment ... the Executive Director was saying ‘We don’t want to traumatize you, but yet the position will be maintained for a period of time until we can clarify things.’ That may have been helpful from his perspective of reassuring us going into the organization. It also created a lot of stress for people in prevention...” (*Therapist*)

Staffs attached to a pilot prevention project experienced much uncertainty as they felt they had to continually justify the program to senior administration to ensure its survival. Administrative personnel making no firm commitments on intervention programs compounded this:

“We were trying to explain what prevention is, so we were in a position of trying to teach our employer who we are, what the work is, who our clients

are. We didn't like the word 'client' because we were primary prevention working at empowerment... It's totally different than the clinical program, so we were caught with having to try and justify and explain who we are and what kind of work we did, and who our population was... The three of us in some ways thought that we were always trying to justify our position and our work within the organization." (*Therapist*)

"Quite often when things get shaky, like cutbacks and these kinds of issues, prevention is becoming more either a political tool and, well, we're not sure. We're always feeling uneasy about the role of prevention. Sometimes we feel like we're under a microscope in terms of the work that we do." (*Therapist*)

In essence, some staffs were unclear whether their program would continue under the new organization. They also were unsure about the value that senior management was putting on their specialized skills, making some feel they were struggling for the existence of their work in the organization.

4.4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the preceding section, we outlined the key events and milestones leading to the organizational changes at the psychiatric hospital along with some of the principal descriptions of staffs around uncertainty. The separation of the children's mental health centre from the local psychiatric hospital followed several years of conflict, and the result was a radically different organizational structure.

When viewed in the largest sense, it appears that turbulence and uncertainty penetrated many aspects of organizational life in the centre that was studied. Participants described uncertainty as a central element to policies and procedures, unmet expectations, job security and financial cutbacks, and the possible termination of intervention programs.

Also described were differences between veteran staffs and new staffs in the way they described uncertainty and turbulence. Obviously, some differences are attributable to the different experiences staffs had in the organization. It is noteworthy, however, that veteran staffs were more vocal than new staffs about certain types of concerns such as job security. One might expect newcomers to be more concerned about such an issue because they would be the first to lose their jobs under financial cutbacks. One possible explanation is

that for veteran staffs, job security issues peaked when they were asked to decide whether they would transfer with the new organization and maintain their seniority rights in the union, or remain with the psychiatric hospital and exercise bumping rights in other hospital departments. It also is possible that some veteran staffs felt threatened by newer, more qualified staffs, especially in an environment where job security was not assured.

Veteran staffs also had more invested in the changes that occurred, and this might explain, at least in part, their fluency in discussing uncertainty and turbulent events. Also linked was uncertainty around the continued existence of prevention programs, to which senior administrators would not commit themselves.

Feelings of betrayal were identified and seemed linked to broken promises and let-downs in terms of expectations. It is reasonable to assume that expectations were tied to old history, and that this old history was brought into the new organization by veteran staffs. This was compounded by the slowness of the new organization to develop a strong identity that was distinct from the former psychiatric hospital. Some staffs described this partly as still living in the past. Again, these descriptions were mainly from veteran staffs because newer staffs had not experienced the history of the organization.

Much of the uncertainty and turbulence in the organization was due to financial problems. For two years in a row, the Executive Director discussed a \$500,000 financial shortfall to employees in staff meetings just prior to Christmas. The sense of urgency this gave undoubtedly increased uncertainty and heightened the sense of turmoil that staffs had concerning the cutbacks. While it is not possible to determine the exact motives behind the timing of the announcements and the way they were carried out, it is reasonable to believe they were designed to create a sense of urgency to push people out of their “comfort zones” or usual ways of behaving. In essence, staffs were not able to anchor themselves in past successes because senior management was trying to build the organization from “scratch”.

In the next two chapters, we will examine how the participants dealt with uncertainty in terms of power strategies. To recall the objectives of this study, we will examine what the bases of individual and group power were, what power games existed, how the games were played, and how the games related to one another at different hierarchical levels. As described in Chapter Two, it is assumed that the employees actively used different sources and

means of power available to them to manage the uncertainty. A few of the questions that will be addressed in the next two chapters are: What kinds of power strategies did the employees use to deal with the uncertainty they faced? What was the differential use of power strategies between veteran and newcomer staffs? How did senior administrators, middle managers, therapists, and clerical employees differ in their use of strategies to deal with uncertainty?

The Sources of Power Employed by the Participants

“People will believe that the higher you are up on the thing,
the more power you have. Often, the more powerless you can feel.”
(Senior manager)

“My role is so central that I’m like the meat in the sandwich. I’m between levels.”
(Team leader)

This chapter begins with a brief review of the definitions of the sources of power as derived from the literature in Chapter Two. We then provide descriptions of each of the sources of power as the participants in the research depicted them. This is followed in the next chapter by a description of how the sources of power were employed in terms of power strategy formation.

As described earlier, power was a fact of life for the participants, as demonstrated by the 600 or so references to power and 1000 strategies that were coded in the interviews. We found that the participants were quite verbose about the sources and strategies of power they employed, again confirming their years of experience and involvement in the subject.

5.1 THE SOURCES OF POWER

In Chapter Two, we identified eight sources of power from a diverse base of literature on power: 1) formal legal authority; 2) the use of coercion or intimidation; 3) the ability to give rewards or to impose reprimands; 4) expertise or specialized skills and knowledge; 5) the ability to control relations between an organization and its environment, and the ability to control resources; 6) the ability to control information and communications between different parts of the organization; 7) controlling access to power holders; and 8) referent or charismatic power.

We also found that three important criteria are necessary for power to exist. First, sources of power must be rare, in short supply, or not easily accessible to all members of the organization. Second, sources of power must be irreplaceable or very difficult to substitute. Third, sources of power must be essential to other persons or groups in the organization. Power involves dependency of one person on another person's resources.

It also will be recalled that power is not necessarily something possessed but is exercised in a relationship between two or more persons. Finally, there is a sanctioning aspect, meaning that any power relationship contains sanctions or potential sanctions. The ability to manipulate these sanctions, thus the outcome of the actions of others, is essential for power to exist.

5.1.1 FORMAL LEGAL AUTHORITY

The transcripts revealed that the participants were far more verbose about formal or legal power than any other source of power. There are several possible explanations for this. First, the Ministry of Community and Social Services granted formal authority to the Steering Committee that planned and led the development of the new organization and the new board of directors. The hierarchical structure of the organization had been a topic that elicited much conflict over the past several years, and the participants thus had much to say about it. The radical change in the formal structure that occurred following the divestment of the two organizations was a topic that was easy to discuss and to provide examples for. Formal authority is a reality in all human service organizations that employ professionals and

is perhaps the most visible form of power because it affects every person in the organization, regardless of level or position.

We made several comparisons between different staff groupings to determine the principal themes related to legal authority. Veterans and new staffs were similar in terms of their concerns around legal power. This is not surprising given that legal power is the first source of power that one normally encounters when entering or leaving an organization (for example, staffs are hired, fired, or promoted by their superiors). Relevant observations also were gathered by studying staffs according to their hierarchical position in the organization. The data revealed several forms of formal authority as a source of power, namely policies, procedures and rules and regulations, hierarchical position in the organization and lines of authority, the court system, and labor union rights. We will describe these here.

Senior Management’s Focus on Policies and Procedures:

Senior managers described policies and procedures as ensuring consistency across the organization. Due to the decentralized nature of the mental health centre, which was divided into four satellite clinics, it was particularly important that all persons followed the same clinical and administrative processes throughout the organization. A senior manager was particularly emphatic about this:

“That’s why I think that policies and procedures are so important. That’s why I’m placing so much emphasis on having our policies and procedures in place, because with decentralization, we have to be able to refer to something tangible and know where they stand, especially if there’s a team manager caught in between upper and ... You’re on the firing line every day, and you don’t know what you’re expected to do. If things aren’t clear, you can have a real problem, so your controls have to be very tight and your policies and procedures have to be in place.” (*Senior manager*)

It also was clear from the interviews that senior managers used policies and procedures to try to counteract some of the effects of the turbulent changes that were occurring. In essence, a procedure was viewed as an effective way of getting a message across, reducing uncertainty by providing clear direction to staffs, and getting things done in a predictable way.

Team leaders, for their part, described the difficulty of having to design new policies and procedures as time went on, in some cases from one day to the next. They spoke little about policies as a source of power through the turbulent transition, however. This is particularly noteworthy because team leaders are the immediate supervisors of the therapists and clerical staffs, and one would assume that they would have used policies and procedures as one way of exerting authority on their employees and reducing uncertainty. Unfortunately, they faced much uncertainty because new policies and procedures were designed only as problems arose. This contrasts sharply with the way therapists described how team leaders and senior managers used policies and procedures, however. While senior managers described policies as useful tools to ensure consistency, therapists described them as a source of control by middle and upper management levels.

“Our team leader all of a sudden gave us policies and procedures to read. ‘There you go’, she said. ‘Read them and sign them, and now you know what’s in them’ ... In there, we read things that didn’t make sense to us, and we had solutions to improve them. I asked the team leader if we could possibly change some of the policies. She said no because technically they had already been approved... And they claim they want us to participate!”
(Therapist)

Organizational Structure Complicating Lines of Communication:

A second source of formal power is an extension of legal power through the structure of the organization and lines of authority. As presented earlier in the organizational chart (Figure 4.1), the children’s mental health centre has an Executive Director at the top of the hierarchy, one Clinical Co-ordinator and one Administrative Co-ordinator who each report to the Executive Director, then four team leaders or managers who are responsible for the day-to-day functioning of each satellite clinic throughout the city. Although the Co-ordinators report directly to the Executive Director and have functions that span all aspects of the organization, they do not have authority over the team leaders. The participants discussed this reporting structure at length.

The prime function of the two Co-ordinators is to co-ordinate clinical and administrative activities across all segments of the organization. Neither of the Co-ordinators of the organization has legal power over other staffs as designated by the official structure, how-

ever. Their influence lies in the expertise, advice and problem-solving skills that they bring to the Executive Director and the Board of Directors of the agency. This creates functional problems for them in terms of day-to-day operations.

“The least enjoyable is dealing with the team managers because they don’t report to me... If things happen that a person should be reprimanded on or should be brought to that person’s attention, I have to bring those matters to the Executive Director, and I feel like a snitch. Yet, in my capacity as Co-ordinator, certain things have to be followed, certain functions and rules have to be followed so that we know that if someone is really screwing up I could deal with it, but I’m not their boss.” (*Senior manager*)

Both Co-ordinators are thus sometimes put into difficult positions because they must co-ordinate the actions of all staffs while having no structural authority to deal with problems that might arise.

“It’s an awkward situation because if there’s a one-time slip-up or something, let’s say we’re dealing with a problem and it only happens once, I’ll pick up the phone and call and I’ll say, ‘This should be done and you didn’t do it. Please refer to this policy and procedure. If there isn’t one, do something about it.’ I have to tell the Executive Director, and I feel [awful].” (*Senior manager*)

The structure of the organization thus prevents the Co-ordinators from administering and dealing effectively with issues because of having to pass through team leaders to accomplish certain managerial tasks. Conversely, the job of the team leaders also is made more difficult because they do not have a direct link to the Co-ordinators, who are sometimes in a better position to deal with issues.

“Sometimes for the team managers another frustrating part is that if I know that I went to staff directly with the policy and procedure, it would be so much easier for me. It would be easier to administer, no doubt about it. It’s just that I have that middle layer. I’m not trying to get rid of the middle layer. It’s just another layer that I have to train. They in turn have to pass it on, which never gets quite passed on correctly, and it always comes back and it just seems like you’re always revisiting something... It would be a lot easier to have the team managers report directly to the Co-ordinator, to have the Co-ordinator totally responsible for day-to-day functions, with your Executive Director dealing strictly with the political and board issues. That would be so much easier.” (*Senior manager*)

In essence, in an attempt to flatten the organizational hierarchy through a “simpler” reporting mechanism, the designers of the new organization inadvertently made the lines of communication more cumbersome for senior managers and team leaders. For team leaders, however, this brings about a special twist to structural power. Team leaders are the conduits between senior management, therapists, and the different cultural standing committees (Community Advisory Committees), and they have clinical responsibility for intervention programs. In terms of legal authority as a source of power, the team leaders carry the greatest amount of power next to the Executive Director, meaning that the two Co-ordinators are limited to consulting rather than directing. This also means that the team leaders do not have to deal directly with the Co-ordinators to create change and influence either the standing committees or the Executive Director.

With these increased responsibilities and dealing with multiple levels of the organization, the team leaders often must deal with issues that take away from their principal focus of managing the satellite clinics. One of the team leaders used an interesting analogy for this:

“There is something that I think is often forgotten here. Because my role is so central in the organization, I’m like the lunchmeat in the sandwich, caught between two layers. I don’t feel I have as much time and energy to invest into strictly team dynamics.” (*Team leader*)

This was echoed by one of the senior management Co-ordinators, who felt that the most frustrating part of the job was “feeling like the baloney in the sandwich.”

Senior Management’s Emphasis on Proper Lines of Communication:

The flattening of the hierarchy in their new organization initially was encouraging for therapists, for their part, especially when they compared it to the psychiatric hospital. They quickly became frustrated by senior managers’ insistence on following prescribed lines of communication, however, while senior managers did not always follow their own guidelines.

“The Executive Director wants to know about anything that gets communicated, but yet he refuses to communicate directly with us. Everything has to be communicated through the hierarchy. Don’t you find that a bit weird? ... Even to the extent in the communication, they don’t want us as front-line people to even phone payroll and say, ‘I think there was a problem with my pay check’. I don’t really understand it.” (*Therapist*)

This emphasis on following proper channels of communication was perhaps the most problematic issue for therapists in their relationships with other levels of the organization. There are indications of reprimands if lines of communication are not followed.

“They’re pretty stiff about their preferring everything to go through your team manager. That’s their, meaning administration, preference for communication... You’re kind of scolded if you forget and you call the Administrative Co-ordinator and want to know how much vacation time you have, or [you get from the team leader something like] ‘why didn’t you go through me first’.” (*Therapist*)

“There is a definite pecking order in the sense of following appropriate channels if you have an issue to deal with... I could probably go directly to the Executive Director or the Clinical Co-ordinator, but my sense is that it would create bad feelings or whatever. It would have to be handled with diplomacy.” (*Therapist*)

As a relational dynamic, the presence of possible reprimands implies that staffs at different levels occasionally crossed boundaries.

More Structure Leading to More Informal Channels of Communication:

It appears that as senior management emphasized lines and structures more and more, informal communication channels were developing.

“There are boundaries that are crossed because I know that some people don’t necessarily go through supervisors... Despite the formal hierarchy that exists, I also get the sense that there is a lot of informal negotiation that takes place behind the scenes... I think certain boundaries are crossed inappropriately by certain people, which tends to create maybe a sense of discontent in the staff or whatever.” (*Therapist*)

It is ironic that at the same time as senior managers were putting strong emphasis on proper lines of authority and not crossing boundaries, the Board of Directors of the organization authorized the presence and participation of a staff observer from each satellite clinic at each of their respective Community Advisory Committee’s meetings. The purpose of this was to receive direct staff input, and to some degree, to deal with accusations that team leaders were filtering information to and from the Community Advisory Committees and that staffs had no say in running the organization. One of the dangers with this approach for sen-

ior management was a greater possibility that informal alliances and coalitions would form between therapists and Committee members. Strategies around this are discussed in Chapter 6.

In essence, the structure and lines of communication prescribed by the organizational structure seemed to enhance communication problems between different organizational levels. It would be reasonable to assume that the more steps that are involved in the communications process, the more distance the communication must cover, and the greater the chance for errors, problems and conflict. The crossing of boundaries implies greater opportunities for power games around lines of communication.

Legal Versus Moral Authority in Terms of Power:

The court system represents another source of legal power. While there was only limited discussion about the topic, it was apparent that there would be court battles over hiring practices involving cultural issues. Requirements that clinical positions in the Aboriginal satellite clinic be advertised as “Bilingualism required — English and Ojibway”, for example, were fiercely fought by the union as unnecessary. The senior management level, on the other hand, supported by the Board of Directors of the organization, was as determined to see the bilingual requirements advertised as the union was to see the requirements dropped so that equal access would be granted to all staffs, regardless of cultural background. It is interesting that while some staffs believed that senior management had the *legal* right to determine job requirements, they did not have the *moral* authority to do so. As expected, few therapists and clerical staffs described themselves as involved in these legal battles because the issues were out of their hands and being tackled by senior management and union representatives. At the time of this study, the issue was far from being resolved.

There were thus indications that claims to cultural rights were used as an element of power, and it would be reasonable to assume that there were power plays around this issue.

Labor Union Contracts:

A final subcategory of formal or legal power was represented by labor union contracts. Given the history of conflict in the organization, it was no surprise that issues related

to unions were described as a legally sanctioned source of power. Therapists were the principal discussants on the subject, stating that until the new organization formally signed a new contract with the union or recognized the old contract that had been previously signed with the hospital, they felt powerless. The contract in itself thus represented a very powerful tool and motivator for both senior managers and therapists. Team leaders, for their part, made few comments about union contracts as sources of power, probably because they were not involved in negotiations and labor grievance procedures. In a sense, team leaders were more removed from contractual issues because other persons in the organization were given that responsibility. It is also possible that team leaders were more preoccupied with other dynamics, such as those related to issues of lines of authority and their being 'sandwiched' between upper and lower levels.

In summary, legal or formal power took on several different forms for the participants in this study. The descriptions of legal power that were gathered from the participants go beyond the regular definitions that authors such as Mintzberg (1983) and Bacharach and Lawler (1980) give of legal power when they write that it relates principally to legal prerogatives granted by those who are authorized to grant them. While there was some overlap between the different forms of power that were discussed in this category, we identified that policies and procedures, organizational structure and lines of authority, the court system, and labor union contracts were contributors to legal sources of power. This implies that legal authority does not only come out of the structure of an organization but also is related to other aspects such as cultural rights. It would seem important not to ignore that subtypes exist in analyzing power sources and strategies.

The absence of discussion about legal power from the clerical group was noteworthy. First, this may be explained in part by the small number of participants in this group. More important, however, the clerical staffs did not describe themselves as heavily involved in union business, nor did they regularly attend union meetings. They also did not describe themselves as involved in issues crossing boundaries or lines of authority. As will be discussed later, clerical staffs did relate somewhat to other forms of power, however.

Several issues were related to the organizational structure. The Clinical and Administrative Co-ordinators, for example, have no legal power over other staffs in the organization.

Basically put, team leaders are in a position of having legal power over both of the Co-ordinators because they may choose to ignore their recommendations, with the Co-ordinators having no recourse but to go to the Executive Director. In terms of dynamics, this sometimes led them to be caught in conflicts between the Executive Director and team leaders, or being triangulated or made a third party in situations that were not of their doing.

It also could be argued that it is to the advantage of team leaders to maintain the present hierarchical structure if they wish to retain as much legal power as possible. Under the current structure, team leaders report directly to the Executive Director and they do not have a hierarchical link to the Clinical and Administrative Co-ordinators.

“What happens is that, let’s say they have a problem with a Co-ordinator, they could do that Co-ordinator a lot of harm because they report directly to the Executive Director.” (*Senior manager*)

This implies the team leaders have legal power over persons who are “higher” than they are on the organizational chart. As a result, it is reasonable to expect power games around this issue. This will be discussed in Chapter 6.

5.1.2 COERCION OR INTIMIDATION

This source of power is based on the fears that it creates in persons. The target of coercion perceives the holder of power as a person who can make their life difficult. The capacity to suggest to other persons a desired behavior is based on actual or potential punishments, and it must appear as an offer that one cannot refuse.

In terms of interpersonal relations in the type of organization we studied, coercion may take shape through moral or interpersonal pressure including playing on the shame or guilt of others, threats of job loss, demotion or displaying strong disapproval or dissatisfaction with the actions of others. The predominant characteristic of coercive actions is the presence of strong negative verbal language or other actions that induce fear or strong discomfort, and that may endanger a constructive relationship between the parties. (Guilbault, 1984; Côté, 1986)

A long history of conflict was characteristic of the relationship between the different parties involved in the divestment of the children’s mental health centre from the psychiatric

hospital, including persons in the new organization. This led us to examine the data for specific examples of possible coercion, but there was little evidence that coercion or intimidation were overtly used by any of the participants. This is not to say that there were no attempts at intimidation, but the participants in the interviews did not discuss negative “strong-arm” sources of power.

Some therapists described themselves as motivated by strong anger against senior management in both the psychiatric hospital and the new organization, but they stopped short of saying that they specifically used coercive means. There are several possible reasons for this. First, one must have the ability to use intimidation effectively because of its strong negative connotation. There also must be an occasion or opportunity to use coercion, and the target of the coercion must feel the actions of the other as very discomforting.

Many participants in this study described themselves as ready for battle because of the years of conflict leading to the divestment. They described themselves as not ready to use openly coercive means, however, because it was not their preferred approach or “style.”

“I love conflict models when I never have to face the person that I’m conflicting with. I hate personal conflict. I really am quite chicken when it’s in my face.” (*Therapist*)

“I don’t like to ruffle feathers. That’s my nature.” (*Clerical staff*)

There also were indications of goodwill between the parties during the initial transition period that would minimize opportunities or necessity for coercion.

“We had felt [our way around a relationship with the Board of Directors], due to some of the internal wars we had previous to divestment with our administration at the psychiatric hospital. We very easily could have been seen as in a warring mood. From a union point of view, we were pretty battle-hardened from what had occurred before... I had all the lieutenants I had before. All of the executive within the union was the same executive that had gone through some of those battles. I don’t get the impression that we came on with our shields up. In fact, one of the very clear and deliberate responsibilities that I gave myself was to bring those shields down and say no, we already live with a new face here now.” (*Therapist*)

In essence, there was little evidence to suggest that the participants used coercive means, because they preferred to use collaborative approaches rather than outright coercion and strong-arm tactics. It would be reasonable to assume that staffs at all levels wanted to

work towards a positive resolution of conflicts, and that they were concerned about the destructive effect that this source of power can exert on relationships with others. Coercion, in effect, would lead to apprehension and defiance. Some staffs did admit that while they had thought about coercion, they would have to be pushed to the limit to invoke it because there were only so many risks they were willing to take before sacrificing their employment. They chose means less destructive than coercion, such as assertiveness and rewards and reprimands, as discussed below. It follows that the participants believed the more co-operative they were with each other, the less likely retribution or retaliation would take place. It would appear that coercion has a high cost when used.

5.1.3 REWARDS AND REPRIMANDS

French and Raven (1959) identified rewards and reprimands as sources of power and as an integral part of organizational functioning as early as 1959. For some writers, however, there are problems distinguishing between coercive and reward/reprimand power. As French and Raven (1959, p. 446) point out, “Is the withholding of a reward really equivalent to a punishment? Is the withdrawal of punishment equivalent to a reward?” We have chosen to separate “coercive power” from “reprimand power” in this section because coercion has a stronger negative connotation, whereas reprimands do not necessarily induce as much apprehension. We recognize that the two may exist along a spectrum, however.

Little Emphasis on Rewards:

It is interesting that there were no references to rewards and reprimands by any of the team leaders, clerical support staffs, and senior managers, and only a few indications in the largest group of participants, the therapists. Why were there so few references, and why only from therapists?

The absence of discussion about rewards was not surprising given the long-standing conflictual relationship between staffs and their former and current employers. Participants may have been less apt to discuss rewards, given that the focus of the study was on turbulent change in the organization, thereby inducing a mindset of answers in the participants. We also are led to wonder if rewards were given low value as a source of power in the organiza-

tion. More particularly, therapists described their organization as hierarchical and driven by lines of communication, efficiency, and control. Although they would have willingly accepted rewards of any kind, one might say that therapists were accustomed to conflict with their superiors and did not have expectations of receiving material or personal rewards (e.g., extra days off, praise, expressions of empathy after a hard day).

Studies carried out on communication processes provide evidence that social workers are not likely to employ many positive-oriented comments, which are a form of reward, in their work with other professionals. In a study examining verbal communications between social workers and school personnel, for example, Guilbault (1984) found that less than one percent of all verbal communications were aimed at supporting other staffs or at reducing their discomfort during meetings about clients. This may mean that staffs ascribed a low value to verbal rewards aimed at improving relations, such as positive comments and praise.

Regarding reprimands as a source of power, there was only limited discussion by the participants. Some therapists described that administrative personnel admonished them through verbal means, particularly when lines of communication were not followed.

“They’re pretty stiff about their preferring everything to go through your team manager. That’s their, meaning administration, preference for communication. I perceive that they violate those rules more often than they really permit us to violate them. If the Executive Director wants to call me, he’ll call me, but if I call the Administrative Co-ordinator and ask something then that person will say, ‘You should go through your team leader’... They can violate it whereas we can be in trouble... You’re kind of scolded if you forget and call the Administrative Co-ordinator and want to know how much vacation time you have or [you get something like] ‘Why didn’t you go through me first?’ [from your team leader].” (*Therapist*)

“I don’t think [calling the Ministry] would be allowed. It would have to go through the channels, and I’m sure if it didn’t that there would be some big repercussions.” (*Therapist*)

Performance appraisals were viewed as another way that reprimands were carried out.

“Going to a team manager for consultation [on a difficult case] is probably pretty dumb because then you’ve got a problem, right? ... So the next time you have an evaluation, that could be used against you, so why would you want to tell him you’re having a problem?” (*Therapist*)

Despite these examples, however, there was little evidence of actual reprimands occurring, or of the threat of using them as a source of power and control. It may be that therapists believed the more co-operative they were with senior and middle management, the less likely retribution or retaliation would take place. Another possible explanation may be that senior and middle managers employed subtle non-verbal means of communicating reprimands, and for that matter, rewards. Also, in some situations, overuse of rewards can reduce their value in the long run. Other possible reasons include the verbal nature of this research and the limited number of observations of non-verbal interactions that were gathered. It was impossible to track all non-verbal interactions of the participants because this was not the goal of the research.

The few references to reprimands that were highlighted in the data, however, occurred only in interviews with therapists. Reasons for this include the larger size of this group of participants when compared to senior management, team leaders, and clerical support staffs. It may also be that the recipients of reprimands are more apt to discuss them than the initiators of the reprimands. In essence, therapists may have discussed reprimands with the researcher out of anger and lack of understanding as to the reasons behind them. Finally, the physical distance between senior management and the therapists may have resulted in a lower number of reprimands from senior levels of the organization. Because senior management personnel are situated away from therapists, who are in satellite clinics across the city, they may not have the opportunity to observe behavior that would result in reprimands. This also would depend on the team leaders, who may choose not to report incidents to higher levels of the organization, which would further the negative relationships between staffs.

5.1.4 EXPERTISE, SPECIALIZED SKILLS, AND KNOWLEDGE

To use Mintzberg's (1989) system of classifying organizations, the children's mental health centre that was studied is a *professional bureaucracy* characterized by power that is distributed rather than concentrated. The expertise of professionals enters into play because the organization requires them to carry out complex and specialized work that is accomplished

through skills developed by extensive training. Professionals thus gain power through their base of specialized knowledge and skills that are scarce, non-substitutable, and essential to the survival of the organization.

In the current study, there was evidence that expertise and specialized knowledge and skills were tied to power. This is certainly not surprising given that the organization studied is a professional bureaucracy. What types of expert power existed? What issues were related to expertise and power?

Clinical expertise as a source of power is the mainstay of the present organization because of the specialized knowledge of social workers, psychologists, child and youth workers, and other types of counselors working there. There are different types of expertise in the present organization, depending on the hierarchical level. The Executive Director is a specialist in managing multi-dimensional organizations. A criterion for his hiring was experience in managing cultural issues.

“If you look at the job description that was there for this particular position back when, they weren’t looking for someone with necessarily clinical experience, but they were looking for someone that they described in many ways as a seasoned administrator and really someone with administrative background, and I guess political sensitivity to the different cultural milieus given the kind of organization this one was meant to be.” (*Senior manager*)

The Administrative Co-ordinator has expertise in working with budgets, financial statements, payroll financial auditing, and setting up policies and procedures, expertise that no other person in the organization possesses. The Clinical Co-ordinator has expertise in diagnosing and treating a wide range of clinical mental health problems, with a particular expertise in consulting with staffs on difficult cases, also in providing clinical leadership to other staffs of the agency. Therapists, for their part, described themselves as having strong skills in treating psychosocial problems in clients, and in designing and implementing primary prevention programs in the community. Thus, each level has an area of speciality.

Administrative, financial, and clinical expertise were not the only types of specialized knowledge described by the participants. Clerical staffs, for example, described themselves as carrying out specific reception and organizational tasks in dealing with staffs and the public. They were particularly proud of their capacity to adapt quickly to a changing environment,

such as being able to replace staffs in other satellite clinics who have different job descriptions, at a moment's notice. While support staffs are not normally seen as "professionals", they nonetheless carry out tasks that require knowledge about specific functions. While every member of an organization is an expert in some way (Crozier, 1964), however, power is gained only through those skills that are difficult to reproduce. In the case of support staffs, it may be argued that expertise is not a primary source of power because of the substitutable nature of their skills.

In essence, there were different types of expertise or knowledge required because of the division of labor and the social mandate of the organization. Related to these were two principal themes: the lack of recognition of past experience at the psychiatric hospital and the resultant setting of boundaries between hierarchical levels, and cultural issues. These are explained below.

Senior Managers Not Valuing Therapists' Past Work Experience:

A frequent theme was that therapists felt senior management had little knowledge of the skills required to carry out the functions of the therapists. Most of the therapists said that upper levels of the organization had little appreciation for the difficulty of the work accomplished.

"I don't think [senior management] knows what we do. They really, fundamentally do not even know or appreciate what we do... For specifics, I think the Executive Director has not ever worked in the field. The only practical experience he's had is with the mentally retarded. I find that anytime he makes a comment about our type of work, it minimizes and expresses an under-appreciation for what we do, and the complexity and the stresses of our work." (*Therapist*)

"I don't believe the Executive Director knows what I do. He'll pretend he knows, but I don't think he has any idea of the work that we do, as he didn't even before. When they were coming to take over, did he ever take a minute to come and talk to any of us to see what we were up to, what we were all about?" (*Therapist*)

For some participants, the focus of the agency seemed more on completing paperwork properly than on using one's skills and experience in therapy.

“I would say this agency has put quite a high priority on paperwork. I guess they need to be accountable. I recognize that, and they’re trying to get accredited, so that’s important, but I also think that part of that comes from the background of the training of the Executive Director, that this is his strength. So of course he can’t emphasize the clinical end because he doesn’t know it. What else can he do except push the policies, procedures and paperwork?” (*Therapist*)

Regarding providing input to the organization, the therapists felt generally frustrated at the lack of recognition of their expertise, and that expert knowledge counted only if it coincided with what senior management wanted.

“In the beginning we believed that what we were saying and what we were doing, and the kinds of things that we were getting, were being considered as valid and valuable, that kind of stuff... As time went along, I began to feel like this is just lip service. We’re being asked to input but it’s some sort of bureaucratic strategy that’s being used, that somebody’s learned somewhere.” (*Therapist*)

There also is evidence that expertise was equated with academic qualifications as opposed to years of professional experience in the field.

“There is an issue about staff who are qualified versus those who aren’t. There are supposed to be a few clinicians who are not qualified, but they’ve been at their job for years. Those people consulted the union because there was talk about laying off eleven persons, and there were rumors that ... well, it was all never confirmed. It was all rumors.” (*Therapist*)

“It’s no unknown fact that [a few of us] are probably the least educated out of everybody that is here in terms of degrees... I’m sorry, I’m not apologizing, but this agency definitely looks at your paper credentials and lets you know that you do not have your B.A.... People are not looking for skills and what you can and cannot do, and what you can accomplish... [My ten years of experience] mean nothing. What’s important is what you have on that paper. It’s not important all the good we do and all the good reports that we get from schools. The Executive Director couldn’t give two shits about us.” (*Therapist*)

The general sentiment for therapists is that they did not feel respected in the skills and expertise that they brought to their job, and that their expert input was not valued. For senior management, however, academic qualifications were an important aspect of expertise. These suggest two further dynamics. First, they imply that expertise of the therapists was

diminished as a source of power because senior management did not recognize it openly and showed a lack of appreciation for its value. On the other hand, therapists may have drawn clear boundaries between themselves and senior management by distancing themselves from management, and by showing they had little in common in terms of skills and experience. This would be in an effort to *increase* their expert power. In essence, this demonstrates that a person or group of persons may increase their power by minimizing the essential value of the skills of another person. It also shows that a person may attempt to increase his or her power by emphasizing the differences in skills and experience between oneself and another.

Cultural Identity As A Source of Power:

Cultural issues also were related to expertise power. The Native clinic of the organization, for example, was designed specifically to address the psychosocial problems of Aboriginal people. The organization sought to hire clinical staffs with specialized skills and experience to deal with these clients. One requirement was to have lived on a Native reservation. The other was a claim by the Native Community Advisory Committee that persons with Aboriginal ancestry were the only qualified persons that could offer Native services, and that traditional academic qualifications were less important. One example provided was that traditional therapy approaches were not effective in the Native culture, and that “Elders” were often consulted to suggest other methods to deal with problems. Due to the small pool of Native professionals having completed Bachelor’s or Master’s degrees in Social Work, Psychology or related social sciences, the organization chose to hire a Native person with less than the required academic qualifications and work experience. Not surprisingly, this caused much conflict with the union, which threatened legal action if the organization chose to waive the hiring requirements for some positions while insisting candidates meet minimum requirements for others. In terms of dynamics, the Native unit strongly felt that the union was biased against Native people, and this caused much friction between representatives of the two groups. This was echoed in the Francophone unit, which felt that more than simple bilingualism was necessary, and that therapists needed to have a strong understanding of the subtleties of the Francophone culture. This all but eliminated non-Francophone candidates from these positions. In terms of sources of power, the union was trying to block or

counter moves by senior administrators that would change hiring practices, and thus the status of the union in hiring.

In summary, expertise as a source of power revolved around several issues, most notably the lack of recognition of past work experience and accomplishments, and cultural dynamics. The scarcity and non-substitutability of skills was shown to be especially important for power in the Native clinic. Also, the refusal of senior management to recognize the past work experience of staffs seemed to reduce the value of their skills as essential to the organization.

5.1.5 CONTROLLING RESOURCES, AND CONTROLLING RELATIONS BETWEEN AN ORGANIZATION AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

There was some evidence from the participants that power was ascribed directly to controlling resources. Senior management, for example, determines and monitors budgets for all satellite clinics in the organization. Refusal to approve certain expenses would thus represent a form of control over the organization's resources. Conflicts over resources focused on three main elements for the participants: uncertainty around possible financial cutbacks, choosing new equipment and furniture, and claims to cultural rights for controlling resources.

Controlling financial resources and costs:

Despite the financial cutbacks the organization faced, some therapists felt that senior management was excessively controlling in trying to reduce costs. During a meeting just before the Christmas holidays, for example, the Executive Director met with staffs in each satellite clinic to gather input on ways of controlling expenditures. What the Executive Director intended as obtaining input from therapists was perceived as trivial and controlling by them.

“The Executive Director came to us just before the holidays and dropped a bomb with all the financial pressures of the new budget, that there were going to be cutbacks, how we were going to survive, etc. Everybody was in a panic. It definitely put pressure on us. Staff reacted and were distressed, and they didn't know what was going to happen with the cutbacks. We didn't want to lose staff like L... and D... You know, we wanted the agency to survive and so we tried to find means... We started talking about ways to keep

all staff, even a two-month shutdown. But after an hour of that, it was enough... It was going down to boxes of Kleenex, how we were going to cut down on boxes of Kleenex, paper clips, Xerox machines, trivial things... They're talking about peanuts... We now pay twelve cents per page for photocopies if it's personal. For a while, we didn't even have boxes of Kleenex for our clients. We had to buy our own." (*Therapist*)

Despite their asking for input from all levels of the organization, however, senior management retained much of the control over financial resources, as they were legally mandated to do. It is arguable that while financial resources were *essential* to the functioning of the organization and in *short supply* (that is, not easily replaceable by other sources of funding), senior management did not have a large margin of freedom in terms of using financial resources as a source of power. They could not simply shut down the organization or one of its clinics to save money. Internal control was through limited means such as denying access to conference moneys to all staffs and minimizing photocopying and materials costs.

Control over choosing office design and furniture:

Other examples of resources as a potential source of power came when new furniture was purchased as staffs were moving from the hospital to their new satellite clinics. In a constructive gesture, senior management wanted staffs to provide input, but the reaction they faced was resistance.

"I wanted to change the furnishings. I felt that they should get bright colors. I wanted not a hospital setting but something professional, I felt that the staff had to be involved in choosing the furniture, in choosing colors and choosing layouts, and that was frustrating. [Staff] resisted because a lot of the components were purchased with computers in mind for the future. We started getting into conflicts about 'Are you telling us down the road that we'll have to use computers?' I was just saying that we might as well have that in mind, because eventually computers are going to be here... Anything from the hospital I wanted to get rid of, right or wrong. I want to get rid of it. I decided that it would be nice to have a new clinic, new things. I wanted to pick up their spirits." (*Senior manager*)

Similar issues arose when choosing office designs.

"We brought the decorator in and then said 'Here he is guys'. That led to problems. Some staff didn't care. One cared so much that he wanted to see more samples and fabric with a different texture, and the choice in the car-

peting really wasn't as broad as he thought it should be. In the meantime, central admin is saying 'We have to order this stuff. Hurry it up.'" (*Team leader*)

There is thus evidence that issues related to control of resources were present during the development of the organization, especially in the initial phases of the separation from the hospital. It can be argued that for staffs who were former employees of the psychiatric hospital, there had never been the opportunity for choice and control over resources such as furniture and office design. Despite their many complaints to the administration of the psychiatric hospital over several years preceding the divestment, for example, their building was repaired only minimally and never remodeled. It is possible that when staffs transferred to the new organization, they carried with them old sets of expectations that their choices would not be respected. Some felt they could not exercise effective pressure around resources and thus did not bother to try.

Culture and the moral right to control resources:

Cultural issues were intermixed with the control of resources. As described earlier, a Francophone advocacy group had been pressuring the government for years for the full control of financial and administrative resources to Francophones in the community. They were partially successful in their bid, as the new organizational structure included a Community Advisory Committee for the Francophone group. Control over financial resources, however, was given to the larger board of directors, of which three members were representatives sitting on the Francophone Committee. The Francophone group nonetheless had secured funding to obtain staffs, offices, and clinical material for service delivery to their culture.

Control over the Native satellite clinic's resources quickly became a problem for senior management. As described in Chapter Four, although commitments were made that moneys for the development of the Native unit would be flowing from the government, the organization had yet to see the funds. In this case, the Ministry of Community and Social Services had the ultimate power in terms of resources by holding the purse strings. Native issues were not only related to the presence or absence of funds, however, but over the moral right to obtain and control them. Several staffs at all levels spoke of the government's

mandate to recognize the Native population's needs, and to increase services to this group. In essence, through the political commitments of the Ministry, the organization was obliged to provide resources and relinquish control because the money "belonged to the Natives". At the time of this study, the issue remained unresolved, and because of the limited number of Native participants in the study, we have little information on the interplay between culture and the control over resources. Further studies along this line are certainly warranted.

In summary, control over financial and material resources represented an important source of power in this organization. This placed the organization in a difficult position. While it had a role of ensuring consistency across the organization and of cutting costs through centralized control, it also had to respect the individual cultural and linguistic rights of each satellite clinic by recognizing the right to self-determination of the Native and Francophone units. As a source of uncertainty, control over resources carried much potential power.

Being in a central position for resources:

Control of relations with the environment also was an important facet in the power relations of the agency in terms of obtaining material resources. This was evident in several ways. One of the senior clerical staffs, for example, was responsible for dealing with landlords, suppliers, and other resource providers in the community. During our interview with this person, a telephone interruption provided an example of how she could control certain resources of the organization.

"(After the telephone call) ... There is an example of one of the things that will happen. That was one of the team managers. He's having some problems with ice build-up at his back door and a stop sign that they wanted installed. My responsibility is to contact the landlord and have that situation cleared up. It's not that they don't know where to go. It's part of the policy that this is my function, and also in fairness to the landlord, so they don't have half-a-dozen people calling them three or four times a day and not knowing who's calling them from where. It's one contact, which is me, and that makes it easier for actually everybody." (Clerical staff)

In essence, by virtue of her relationship with external service providers, this person had the potential of slowing down or speeding up repairs and flows of materials, somewhat

enhancing or frustrating the efforts of others to ensure the smooth functioning of the organization.

Therapists increasing their latitude through external relationships:

Control of relations with the environment also was evident in examples described by therapists, but in a different light. Due to the community-oriented nature of the organization, several therapists worked with other professionals outside the agency on common intervention programs. They felt this gave them some latitude and relationships that were beyond the direct control of senior levels of their organization.

“There are four of us that are seconded one day a week to a prevention program. That means one day a week we’re accountable to the program, not this agency. They’re quite respectful of that. I don’t account for the things, well, I’ll tell this agency the things I do in the program. If I want somebody’s advice, I’ll go and ask for it, but I don’t really account to this agency. It’s like they give me the program, so it’s given me some space.” (*Therapist*)

In terms of power relations, senior levels were not in a position to gain full control over the professional relationships of its staffs with the outside because of the latter’s involvement with external and prestigious intervention programs. With regard to the multicultural aspects of the organization, it was possible for some staffs to increase uncertainty in senior management, and thus to increase their own margin of freedom, by developing links related to culture outside the agency. It would obviously be difficult for the organization to criticize or cease these external relationships because this would go against the mandate of the agency. According to some staffs, senior management felt “nervous” about these links because they did not know where they would lead politically. The implication here is that there were opportunities for possible coalitions between staffs and other organizations, and that these could possibly erode senior management’s power base. External professional relationships also acted as an “anchor” for several staffs, providing them with opportunities for professional growth that were outside the sphere of their own agency.

Discussions about the structure of the agency also were associated with control of relations with the environment. There was an overwhelming feeling from the therapists that senior levels of the organization somewhat discouraged outside networking, and that remov-

ing the “top” layer of the Executive Director and two Co-ordinators would resolve many of the relational problems both within and outside the agency.

“If recommendations were ever that the top level of the Executive Director and Co-ordinators be removed, I think there would be many changes in the organization. There would be less power at high levels and things would be equal. There would still be the team leaders, but it would be much more shared in terms of the exchange of ideas. We would have more input and we would have more power as clinicians.” (*Therapist*)

During the period leading up to the divestment, staffs felt that they might influence the changes that were going to occur by having access to government decision-makers. As the Steering Committee was designing the new model of service delivery, middle managers and therapists of the psychiatric hospital maintained that they should become involved in direct negotiations with the government in a belief this would influence the entire divestment process. This was met with no success, however, given that the government was dealing only with the Steering Committee of the new organization, and that they were not open to the idea of dealing directly with staff groups.

“Individuals had firm beliefs that they could dictate the agency’s mandate, and it didn’t work. They were led to think that it should, and that was wrong... I have a belief that none of the therapists had an understanding of the power of the decision-making body that came from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, nor the Ministry of Health. Therapists, somehow, felt they had more input than the Ministry... Somehow, in this organization, front-line people had a belief that is inaccurate, a belief that they had more, because they had a clinical role, and because of their personal, professional self-assessment, they thought that they had a more powerful contribution than the senior administration at Queen’s Park. That was nonsense, pure nonsense.” (*Therapist*)

In essence, the prospect to participate with the psychiatric hospital’s senior management in negotiations with the government did not pan out and led to much disappointment and unmet expectations. Staffs were never given the opportunity to carry this through. Combined with a belief that they would be armed with the weight of clinical expertise, staff’s attempts to manipulate relations with the environment (e.g., the Ministry) failed.

To summarize, control of resources and control of relationships with the environment were active power sources leading to and during the turbulent period experienced by

the organization's staffs. The control of resources remained mainly in the hands of senior management and government officials by virtue of the control of financial resources. For the control of relationships with the environment, there were differences between different hierarchical levels. Clerical staffs worked more closely with components related to material things, whereas therapists were more involved with trying to influence the direction of the agency by communicating with government officials. Clearly, the links or boundaries to the outside became the object of power strategies. Cultural identity entered into play.

5.1.6 CONTROLLING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE ORGANIZATION

“Information is power, and today everybody has information and they all have the same information, but they don't necessarily believe it's there, or it's not believed they have it, or they don't believe it's been communicated, or they don't believe it's being shared with them.” (*Senior manager*)

The quotation above summarizes well the dynamics around information and communications as power sources in the organization that was studied. Controlling information is considered important because it influences the perception that persons have of their situation and thus the way they act (Morgan, 1986). Along with authority and expertise as sources of power, control of information and communications generated much discussion from the participants. While there were many dynamics around information and communications, the great majority related to mistrust around the sharing and manipulation of information.

Mistrust around information sharing was an important issue throughout the transition period. As described in Chapter Four, staffs historically felt isolated from decision-making processes at the psychiatric hospital, and these feelings were carried into the new organization. From early on in the development of the new organization, there were accusations that information was manipulated.

“This organization manages information, manages percentages, its administrative linkages with the public and specifically with its board and its steering committee. There's very much manipulation of information... Minutes are edited, for example. You know, it comes across in many ways. What is said in a meeting and how it is said in the minutes bear no resemblance to [what ac-

tually happens]... Great fiction! [The minutes] reflect more a novel than reality.” (*Therapist*)

“They told us that we were moving from our day treatment building because it was too big and that there wasn’t enough money to pay for it, but when you compare the money we spent there versus the money it cost us to move here and all the renovations, things don’t add up... There were many things they didn’t tell us. We only found out the real reasons for the move several months later, [when they explained it was to get away from the stigma of the old therapy model.] What really gets me angry is that honesty can’t be there before the fact. Don’t say money when it isn’t!” (*Therapist*)

A potentially explosive situation occurred when union personnel came into possession of confidential financial information that had not been shared with them.

“Last year, after we were told about the possibility of losing twelve staff, the union reps mysteriously discovered in their mail boxes an unsigned and undated document with items highlighted on it. It looked like a budget document that the Administrative Co-ordinator had been working on. They started working with the numbers in the document and noticed there was no shortage of money. They confronted the Executive Director, who said that twelve persons had to go. They said ‘bullshit! According to our calculations, only one staff has to be laid off.’ ... Everybody had those numbers, but the way they were highlighted was the key to it all, and if you didn’t have the key, you didn’t understand.” (*Therapist*)

Information from the finance office was viewed as important not only because it provided complete information on the resources of the organization, but also on ways those resources were used or deployed by senior management. The information also had the potential of embarrassing senior management in any discrepancies that were found.

Sharing information and trying to increase its value:

Senior management made several attempts to reduce the distance between them and other levels by holding meetings to gather suggestions for resolving the organization’s financial problems. They held these meetings in each of the satellite clinics with the intent of conveying facts about the seriousness of the finances of the organization. Veteran and newcomer therapists unanimously viewed this as a temporary pacifier, however. Many accused senior management of going through the motions of listening but of paying no atten-

tion to the actual content or value of their suggestions. Senior managers, for their part, said there was little more they could do to convince staffs of the accuracy and completeness of the information that was shared. Mistrust was high.

“One thing is that everybody tries to take control. When the Executive Director discussed the agency’s financial problems with us, staff said, ‘We want more information. We want all the information. Give us the full budget. Where is the money going?’ Once they got the information they said, ‘You’re not telling us everything’. Again, suspicion. ‘You’re not telling us everything. What is this line? Who’s greasing his pockets?’” (*Therapist*)

The physical distance between the administration site and the satellite clinics compounded problems of mistrust around information. It was physically impossible for senior management staffs to meet weekly with lower-level staffs. This implied that therapists had fewer opportunities to use formal and informal influence to obtain information.

In terms of relational dynamics, the therapists’ attempts to obtain information and thus to control it represents a challenge to the traditional boundaries between levels in the organization. Normally, one would expect major financial decisions to be a function of senior management levels with perhaps limited input from other levels. In the present organization, however, the full sharing of information occurred and therapists became involved to some degree in organizational planning. By sharing or opening the problem to therapists and seeking their input, however, senior management may have inadvertently opened a door that was difficult to close. In further research, it would be interesting to examine the impact of such actions and to try to reverse them.

Clerical staffs, for their part, described themselves as more distant from the problems described above, although they nonetheless observed them.

“I think we really need to work on our communication. Again, that’s because we’re so scattered. One team might feel that they were told something, that they understood something, and the other team might feel ‘Nobody told us that. Geez, we didn’t know that’... Sometimes also, maybe something is said or something is going to be done, and it’s felt that maybe overall all staff don’t have to know right at the present time, but it would have been better if, overall, staff did know.” (*Clerical staff*)

For one of the unionized clerical staffs working in the administration offices, knowing about confidential information often put her in potential conflict with her co-workers.

“You’re often caught in the middle where you’re talking with your peers. I might be talking to some of the receptionists, but I can’t because of my position here, because you overhear so much confidentiality. My position is unionized. When I go to union meetings, they look at you as if you’re a traitor... A lot of the time, since I’ve been here, the reason I haven’t gone to any union meetings is that if I hear, well you know that what you hear is confidential and you go to a union meeting, and they’re going to bring up things, and I’d get very involved, and I would never want to disclose any confidentiality.” (*Clerical staff*)

Team leaders not openly exerting power in their central role:

Central to all communications in the organization are the team leaders because they represent the conduit between senior management and therapists. They also are responsible for communicating with their Community Advisory Committee. When staffs have concerns they would like their Community Advisory Committee to address, they must pass these through their team leader. The power of such a central position had implications for upper and lower levels.

“Different teams have different perceptions of where things are at, feel that they are included, excluded, feel that management treats them this way, and often it’s a reflection of their own manager, how he or she may react to them or may interpret what’s happening or may not be a good conduit of information or may be an excellent conduit of information.” (*Senior manager*)

By virtue of their position in the hierarchy, team leaders may be described as the “gatekeepers” of information in the sense that they may choose to pass on information, to delay or speed it up, or to alter its contents in their own favor. There was little evidence from any of the participants that team leaders employed information as a source of power, however. Several reasons may explain this. First, most of the conflict in the organization was directly between senior management levels and therapists. Team leaders said they put much effort in avoiding becoming “sandwiched” between the two levels by merely conveying the required information between the two levels and then letting the others “fight it out” between them. In essence, they steered away from issues that might have threatened their independence or margin of freedom. Second, the manipulation of information could only have gone so far before other parties discovered it. Also, with the strong atmosphere of mistrust

that existed, manipulating the flow of information would simply have meant repeating the same patterns as other staffs, thus perpetuating the problem.

In summary, information was shown to be a precious commodity in the organization in that there was much conflict around it. As important as the actual control of information, however, was the *perception* that some actors controlled and manipulated information. Ironically, while therapists said they could not depend on the information they received from management because it was inaccurate and biased, they nonetheless fought furiously to obtain all the information they could. This may be understood as an effort to minimize their dependency on senior management in terms of information while trying to reduce the value of the information. The issue of trust appeared to be a major factor in this dynamic. The control of information provided much potential to disrupt the organization, or conversely, to assure its smooth functioning.

5.1.7 CONTROLLING ACCESS TO POWER HOLDERS

Power flows to those who can sway other powerful persons. In the present organization, staffs were frustrated at their unsuccessful attempts to influence senior management, and they believed their only remaining recourse was accessing their Board of Directors and the Community Advisory Committees. Dynamics for this source of power revolved around three elements: contact with the Steering Committee prior to the organization's separation, contact with government officials, and means of accessing power holders through the new organizational structure. We will discuss these here.

“Out with the old, in with the new.”

Prior to the official launching of the new mental health centre in 1990, there was a general feeling by the therapists and middle management staffs that they did not have access to decision-makers. First, the employees of the children’s mental health centres in the hospital historically felt distant from their board of directors. As the new organization was taking shape in the late 1980’s, middle managers and therapists had a difficult time accessing members of the Board of Directors of the psychiatric hospital to gain their support. Any requests to meet board members were met with statements from hospital administrators such as, “They are fully aware of the problem. They are dealing with it.” Second, despite several opportunities for accessing the new corporation’s Steering Committee through public forums, there was a strong feeling that the Steering Committee was avoiding anything to do with the psychiatric hospital, including its staffs, or simply going through the motions of talking to them.

“I think the Standing Committees attempted to meet with us on several occasions, so they did do that, but a lot of it was nice glossy work.” (*Therapist*)

This was further emphasized when the newly hired Executive Director of the mental health centre told two existing middle managers at the hospital that they would have to reapply for their own jobs in the new corporation, and that they were not guaranteed jobs there. In essence, the feeling was “out with the old, in with the new”. Contacting government officials also was discouraged, as evidenced by the verbal reprimand that one of the two Directors of mental health at the psychiatric hospital received when he contacted the Ministry concerning similar issues. Thus, accessing power holders at the Board and government levels to influence them was difficult at best.

After the organizational separation, these dynamics remained. Therapists felt that the team leaders were limiting their access to information and to decision-makers by emphasizing official lines of communication. This was despite claims by senior management that great strides had been made to open communications.

“If I look at what we’ve done to open communications, I think we’ve gone further than most organizations. Our minutes of board meetings, standing committee meetings are available to staff, so that’s theirs. If they want to discuss any point that is there they are free to do so. They’re even free to come

to me with any points that they feel is not being dealt with. They've been invited, they've been informed that they're invited to attend any board or standing committee meeting they wish to." (*Senior manager*)

Staffs obtaining limited representation on the Community Advisory Committees:

At the time this study was carried out, and following pressure from staffs to keep informed about the running of the organization, the Community Advisory Committees were expanded to include one staff representative from each satellite clinic as an observer.

"We've opened the doors, we share minutes, and at the standing committee meetings, they've decided as teams that they wanted to have reps there, that they want to have people at all standing committee meetings. It's their choice. We haven't stopped that from happening. In the initial description, it said that any input the staff wanted to bring should be brought through team managers. Now they want to have input mechanisms other than by through the team managers." (*Senior manager*)

Thus, a change in organizational structure allowed access by therapists to the decision-makers of the agency. Although issues of mistrust remained, this was well received by staffs.

"The Standing Committees did invite us, which is a positive thing. We basically have attended, but no voting power. It's their agenda, but we can be there... We can also put things on the agenda. I think we need to be careful not to abuse that privilege, that we're clear in terms of what issues get on to the Board. I've been invited, and other people have been invited to [make presentations] to their Standing Committees." (*Therapist*)

Providing staffs with full access to the Community Advisory Committees implied several potential problems for senior and middle managers, however. First, the potential for mixing roles was strong. While therapists had no right to vote on the Committee, they had the right to put items on the agenda of Committee meetings and of speaking on issues. Over the long run, some might come to believe they were part of the policy development level of the organization, although the agency was not designed this way. A related problem was the possible involvement of Committee members in the daily operation of the satellite clinics, which is a managerial function (Mintzberg, 1989). By accessing Committee members and explaining daily situations to them, Committee members were drawn into situations that

should not have gone beyond the team leaders, according to the structure of the agency. In essence, there was a strong possibility leading to confusion around “who is managing what”. This is a potential problem in that it reduced the authority of the team leaders. By being able to communicate directly with their Advisory Committees, there is no question that staffs could bypass their team leaders and go directly to the Board of Directors.

“For example, I could decide tomorrow that I’m firing Joe Blo, or that we’re going to have a day of suspension of an employee for whatever. The last thing that makes sense in an organization, and that just kills organizations, is that the next thing you know, that employee or another employee phones a member of the board and starts saying this or that. The sad part would be if the board member said, ‘You’re kidding. He did that? That’s unreasonable.’”
(*Senior manager*)

This implied that team leaders would lose some power to filter information between levels if they chose to do so.

In essence, structural changes that occurred just as this study was getting underway potentially had implications for the control of access to power holders within the organization. Unfortunately, we were not able to determine the full effects or consequences of changing access to power holders on the dynamics of the organization because of the timing of the study. This would be a fruitful area for further research.

5.1.8 REFERENT OR CHARISMATIC SOURCES OF POWER

A person possesses referent or charismatic power when s/he demonstrates personal characteristics that attract others and that lead to identification to him or her. (Bélanger, Bergeron, Côté-Léger, and Jacques, 1979). These characteristics may include elements ranging from charm, physical beauty, reputation, or success, all qualities that bring about admiration. Identification stems from individuals wanting to imitate the person that is being admired.

Careful review of the data for this study revealed no references to charismatic power. In relationships within same hierarchical groups and within each satellite clinic, charisma and identification were never mentioned as having an impact or being a driving force. This is not to say that staffs maintained entirely negative relationships with one another or that they did

not try to build trusting relationships. Many staffs had positive relationships with one of the Co-ordinators because they felt the Co-ordinator gave them much “space” in their actions. The focus of the interviews, however, seemed to have been on the conflict that staffs experienced throughout the difficult divestment period.

Some of the explanations for the lack of examples of referent or charismatic power include the fact that the semi-structured interviews may have guided the participants to discuss conflict rather than positive relationships. This is possible when one considers that the participants overwhelmingly discussed the years of conflict leading to the divestment from the psychiatric hospital, the ensuing turbulence, their letdown in terms of expectations for improvement, and the low level of trust between senior management and the therapists.

It is possible that the absence of referent power was simply due to members not feeling they had access to this type of power. Attempts by the organization’s leaders to employ charismatic qualities or means, for example, would probably have been met with suspicion from therapists. Unfortunately, the current examination is unable to find further reasons for this without entering the realm of speculation. Further detailed research into charismatic power during turbulent change periods may help determine factors that facilitate or inhibit its effects.

5.1.9 CULTURAL IDENTITY

The presence of cultural elements seemed to be an important factor in the turbulence and uncertainty of the organizational changes that occurred, particularly in the Francophone and Native units. In this section, we will argue that cultural identity should be identified as a separate source of power.

As outlined in Chapter Four, conflict over the cultural control of service delivery was an important element leading to the establishment of the new children’s corporation. In the late 1980’s, the Minister of Community and Social Services decreed five guiding principles for the new corporation to try to bring the conflicts to an end. Three of the five principles related to cultural and linguistic issues: the establishment of a new *bilingual* child and family intervention corporation, *distinct service streams* for both Francophone and non-Francophone populations, and *split governing jurisdictions* over the management of *culturally appropriate service*

streams. This meant that the organization was officially mandated and directed to offer services in French and in English. The government's decree also forced the agency to respect the indigenous culture of Francophone and Native groups by providing them with control over services. As one of the participants described it, this was to be a highly touted model of service delivery for the province:

“If I look at the Ministry, there were promises made that this was going to be the Cadillac structure that was the envy. They had been told by the Deputy Minister that we were the envy because of our structure and of the way that we respected culture. We were the envy of the Minister.” (*Team leader*)

By examining the history of the organization, we find that cultural elements were woven into the design of the new mental health centre in its mandate, structure, and operation. Cultural elements ultimately dictated the structure of the new organization.

In discussing power and turbulent change, several participants repeatedly mentioned issues specific to Francophone or Native rights and culture, and that these issues provided some degree of control to those groups. Three themes seemed to be particularly important in terms of culture: keeping a separate cultural identity for some satellite clinics, the sense of loss of control over decision-making by the Anglophone units, and disputes over job qualifications.

Ensbrining a separate cultural and linguistic identity for each satellite clinic:

In terms of keeping a separate identity for each of the satellite clinics, there was little argument from the beginning as to why this was made a key element of the new organization.

“The actual splitting of the teams and those boundary divisions, when they were created, I don't remember a lot of people speaking out against them. They were things that came down from the board as things that had to be imposed. It had to be this way. It was the best way to do it. It was the only way to guarantee a culturally sensitive agency, particularly for Francophones. I felt that if it's that much in the balance, then let's do it.” (*Therapist*)

“At one of the cross-cultural workshops that we had, Francophone workers were able to say, ‘We need to be separate. We need separate locations’, which is a really hard thing to say... I guess what I'm trying to say is that I can ap-

preciate why a French team and a Native team might choose to be separate because there are questions of assimilation.” (*Therapist*)

Thus, issues of sensitivity to culture and of preventing assimilation of the cultures played an important role. There also were indications that culture was invoked as a source of power when agency-wide issues came to a head for the Francophone unit.

“When the Executive Director comes and tells us that there is to be no more overtime, our team leader can say things like, ‘Our team doesn’t function that way. At the cultural level, the Francophones don’t live like that.’ ... When it came time to centralize the library, our team leader disagreed that all books should be at a single location and said ‘Is it the Native and Anglophone workers who are going to read our French books?’” (*Therapist*)

While therapists from all satellite clinics recognized the need for a separate identity for the Francophone and Native units, some of them felt that keeping them physically separate was detrimental to the agency because this created comparisons and competition between the units.

“Before, we had a strong feeling of togetherness when we were all in the same building at the hospital campus. We divided into three teams; we lost the sense of team spirit. Now, I find that there is a lot of competition between the teams that was never there before. There is competition in terms of length of client wait lists. There is competition between Francophones and Anglophones, and other team leaders are always asking us how long our lists are. They want to know to compare themselves and bring down their lists if they have to. When lists are long, there is pressure to do something.” (*Therapist*)

This type of dynamic stems from historical competition between the Francophone and Anglophone divisions at the psychiatric hospital, where some felt that the Francophones were receiving more funding per client than other hospital departments. Nonetheless, the recognition of the need for separate units was strong and generally supported by staffs.

From senior management’s perspective, respect for culture was something that was legally and morally mandated by the provincial government and the community.

“The Native community has always argued that the mainstream services don’t respond effectively to Natives, and Natives don’t access the traditional services that we have, which are the mainstream services. Why? The white man’s approach, solution, mind-set does not necessarily answer the Native

approach. It doesn't include the Native component, world vision, etc." (*Senior manager*)

Senior management, and by extension the Board of Directors of the agency, thus were not in a position to question cultural issues because the moral and cultural realities of their community had to be understood and integrated into the organization. This would perhaps increase uncertainty for opposing parties because culture was not something that could be negotiated.

Team leaders, for their part, felt that the cultural boundaries between the teams were useful to protect and enhance the identity of their teams.

"If you look at Francophone interests, there was always this kind of issue in the agency. 'What's yours is mine, and what is mine is mine.' They also had this thing, even though it doesn't impact on us, they still had the veto or a say in what we did. In the Francophone unit, we have strong boundaries and we're in our own site. There's the whole question of identity. We're all separate. There is promotion of language and culture. We allow ourselves to be different than the other teams." (*Team leader*)

"One train of thought is the American, entrepreneurial, the gun-slinger approach to life, and the other one is more consensus. By way of this organization we're seeing more and more of that consensus in the Native group. If you look at their Standing Committee, they tend not to take motions where people vote. They discuss it until they come to a point where they can all agree. Different, much more consensus. Their culturally preferred position is that 'We all agree', so you may have to move things around a little bit to find a point of agreement, but the arrival at consensus is much more important than in the Anglophone and Francophone units. We tend to say, 'OK. We've talked about this long enough. We've got other items on the agenda. We've got to take a decision. Let's put it to a vote.' Different dynamics... I think that we see the frustrations with Ovide Mercredi, who has been trained in the legal world and who has been brought up in, if you will, the larger societal context, is who is continually running into trouble with some Indians in the Northwest Territories who say, 'He doesn't speak for me. He never consulted me'." (*Team leader*)

In essence, culture was used to strengthen the separate identity of cultural groups by drawing boundaries and emphasizing the differences between them.

Increasing control for some perceived as loss of control for others:

Issues of gaining or losing control over certain decisions were described as related to culture. When examined historically, Francophones and Natives felt they were at the mercy of Anglophone decision-makers for the delivery of services. This was one of the original thrusts for a new model of service delivery in the community. In the new corporation, official powers were now granted to cultural groups, implying less overall control for traditional power holders.

“The organization was devised to be client-responsive, grassroots, the community involved, the whole thing around representation of minorities. The Anglophones lost in terms of power because they were always able to say, well, they always kind of had a veto over what Francophones wanted to do. ... The way I see it is that the Anglophones are beginning to realize that they don’t have all the power. They don’t have the power anymore. They always did. They always had the inside track. They were always kind of able to veto things. Now, they’re not. Not only that, maybe some of the rest of us are going to be radically different. They lost.” (*Team leader*)

Invoking cultural identity as power over determining job qualifications:

There is also evidence that cultural issues heavily influenced disputes over job qualifications. As described earlier, there were strong conflicts between senior management and the union over relaxing hiring requirements for the Native team. These remained unresolved at the time of this study. Similar issues also had been raised against the Francophone unit in the past.

“Certain positions have been designated as bilingual, such as the receptionist at the front. Some staff are excluded. Before, at the hospital, it was like ‘The secretary can just about say bonjour. That will suffice’. It was all that kind of thing. Here, even centrally, bilingualism is respected. It’s a working thing, not just superficial. It’s real. People can type in French and have full conversations, not just answer the phone. So, the others feel like they’re losing.” (*Team leader*)

Francophone persons attributed their “success” at protecting Francophone positions to continued invocation of the moral right to culture and identity.

In summary, the participants provided several examples where cultural identity provided strong influence over decision-making. Cultural identity was intermixed with issues around protecting the cultural identity of satellite clinics, removing control of decisions from non-minority groups, and insisting on cultural requirements to fill positions in the organiza-

tion. In terms of uncertainty and relational dynamics, invoking culture strengthened the hand of one party while unbalancing the other. Where hiring practices had been standardized through labor negotiations and legal contracts, for example, senior management chose to bypass these requirements in a bid to obtain candidates with more experience with the target populations. Culture thus had an important role in the power games of the organization by representing something *rare* (e.g., many employees could not fill the Francophone or Native positions despite their academic and professional experience), *not easily substituted* (e.g., “only Natives can treat Natives”), and *essential* to meeting the organization’s multi-cultural mandate. Culture touched upon norms that are difficult to counter in any kind of argument. It would be difficult to bypass Native issues or close the Native unit, for example, given the mandate of the organization and of the provincial government to deliver culturally and linguistically appropriate services to the community. In terms of dependency, the organization faced an audit from the provincial government and strong community pressures if it did not fulfill its mandate. Any solutions that Native or Francophone persons could bring to these issues would thus help relieve the burden.

In essence, culture may be considered a source of power, at least in the context of the human service organization that was studied.

A characteristic of culture as a power is that it seems to work hand-in-hand with other sources of power, such as expertise. The example of hiring requirements in the Native unit, for example, showed that expertise in itself was not sufficient to fill the positions, but that *belonging* to a cultural group was needed. This goes beyond simple academic or professional qualifications. The same concept may be applied to legal authority as a source of power, for example. Many of the participants described senior managers as having to fulfill the cultural mandate of the organization, and no amount of legal authority could counter the argument that multicultural services were needed. It would thus seem that culture works in an integrated fashion or that it is “woven-in” with other sources of power by invoking historical issues and current norms, thereby raising the stakes in terms of uncertainty.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The separation of the children's centre from the psychiatric hospital and the resulting creation of a new community organization in 1990 meant many changes would occur for service delivery in the community. These changes raised much uncertainty for staffs at all levels of the new organization. In some cases, they provided staffs with new opportunities or margins of freedom, such as their gaining observer status on each of the Community Advisory Committees (Francophone and Native).

In the preceding section, we examined the major turbulent events from the perspective of the participants in this study, in terms of sources of power. We described nine sources of power and provided examples of how these provided power to various groups. These are summarized in Table 5. We examined evidence that senior management tried to lower uncertainty by restraining the margin of freedom of other levels, such as by creating new policies and procedures and emphasizing lines of communication. Some of the events were destabilizing for some of the actors while simultaneously representing opportunities to capitalize on uncertainty for others. This does not assume that staffs engaged all situations characterized by uncertainty as sources of power, but that key events were chosen because they represented opportunities to enhance one's margin of freedom and gain power.

It is reasonable to assume that the organization tried to buffer some of the uncertainties it faced by relying on formal power, especially by senior managers. Despite attempts to try to reduce uncertainty by designing new policies and procedures, however, some uncertainty remained. Even with the most rigid enforcement of procedures, it would be almost impossible to accurately predict and control all situations. One might even argue that the more rigid procedures are, the more likely informal sources of power will develop.

By studying power relations through examples such as dealing with uncertainty, we have gained a better understanding of organizational relations. In essence, the organizational chart presented in Chapter Four is only an official representation of formal power in the agency. Our study explored uncertainty, constraints, and margins of freedom of participants at each level, providing a wider and deeper picture of the organization's functioning.

Table 5

OVERVIEW OF THE SOURCES OF POWER BY ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

SOURCE OF POWER	SENIOR MANAGERS (Executive Director and Co-ordinators)	MIDDLE MANAGERS (Team leaders)	THERAPISTS (Therapists)	CLERICAL STAFFS (Secretaries)
Formal or Legal Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of policies and procedures to ensure consistency. • use of court system to defend special cultural hiring requirements. • emphasis on communications through lines of authority. • bypass union by asking for input directly from therapists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invented policies as problems arose; much uncertainty about what to fall back on as guides. • central to lines of communication horizontally and vertically. • emphasized lines of authority in communications. • say Native and Franco-phone teams gained power at expense of Anglophones. Now mostly autonomous legally and morally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accused senior management of bypassing union in lines of authority. • use of legal union contract to challenge special hiring conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no references to legal authority
Coercion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no references to coercion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no references to coercion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minor references to coercion; preferred less damaging means. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no reference to coercion.
Rewards / Reprimands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no references to rewards or reprimands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performance appraisals were only form of reprimands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no expectations to receive rewards during tur- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • said rarely received encouragement or

<i>SOURCE OF POWER</i>	<i>SENIOR MANAGERS (Executive Director and Co-ordinators)</i>	<i>MIDDLE MANAGERS (Team leaders)</i>	<i>THERAPISTS (Therapists)</i>	<i>CLERICAL STAFFS (Secretaries)</i>
		<p>mand used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some margin of freedom in terms of assigning time off to staffs, but not discussed by participants. 	<p>bulent times.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • felt that performance appraisals sometimes used by team leaders as reprimands. 	<p>rewards.</p>
Expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • used cultural reasons to waive normal hiring requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no references to expertise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of legal contract to challenge waiving of special hiring requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adaptability to rapidly changing environments is important.
Controlling Information and Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possessed confidential financial information of the organization • Potential embarrassment if discrepancies in information found by others • Shared some \$ information with staffs, but back-fired. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No references 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accusations that information is “managed”. Disqualified information from above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No references
Controlling Resources and Relations With Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • retain control of resources through finances. • control of relations with environment somewhat limited due to professional affiliations and external collaborative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little control over resources. Dependent on senior management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some control of relations with environment gained through external collaborative projects. • some control gained through professional af- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited control of flow of materials. • control of relations with landlords and suppliers.

<i>SOURCE OF POWER</i>	<i>SENIOR MANAGERS (Executive Director and Co-ordinators)</i>	<i>MIDDLE MANAGERS (Team leaders)</i>	<i>THERAPISTS (Therapists)</i>	<i>CLERICAL STAFFS (Secretaries)</i>
	projects.		filiation.	
Controlling Access to Power Holders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> loss of some power due to staffs now sitting on Community Advisory Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can access board members by virtue of sitting on Community Advisory Committees. loss of some power due to staffs now sitting on Community Advisory Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gained official status as observers on Standing Committees, thereby gaining access to board of directors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no references
Referent / Charisma power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no references to charisma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possibility of influencing others through positive relationship, but no examples of charisma. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> try to develop positive relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no references to charisma.
Cultural identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cultural conflicts led to divestment of centre from hospital. Now have official mandate to offer services to Francophone and Native cultures. used culture to waive hiring requirements for some positions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> used culture to enhance identity of teams. invoked culture to “do things differently”; draw boundaries between teams. Native and Francophone teams gained power at expense of Anglophones. used to waive hiring requirements for some 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> challenge from union of special hiring requirements through union contract and courts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no references to cultural identity.

<i>SOURCE OF POWER</i>	<i>SENIOR MANAGERS (Executive Director and Co-ordinators)</i>	<i>MIDDLE MANAGERS (Team leaders)</i>	<i>THERAPISTS (Therapists)</i>	<i>CLERICAL STAFFS (Secretaries)</i>
		teams.		

Several other observations are noteworthy. As could be expected, staffs used a variety of sources of power during the organizational restructuring period. While it was not our goal to carry out numerical computations on the data, it was nonetheless difficult not to notice the large number of references made about formal power, information power, and the control of relations with the environment, when compared to other sources of power. Several reasons may explain this. First, formal or legal power is present in most if not all organizations, regardless of their past history and development. Second, past history is an important factor. Historical conflicts around structure, control of information and communications, and relations with the environment were key dynamics at the psychiatric hospital before the organizational separation. Similar issues related to mistrust of information and bypassing lines of communications were prevalent in the new organization, despite the newness of management personnel and their attempts to “do things differently.”

It is also likely that the members who transferred between the organizations carried “old baggage” from the psychiatric hospital into the new mental health centre. While approximately one-half of the participants of this study were former employees of the psychiatric hospital, only one of the seven senior and middle level managers of the new organization was a former employee. Ironically, management faced similar conflicts to those that had existed at the psychiatric hospital in the period leading to the separation. In this sense, despite the newness of the managers, the organization was still dressed in some of the old clothes of the hospital in terms of power dynamics. This would emphasize the importance of including past history, context, and expectations of staffs in studying and dealing with power in organizations. Further research focusing specifically on the expectations of staffs prior to major organizational changes, and how these expectations are met or not met, may provide clarifications as to the role of “old baggage” in terms of power dynamics.

Our study of the sources of power in the organization supports the notion that persons of different ranks in the organization have different access to the sources of power. By virtue of structure, some actors had more formal power than others did. Others, through their cultural background and heritage, were able to exert moral power by invoking cultural rights. What was common across all levels, however, is that sources of power were closely linked to uncertainty.

There were indications that many power relationships occurred directly between senior management and therapists. The absence or limited role of the team leaders in many of the dynamics (e.g., expertise, rewards and reprimands, and control of resources) may indicate their avoidance of these types of issues. It may also indicate that team leaders, despite their central role in the organization, chose not to act as buffers between upper and lower levels, or were not given the opportunity to do so. Avoidance, for its part, may in itself be a tactic in terms of minimizing one's loss of power. The number of participants in the study is too small to provide further explanations without speculation, however.

Clerical staffs were much less verbal than other groups in terms of sources of power. One cannot assume that they were less affected by the organizational changes that occurred or by the ensuing turbulence, however, but their relative silence in terms of power does imply a more distant involvement. It is arguable that the organizational separation did not have the same impact on clerical or support staffs because the changes were aimed at producing a new model of service delivery. Clerical staffs do not rely on a "model" of service delivery to fulfill their functions, for example, and thus their participation in power struggles over service delivery may have been minimal. In this sense, it is possible that the methodology of this study was not able to "reach" clerical staffs in the same way that senior management, team leaders, and therapists were able to participate. Further detailed research into how clerical staffs react to changes at other levels would provide useful information into dynamics at this level.

There was considerable overlap in some of the sources of power. Expertise as a source of power, for example, was often entangled with issues of legal authority. This may imply that in human service organizations, sources of power are not necessarily "pure" types but that they are sometimes hybrids of one another. Further comparisons with other similar organizations may shed light on this.

We have discussed cultural heritage as an important source of uncertainty, particularly in terms of its impact on formal authority and expertise. By displacing or modifying standard hiring practices and methods of operation, cultural identity was a powerful force when it was invoked. In essence, the rules of the game may be changed radically by culture.

In the next two chapters, we will examine the interplay of culture as one of the elements in terms of deep-level strategies.

Two sources of power were noticeably absent. Coercion was not a source of power that staffs considered or would admit to considering. This may stem from the fact that coercion is generally not a desirable method of dealing with issues, and perhaps even more so in a professional context. Rewards and reprimands also were rarely discussed. This may be a characteristic on non-profit organizations in the sense that financial and material rewards are not at the disposal of senior management, as they are in industrial organizations. It is interesting that even when rewards are expanded to include things such as praise, however, there were very few examples emerging from the data. It is possible that during the extreme turbulence and uncertainty that staffs faced, rewards were given little value or met with mistrust, thereby lowering the potential of this source of power.

Although issues of gender are sometimes at the root of power and conflict (Morgan, 1986) these did not appear to be a factor in the present study. As Morgan points out, life in organizations is sometimes led by subtle and not-so-subtle gender dynamics, ranging from open discrimination (e.g., “this is a man’s job”) and sexual harassment, to being subjected to subtle male stereotypes that managers should be rational, analytical, non-emotional, and tough. In terms of the presence or absence of these factors in our data, no participant raised these issues as having any impact on power relations either in the current or past organization. Unfortunately, the primary focus of our study did not include gender issues as a source of power in human service organizations. Further research into this issue is certainly warranted.

In terms of comparing new employees with veteran staffs, there were few important differences. Apart from the types of examples that they provided, new staffs were quite verbose about the effects of the turbulent changes that had occurred prior to their arrival. They were also able to understand and relate to past turbulence because they were currently living its ongoing effects. This would imply that power exerts a “wave” or “ripple” effect, where an event produces effects that can be felt further away in distance and time.

We did not study the relative strength or importance of each of the sources of power, nor make attempts to quantify them because this was not the object of this study.

Such research would face many methodological problems because past history and context often influence the intensity of the uncertainty that is experienced. Generalizing the findings would be difficult at best and may not provide valuable information because power relationships are constantly changing in intensity.

Recalling comparisons we made between private and public organizations in Chapter Two, our findings provide additional clarifications as to their similarities and differences. The mandate of industrial corporations does not necessarily include meeting social and cultural needs because these organizations are generally run by profit motives. In human service organizations, however, increasing recognition of cultural heritage by governments forces public sector organizations to hire staffs that are capable of delivering culturally and linguistically appropriate services. In this sense, culture may shape the structure of some agencies. Traditional hiring practices must be reviewed or waived, thereby displacing traditional margins of freedom in hiring.

In terms of the “final product” that mental health centres provide, more and more groups of clients are advocating receiving culturally sensitive services. In terms of power strategies, this may imply changing the balance of power in conventional boards of directors and working committees. When elements of cultural identity are inserted into the equation, issues of expertise also are brought to the forefront.

A further comparison between public and private organizations may be made. In terms of cost-benefit analysis and of production and output, financial cutbacks at the federal and provincial levels are forcing organizations to re-examine programs and staffing patterns. This is the case of recent (1995-98) Ontario Government budgets that slashed funding for several major social services by more than twenty percent, while eliminating others completely. In terms of power sources, this undoubtedly creates much uncertainty in all human service organizations. It remains to see if some of the players may turn these situations into opportunities.

In closing this section, our discussion of the sources of power and some of their uses in a human service organization has provided us with a set of tools with which we can begin to decode power games and dynamics. These tools help us answer not only “Who has the power in this organization?” but also “What kind of power do they have?” and “How do

they use it?”. In Chapters 6 and 7, we will examine how the sources of power described above were employed in terms of power strategy formation.

The Surface and Deep Level Power Strategies Used by the Participants

“People will use power and coalitions and alliances in order to try to influence the system, and they engage in this dance that they neither can control nor predict.”

(Therapist)

“Physical separation between where senior admin sits and where the clinics are has led to a situation where the Executive Director isn’t seen until there’s an issue or something ceremonial.”

(Team leader)

6.1 SURFACE LEVEL AND DEEP LEVEL POWER STRATEGIES

This chapter builds upon the last chapter by examining the manipulation of the sources of power into strategies. As defined in Chapter Two, strategies are patterns in a stream of actions. In more concrete terms, strategies are conceptions that a person has of how to deal with his or her environment over time (Mintzberg, 1989). There are surface level and deep level strategies. Surface level strategies involve the exercise of power to obtain what one desires through decisions, negotiations, and interpersonal relations. Power in its surface existence derives from dependencies on resources between and among actors (Frost, 1987). Deep level strategies, for their part, are coded in the cultural beliefs, values and practices of the organization, and are often used to disguise plays around power. Deep level strategies

may derive from surface level strategies in that over time “the unequal distribution of power becomes unnoticed and is hidden under the garb of a legitimate system of influence.” (Frost, 1987, p. 514) They also are used to show others “the way things are”.

In the next two major sections we will highlight examples of each of the surface and deep level strategies that emerged from the data. The beginning of each major section will present some basic statistical information then proceed with a detailed description of each strategy. The current chapter will focus on descriptions of the data. Detailed analysis and discussion about the strategies will be presented in Chapter 7, where power strategies will be discussed in relationship to uncertainty and sources of power.

6.2 SURFACE LEVEL STRATEGIES

Tables 6 and 7 compare the relative emphasis that the different staff groups placed on each surface level strategy. We have included this very basic statistical information to provide an indication of the degree of importance placed on each strategy by the participants. Simple computations were used to transform raw numbers into categories. The tables translate averages of each strategy into “below average”, “average” and “above average” categories. Average frequencies for each strategy were taken to minimize skewing due to uneven group sizes. Numbers were rounded to the nearest tenth decimal place. Averages for each staff group were compared to the overall average and placed in the top third (above average), middle third (average) or bottom third (below average). Symbols (***) were used in the Tables instead of numbers to provide a general indication of the emphasis placed on each strategy, not an exact quantitative measure. When no examples of strategies were found, “not used” is indicated. As it is the goal of this research to focus on the qualitative aspects of the power strategies employed by the participants, further numerical calculations were not performed.

TABLE 6
Comparison Of The Relative Emphasis Placed On Surface Level Strategies
By Different Staff Groups
*(*** above average, ** average, * below average)*

Surface Level Strategy	Senior Managers	Team Leaders	Therapists	Clerical Staffs
Altruism	***	Not used	Not used	***
Assertiveness	**	*	**	*
Bargaining	***	***	**	Not used
Coalitions	*	**	**	*
Deceit	Not used	Not used	***	Not used
Psychological distance	***	**	***	*
Appeals to higher authorities	***	*	**	***
Ingratiation	***	Not used	**	**
Reasoning	***	*	**	*
Sanctions	Not used	Not used	***	Not used
Working to rule	Not used	Not used	**	Not used
Managing lines of communication	***	**	**	*

Several cautions must be considered in examining the tables. The limited number of interviews means that the ratings we have presented in Tables 6 and 7 are for general comparisons only. While there were almost one thousand references to strategies in the interviews, some frequencies were so small that it would be imprudent to carry out statistical operations on them. Also, strategies receiving an “above average” rating do not reflect that they were used frequently by staffs. The indication is only that the group used the strategy more on average than other groups. Further, some participants may have been more vocal than others about a particular strategy, thereby skewing the average. Taking overall and group averages lowered individual bias.

Of the total 968 references to surface and deep level strategies in the interviews, there were 806 surface level strategies (83%) identified. Clearly, surface level strategies were more abundant than deep level strategies because they are the part-and-parcel of interactions between staffs. They also are easier to discern by the researcher because they are not so deeply embedded or hidden in the organization’s functioning.

The most obvious observation from Table 6 is that the groups emphasized the different strategies unevenly. There are several possible reasons for this. First, as highlighted in Chapter 5, the different groups within the organization had different access to sources of power. Senior managers, for example, have the widest potential pool of resources at their disposal. It follows that their strategies potentially could access the largest amounts of sources of power. This was confirmed to a certain degree by a higher than average amount of use of many strategies.

A second reason for unequal emphasis by the groups is that hierarchical position within the organization permits some groups to have more leeway. As will be discussed, senior managers had an easier time breaking their own rules, while lower level staffs were continually pressured by policies and procedures and the fear of sanctions.

The presence or absence of some strategies is another factor to consider. Senior managers made no references to deceit, sanctions and working to rule. The fact that they never mentioned sanctions is at first surprising because it is within their purview to carry out sanctions on lower level staffs. Conversely, it is surprising that there were references to sanctions as strategies by the therapists. We will explore some of the reasons behind this in detail in the section on sanctions below.

It is evident that the strategies that have negative connotations, namely deceit, and sanctions received little attention by the participants. As we will find out, these may have been substituted by less negative yet strong social pressure strategies such as assertiveness. At this point in the analysis, however, it is unknown if there is a discernable pattern between groups in the use of strategies.

Generally speaking, the senior managers as a group seemed to emphasize altruism, bargaining, psychological distance, appeals to higher authority, ingratiation, reasoning, and particularly managing lines of communication more than the other groups. There was average use of assertiveness, and below average mentions of coalitions. There were no references to deceit, sanctions, or working to rule as strategies.

Team leaders referred to less types of strategies in the interviews and remained in the average range for coalitions, managing psychological distance, and managing lines of communications. They made higher use of bargaining only, and below average use of assertive-

ness, appeals to higher authorities, and reasoning. There were no references to altruism, deceit, ingratiation, sanctions, and working to rule.

Therapists, for their part, placed more emphasis on deceit, psychological distance, and sanctions than the other groups. This is interesting given that sanctions are not a normal part of the power base of front-line therapists. We will examine why this is so when we discuss sanctions. For all the remaining surface strategies, therapists were in the average range. Altruism was the only strategy not mentioned by the therapists.

The clerical group was much less vocal about their use of strategies. There were no references to bargaining, deceit, sanctions, or working to rule. While the number of references to strategies by the clerical staffs was low overall, there was higher than average mention of altruism and appeals to higher authorities as strategies.

Comparisons were made between newcomers and veterans. Table 7 compares the two groups in terms of emphasis on each strategy during the interviews.

TABLE 7
Comparison Of The Relative Emphasis Placed On Surface Level Strategies
— Newcomers Versus Veterans —
(*** above average, ** average, * below average)

Surface Level Strategy	Newcomers	Veterans
Altruism	***	*
Assertiveness	**	**
Bargaining	**	**
Coalitions	**	**
Deceit	*	***
Psychological distance	**	**
Appeals to higher authorities	*	***
Ingratiation	***	**
Reasoning	**	**
Sanctions	*	***
Working to rule	***	**
Managing lines of communication	**	**

There is uneven emphasis on strategies between newcomers and veterans. As with the comparison between the four staff groups earlier, caution is advised because the veterans group comprises no senior managers and no team leaders. Nonetheless, it is evident that newcomers had higher average use of altruism, ingratiation and working to rule. Deceit, ap-

peals to higher authorities and sanctions received more emphasis by the veterans, with the balance of the strategies being roughly equal.

Unequal emphasis between newcomers and veterans may be related to several factors. First, as highlighted in Chapter 5, the different groups within the organization potentially have different sources of power, thus leading to differential use of strategies. Second, newcomers and veterans do not share the same history within the organization. For the newcomers, there is less knowledge about the players, history, and interactions with internal and external sources. Veterans have more knowledge about the internal and external workings of the organization. In the next section, we will examine the qualitative aspects of each strategy by each group.

6.2.1 APPEALS TO ALTRUISM

The Random House Dictionary (1980) defines altruism as the unselfish concern for the welfare of others. Altruism thus assumes moral qualities such as benevolence and generosity, and it assumes sacrifice for the sake of others.

This strategy was noteworthy for its relative absence in the interviews. While administrative and clerical staffs made mention of this strategy, there were too few references to safely compare the relative emphasis between the groups. The mere presence or absence of this strategy cannot be taken as indicative of differential use because of the very low numbers. Nonetheless we will describe it as observed in the data.

Very few of the participants discussed this as a strategy that they had used or that they had the intention of using, for dealing with the organizational changes that were occurring. There are several possible reasons for this. First, given the difficult changes that the participants were experiencing, and the heightened emotions that accompanied them, it is not surprising that staffs did not “feel” like giving their time and energy selflessly to the organization. Second, participants described themselves as carrying out their duties out of professional responsibility, not out of an altruistic sense. Altruism is not essential to the mandate or the survival of the organization and therefore would exert little power in terms of strategies. Third, we found no links between altruism and trying to improve one’s personal status in the organization.

The low use of altruism as a strategy in the interviews may not mean that altruism did not come into play, however. To the contrary, it may mean that the *withholding* or *withdrawal* of altruistic acts by staffs could have been used as a means of influence on the organization. One possible indication of its use would have been if employees refused to carry out special tasks for needy clients or agree to do any favors for others in the organization. It is difficult to verify this hypothesis, however, since evidence around this was not found. More detailed research into the use of altruism could explore what power sources are tied to altruism, and under which conditions it is employed.

6.2.2 ASSERTIVENESS

In this study, assertiveness refers to using a forceful approach in relationships with others. This includes actions such as confronting verbally in a strong tone of voice. Our data showed many references to assertiveness as a strategy, as was expected given the high levels of conflict over the past few years. We divided these into three main dynamics that we would call “refusing”, “voicing”, and “avoiding”.

Refusing to do something; refusing to recognize formal authority:

Assertiveness was used as an outright refusal to do something that a superior had asked. For therapists, this ranged from refusing to sign a performance appraisal, not signing a routing slip, to refusing to work after 5 o’clock. We will discuss the performance appraisal example here as it provides a good illustration of how assertiveness was used.

A therapist received his yearly performance appraisal from his team leader, but he did not agree with some of the recommendations because these had not been discussed with him prior to receiving the written report.

“For the written evaluation, there were many things that we had never discussed in regular supervision. My team leader said that my skills and experience did not correspond to the model of the agency. She disqualified me totally... She gave me a written performance appraisal to sign that she had already signed herself... I told her that I couldn’t accept the report. I refused to sign. She insisted that I sign so that we could go on to other things. I had to confront her. I refused to sign.” (*Therapist*)

This employee described the performance appraisal as a form of control that the organization was imposing and that was legally sanctioned. Agreeing to sign the report would have implied accepting the authority of the team leader and sanctioning it further. By refusing to sign, however, the employee refused to recognize the formal authority delegated to the team leader. In this sense, the assertiveness of the employee forced the team leader to seek other means to carry out her functions, thus reducing the team leader's margin of freedom and inserting some degree of uncertainty in the relationship.

There was no mention of refusals as power strategies in the senior management, team leaders, and clerical staffs groups. This may be related to their positions within the hierarchy. Senior and middle managers, for example, retain formal authority and thus may deny requests to subordinates simply by exerting their authority. Clerical staffs, for their part, also did not employ refusals as a strategy. The absence of assertiveness in all these groups may be explained, at least in part, by their choice to employ less aggressive means, as will be described later, under "avoiding".

Voicing concerns verbally, and verbal confrontation as strategies:

The second theme related to assertiveness is what we call "voicing". Linked partly to "refusing", this refers to voicing one's concerns by confronting another person verbally.

"One thing I did was to speak up about my concerns. I told my supervisor that nothing made sense." (*Therapist*)

"As time went along, I began to feel like this is just lip service. We're being asked to input but it's some sort of bureaucratic strategy that's being used, that somebody's learned somewhere. It keeps people relatively pacified and inactive until something else is done which is not necessarily related to the input. I got to the point where I was in meetings and feeling very frustrated, and getting very angry, and saying things like 'If you don't want what we have to say, don't ask. Stop wasting my time.'" (*Therapist*)

"When we moved to this building, they told us that the office where D... is right now, was smaller than our current one, so they said they couldn't put us there. Then, when another clinician asked for this office, they said we were supposed to move into another office that was smaller than this one, and that's when we got pissed off and said enough!" (*Therapist*)

Other examples of voicing included standing up to senior management in a forceful way by demanding that all financial information be put on the table for all parties to see, and asking pointed questions about the future of the new organization.

“Last week there was a board meeting here in our building ... You know when you see people come and go from here, people who normally have no business here. We sat down and said, ‘What’s going on? We know something is going on. Just tell us. Are the changes going to affect us or not? Tell us.’”
(*Therapist*)

In the data, only the therapists group seemed to use “voicing” as a strategy, and this was generally with regard to the control of information. While senior management claimed to have been on the receiving end of assertive strategies, they did not use them themselves. Neither did team leaders and clerical staffs. There are several possible explanations for this. First, the application of rules, as shown by management’s heavy emphasis on policies and procedures, may have lessened the need for assertiveness on their part. Second, senior management took pride in seeking input from staffs and thus managing through assertiveness was not viewed as compatible with the values of participation. Third, therapists may have been more apt to use assertiveness than managers did because they needed to intensify the relationship, in essence increasing uncertainty and escalating the stakes. There are indications that both the senior and middle manager groups did not want to intensify the relationship because of the already high conflict levels in the organization. Senior managers needed the collaboration of their subordinates to get things done. This is especially true for the two Coordinators, who did not have a direct chain of command over the team leaders, but who needed their collaboration to carry out their functions. Clerical staffs, for their part, did not use assertiveness. This is consistent with their trying to stay out of the historical conflicts between therapists and senior management.

Avoiding assertiveness as a strategy:

A third theme that was prevalent in the data was that of “avoiding” assertiveness as a strategy. While a few participants overtly used assertiveness in their relations with others, as shown above, most said they were uncomfortable using assertiveness. Many participants de-

scribed themselves as actively avoiding assertive measures because it was not their style to use such means.

“Nobody enjoys confrontation. I certainly don’t.” (*Therapist*)

“I’m not the type of person to pressure anybody. I’m kind of an easy-going person.” (*Clerical staff*)

“I love conflict models when I never have to face the person that I’m conflicting with. I hate personal conflict. I really am quite chicken when it’s in my face.” (*Therapist*)

Assertiveness also was avoided during the initial stages of the relationship between the union and the new organization:

“Our intention [at the beginning] was just to see if we could just establish some sort of working relationship on a more positive note than we’d experienced at the hospital. That was the way we were trying to do it. The process lasted for a few months, and we came to the conclusion of ‘Why don’t we wait until the thing is established and back off just a little’.” (*Therapist*)

In essence, avoiding assertiveness or overt aggressiveness seemed to be a personal choice of not wanting to “rock the boat”. Therapists were not willing to take large risks when confronting superiors.

When examining the data seen as a whole, assertiveness was related to several themes, notably refusing to carry out requests from superiors, and voicing one’s dissatisfaction in ways that exerted social pressure. Outright assertiveness, however, was more noted for its absence in senior managers, team leaders, and clerical staffs, as explained by their preference for less aggressive means of pressure. It would thus be logical to assume that these groups used other sources of power.

In comparing new staffs to veteran staffs, there were no significant differences between them in terms of refusing, voicing, or avoiding assertiveness. We might have expected veteran staffs to be more vocal than newcomers about their concerns and more proactive in their actions because of their past history and experience with the organization’s divestment. This did not appear to be a factor in the data that was collected. Veteran and new staffs alike made distinct attempts at avoiding assertiveness, especially in the beginning phases of the new organization. As the organization’s divestment moved ahead, however, assertiveness

turned to refusals and voicing. Unfortunately, our research did not involve the study of non-verbal communications, through which assertiveness may be conveyed. Frowns, strong stares, and long silence, for example, might have been means that were used but not captured in the study.

In terms of interactions with sources of power, assertiveness was primarily related to dynamics around information (e.g., “We demand that you give us the correct financial information”) and formal authority (e.g., “I refuse to sign this performance appraisal.”)

6.2.3 BARGAINING

In the present research, bargaining refers to negotiating through the exchange of benefits. We will not discuss the different types of bargaining here as much has already been written on the subject by other authors. We will nonetheless describe what our data revealed in this category.

Creating a sense of urgency, and opening up the consultation process:

The data showed one principal theme related to bargaining, namely negotiations around job security and material resources such as moneys and working conditions. Due to the severe fiscal problems of the organization, management consulted their staffs to consider different financial options. In terms of strategy, senior management created a sense of urgency by presenting the critical nature of the problem and facts to lower level staffs, and claiming there was no other way to resolve the problems. One of the options was laying off eleven employees, mostly at the therapist level, but this would have meant cutting back a substantial amount of mental health services to the community. Another option was to terminate certain intervention programs, closing satellite clinics and amalgamating others, but this also was out of the question because of cultural implications. A third alternative that was considered was maintaining the current work force but cutting back on the weekly work hours, thereby preventing layoffs. Even though this meant reopening the labor contract and smaller pay cheques, the latter was the preferred option of most staffs.

“We’re looking for ways of helping so that there will be no layoffs. We are even ready to work four days per week or take two months of non-paid holi-

days. We're looking at ways of keeping staff. From what I understand, most people here want that. They don't want layoffs." (*Therapist*)

"One thing that I think is very good is that with the deficit, the union and the management have agreed that they don't want anyone to lose their jobs, that there may be cutbacks or rational layoffs or something to that effect, but hopefully no-one will lose their jobs." (*Therapist*)

"We had a meeting several months ago, a union meeting, and because the majority of us were there, the president asked us if it came down to layoffs or major changes, what would we decide to do. I couldn't believe the response. It was all 'No layoffs. We don't want to lose anyone, no one'. We would take a four-day week, a month's shutdown, whatever it takes. We would not want to lose one person. I couldn't believe it. It was unanimous, and no one raised their hand and said 'I've got a mortgage to pay, I can't do that' or 'I've got kids going to university. I can't do that.' No one said anything. It was a unanimous decision that we would work a four-day week in order to keep our staff, which is kind of nice, because who knows what is going to happen come April." (*Clerical staff*)

One or two employees voiced some opposition to this approach because they had more seniority than others in their group and felt they were losing out to more junior staffs. This was not the general sentiment among employees, however, and a majority decision to keep all staffs prevailed. This led to some irony in terms of bargaining dynamics. By bringing solutions to the table, the union was attempting to narrow down the possibilities of action of senior management, in essence extending its own margin of freedom in bargaining. The union felt it could force management to accept its proposals by agreeing only to a reduced workweek and to no other alternatives that management came up with. Imposing such a choice may have ultimately helped senior managers, however, in that the union shut down other possible bargaining avenues. Senior members in the union would not be able to exercise seniority bumping rights and maintain their full salary because the union agreed to shorter work weeks thus saving management from having to make this difficult decision. In this sense, the uncertainty that senior management faced was somewhat reduced because bargaining was not a long drawn-out process.

It is interesting that in bargaining strategies, team leaders were bypassed in the play of power. Dynamics occurred principally between the senior management level and therapists and clerical staffs, represented by the union. This is probably due to labor relations bar-

gaining being the realm of senior administrators in the organization. In other words, team leaders had no control over the resources needed to engage in negotiations unless delegated by senior management. Mintzberg (1989) forms a similar conclusion for middle managers in professional bureaucracies, adding that unionization diminishes the influence of professionals in the administrative structure. While the middle management layer in our study was bypassed in the bargaining process, there was evidence that it was not shielded from the effects of the bargaining strategies of other levels. The team leaders, for example, had to deal with the immediate concerns and anxieties of staffs with the announcement of possible staff cutbacks. They buffered the impact between senior management and the union by “putting out fires.” The only limited “bargaining” the team leaders engaged in related to offering choices to therapists around office décor and design. By coming to a decision to offer different choices along a continuum, they in essence limited and controlled the result to a series of possible predictable outcomes.

As for clerical staffs, there were a few noteworthy dynamics. Some of the unionized clerical staffs had access to confidential management information by virtue of their “floating” between satellite clinics and the administrative offices, depending on where the heaviest workload was. This sometimes provided them with information that could have been useful to the union for bargaining. There is no evidence that such information was leaked to the union, however, or that it was used for personal benefit. In this sense, clerical staffs did not enhance the margin of liberty for themselves or for the union, nor is there evidence that they tried to increase uncertainty for administrative personnel through the manipulation of information.

Splitting the solidarity of the union:

There was evidence that senior management may have tried to split the solidarity of the union, and thus weakened the union’s bargaining position, by pointing out to staffs that the union was sometimes blocking progress.

“It makes me think of divide and conquer. If senior management are feeling really threatened or insecure about things, there are ways to bring about changes... It started this year with the idea of layoffs.” (*Therapist*)

“The Executive Director came to one of our meetings and must have said the ‘union’ word twenty times, and things like ‘well, that’s up to the union.’ When he wanted to save money, his messages would be things like ‘If your union is asking for too much money and keeps asking for a raise, then there will be layoffs. You’d better tell your union to stop... It’s divide and conquer within the union.’” (*Therapist*)

These examples clearly point out the perception of some staffs that bargaining involved bypassing the normal lines of negotiations. Consulting directly with the therapists and clerical staffs, providing them with the facts about the organization’s problems, and telling staffs that the burden of responsibility was on the union, provided evidence that senior management tried to bypass the union and split the opposition. Staffs described this as a strong method of raising uncertainty and enhancing the feelings of urgency about the situation. We will provide further evidence of these dynamics as a strategy later when we discuss lines of communication.

There are other issues related to union-management labor relations that we could have explored, such as conflicts over job classifications. We limited discussion of such topics, however, because they are not directly tied to the organizational transition and are not the primary focus of this study.

In essence, the bargaining strategy was tied to the two types of power, namely formal power and information power. Through formal power the union could invoke bargaining as a legal process when labor issues were at stake. Ironically, the union also had its hands tied in that if the organization decided to go “by the book” in terms of layoffs, the union would have little choice but to follow the accepted terms in their contract. Senior managers exploited the opportunity by opening the consultation process to all staffs and union personnel. While this meant they were forced to share financial information with all staffs, it also helped put the ball into the union’s court. Information as a source of power also seemed important because financial information and financial planning were opened to all staffs of the organization. While financial information was no longer confidential, it nonetheless was used to legitimize the serious problems faced by the organization.

With the aid of information as a source of power, the bargaining strategy employed by senior management involved creating a sense of urgency and crisis, in some ways reduc-

ing the time line for negotiations and raising the stakes in terms of uncertainty for the union. The bargaining strategy showed that each of the partners tried to reduce the choices of the other.

We did not notice differences between newcomers and veterans for this strategy. This is probably due to the issue at hand that involved all levels of the organization.

6.2.4 COALITIONS

Coalitions are attempts by persons to mobilize others in the organization. While coalitions may be formed in upward or downward relationships (e.g., therapists with their team leaders) and in lateral relationships (e.g., therapists joining with others of their own rank), coalitions also may involve other types of relationships. As our data confirms, and as Pfeffer (1981) points out, organizational politics may involve the formation of coalitions with persons outside the formal boundaries of the organization.

There were three basic themes emerging from the data concerning coalitions. These were related to the labor union, co-optation through external sources to the organization, and cultural identity. Coalitions occurred within hierarchical groups, and across them.

“Divide and conquer” -- threats to the solidarity of the labor union:

For the purposes of the present research, labor unions may be considered coalitions in that they represent a group of staffs who have a common interest and who pursue common goals. Unions may be viewed as “legitimate” coalitions in that they are legally recognized and are generally permanent. When examining the history of this organization, it is safe to say that staffs tried to rally behind the union as a means of defending themselves against uncertainty related to job security. Some unionized staffs described themselves as “battle hardened” and “in the mood for war” after many years of conflict with the psychiatric hospital. They also felt confident that they were more experienced with union issues and negotiations than the new management. One possible gain for the labor union in the new organization was that it could now invoke strike actions, which it could not do at the psychiatric hospital due to provincial restrictions of such activity in hospitals. There were several events that threatened the union coalition, however. First, while staffs were under a single union repre-

senting over one hundred fifty employees at the psychiatric hospital, they were now split from the hospital in two separate locals. Negotiations were now separate and independent in each local, implying a loss in the strength of numbers. A second threat to the solidarity of the union was the splitting of staffs into teams and satellite clinics. This meant staffs could not easily discuss union issues, as they were accustomed to doing in the past when under a single roof.

“I wonder if it isn’t divide and rule... We had a reputation as being articulate, extremely self-confident, ready to tackle, ready to use strategies for community change to pressure the government, and this was quite a sophisticated little work group. I think [the separation of the staff] scared people. I wonder if it wasn’t divided... From the point of view of keeping the workers separate, it works really well.” (*Therapist*)

Physical separation as a threat to solidarity:

The split into separate satellites and teams took some of the focus of coalitions away from the union and placed it on individual teams.

“We work as separate teams but we provide the same service to the same community with the same boss. We work in different offices. I’m opposed to those kinds of boundaries because I think they build in prejudices that are useless in an organization... The physical boundary is the obvious one, but the concept that there are separate teams that provide the same service gives the impression that we are somehow in competition with each other. I’m not in favor of that kind of thing. I look at it as a step backward.” (*Therapist*)

Cultural identity as a factor splitting labor union solidarity:

A third threat to union solidarity related to the mandate of the agency to provide separate and culturally appropriate services:

“If they had built a single building, they could have had three separate floors with the Francophone on one floor, the Anglophones on the other and so on, with a single coffee room, a single room where we could have eaten lunch together. That way, we could have shared ideas and discussed what was going on in the agency. I really had the impression that they wanted to separate us, that administration wanted to separate us. If there were going to be cliques, they were going to be small cliques instead of large unhappy groups. There is more power in large teams than in small teams... [We’re now] easier to deal with because the group is much smaller and it’s divided more. In that sense, I think that administration wants us separated so that they may control us more.” (*Therapist*)

It would thus appear that coalition strategies by therapists were weakened from the start because of the smaller numbers of employees, the physical splitting of the workers into separate sites, and the cultural mandate of the organization.

Other threats to union solidarity included accusations that senior management attempted to split the union coalition. As discussed above under the bargaining strategy, the Executive Director was often described as trying to split the union's solidarity around job issues.

“If your union is asking for too much money and keeps asking for a raise, then there will be layoffs. You'd better tell your union to stop... It's divide and conquer within the union.” (*Therapist*)

Coalitions and invoking cultural rights in the Francophone and Native clinics:

Given the polarization that occurred around culture in the history and design of the new organization, it was not surprising to see some disunity between staffs in the four clinics. Many therapists, for example, suggested that while they supported the concept of cultural diversity, splitting teams along cultural lines led to competition between the clinics rather than unity or tolerance. Therapists and clerical staffs felt they had lost the sense of togetherness that existed prior to the organizational separation, primarily because the focus was no longer on a single mental health centre but on several distinct clinics.

“You have the Native, the French, and then there is the rest. That's English and multicultural. The English committee is still looking for a *raison-d'être*. They don't know exactly what is their function, how they get involved, how it should get to them, and listening to them talk, it's far from resolved.” (*Team leader*)

Despite being split from the larger group, however, Francophone therapists described their team as having a very strong identity, being a tightly knit group, and not necessarily needing the rest of the agency to survive.

“If there is one thing that would be best for the agency, it's that we'd become four separate agencies, that the Francophone team become its own mental health centre with its own government funding, with our team leader in charge. We wouldn't need the rest of them.” (*Therapist*)

While that strategy had been unsuccessful with the Board of Directors, it was nonetheless much discussed by the Francophone and Native staffs. Members of the Anglophone team were relatively quiet concerning this strategy, presumably because they were not in a position to invoke culture as power and because they did not want to “stir the pot.”

When one examines cultural issues and how team leaders related to them in terms of coalitions, there are indications that cultural identity was a strong factor in coalition formation with the Community Advisory Committees. For both the Francophone and Native units, culture was a legally mandated source of power. In essence, power was derived from the structure of the organization, and team leaders made clear attempts to use this to their advantage. When designing intervention programs specifically for the Francophone team, for example, the Leader of that team always sought the backing of her Community Advisory Committee, which then empowered her to implement the program, regardless of the wishes of higher management levels. One example was the closure of a Francophone day treatment program, which the Executive Director opposed. The team leader felt very strongly that the program should not continue in its present form, and with the backing of her Community Advisory Committee, the centre was closed despite objections from the senior management level.

“I brought the issue to the Committee. They said, ‘This is what needs to happen for this program to function’, and then they directed the Executive Director... What was very nice is that the Committee said ‘The team leader has nothing to do with this. She is our employee. We have made the decision that we want this extra space here. We want to move people out.’ The Executive Director went to the Board of Directors to complain, but the Board ordered him to respect the Committee’s decision. I don’t know if other Committees would have got away with that... You have very strong people on the Committee, my school board people, and it’s through them that I got my staff to move out.” (*Team leader*)

Similar dynamics were present for the Native unit, where the Community Advisory Committee was an ally both in terms of legal and moral support. Alliances with the Community Advisory Committees provided the team leaders with protection against taking on individual responsibility for their actions. In essence, cultural dynamics increased the margin of

freedom of two of the team leaders vis-à-vis the senior management level, and to some degree the Board of Directors.

Co-optation of persons external to the organization as a strategy:

A third theme related to coalitions was co-optation through external sources to the organization. As discussed in Chapter Two, co-optation may take several forms. Two of these forms, namely complex co-optation and two-step co-optation will be described here, as they are relevant to coalitions. The other two forms of co-optation, direct and avoidance, do not refer directly to coalitions and will not be discussed here.

As Garguilo (1993) points out, complex co-optation exists when person A cultivates ties with person B while also developing ties with person C. Involvement of person C is viewed as a way of securing additional control over person B. Two-step co-optation is a variation of this. “Rather than seeking an embedded relation with B, A secures B’s restraint by manipulating the social structure around B through the co-optive tie with C.” (p. 6) In essence, both forms involve a third party in direct or indirect ways. Such maneuvers or manipulations of relationships were evident in examples that we observed in the data. First, in terms of complex co-optation, one of the Co-ordinators found that labor negotiations around the union contract were very difficult and time-consuming. The Co-ordinator (person A) tried to convince the Executive Director (person B) to hire an external negotiator (person C) so as to free up senior administration of this task.

“Right now the Executive Director and I meet with the union. Only he and I meet with the union to do all the negotiations, and he is the negotiator for us. He is the one who talks. It’s something that I have not agreed with from day one. It’s a very difficult position to be in day-to-day management and then sit across the table and actually be the negotiator with the union. From day one, I was saying that we should have an external negotiator or someone from the Board... What I’ve started to do, and first of all because of my feelings with the negotiations, I felt that he and I didn’t have the total expertise, and so I’ve talked him into using external resources from a local law firm, which took a lot of talking because the Executive Director is a very proud man and he’s very confident, to the point if you were wearing a white shirt he would argue that it’s black. I call it the art of gentle persuasion. So I talked to him and said ‘Let’s use Mrs. T... She’s really good. She has a way of dealing with

things.’ So I draw on her. I use her to get to the Executive Director.” (*Senior manager*)

In essence, while continuing to convince the Executive Director of her point of view, the Co-ordinator also sought an outside person to influence the Executive Director. Complex co-optation was possible because of her positive relationship with the Executive Director.

Two-step co-optation: riding on the weight and reputation of prestigious external partners:

There also were examples of two-step co-optation. In one case, several staffs had difficulty convincing the Executive Director of the value of their intervention program, especially in the face of losing staffs due to financial cutbacks. Emphasis on following the lines of communication in the organization hampered the group’s efforts to influence the Executive Director. Members, who had in many ways given up trying to influence him, thus co-opted external influencers. Being involved with professionals from other agencies in joint intervention projects was the beginning of this strategy and facilitated it.

“What I did was that I started working with agencies other than this one to develop joint funding proposals. So, at my initiative, several of us joined and made a consortium that put in a proposal for money. This money was prestigious.” (*Therapist*)

Co-optation of persons external to the organization was particularly effective in this case for several reasons. First, the Executive Director seemed to place a higher value on the opinions of persons outside the organization than on those from the inside. Participation on joint projects would thus gain some legitimacy for the group. Second, co-opting external persons was an excellent means of informing outside agencies of the happenings in the organization and of influencing its functioning.

“Other community agencies are involved such as the Superintendent of Education, whatever. So, what happens through this project is that I am able to report that things are not going well here... This committee is coming up with lots of movers and shakers on it. Those people are the movers and shakers. They are powerful people.” (*Therapist*)

Using one's external links with the movers and shakers as a strategy:

One of the advantages that therapists and clerical staffs maintained over senior and middle management was their knowledge of the 'movers and shakers' outside the organization due to their longer history with the organization. This was often to their benefit in co-optive strategies.

"There are new people in upper management positions who are also new to the community, so you develop the stilted growth that goes along with how much do they really know about the playing field out there, whereas some of us have been here for years and have made this community our home, and already know who the movers and shakers are. They have that to learn on top of everything else." (*Therapist*)

Thus, two-step co-optation involved dealing with external sources as indirect means of power over the Executive Director. This strategy entailed risks, however, because of the potential consequences to the employees if their strategy was uncovered.

What are the different conditions under which complex or two-step co-optation might be used? Without having a larger sample to study, it is difficult to answer this question. It is evident, however, that when a positive working relationship exists, or when opposing interests are not present, complex co-optation may be the strategy of choice because of its lower destructive effects on the relationship if the strategy is discovered. When a person cannot engage with another party because of a strained or limited relationship, such as the case for the group of staffs trying to convince the Executive Director of the value of their intervention program, direct co-optive means may not be effective. Two-step co-optation may be more effective under such circumstances. Co-optation as a form of coalition also is likely in situations where professionals have access to outside sources, such as professional associations or work on joint projects. Unfortunately, we cannot verify this hypothesis, due to the limited size of the group studied.

For each of the three themes outlined above, we compared veteran and newer staffs in their use of coalitions as a strategy, and we found limited differences. There were some situations, for example, where veteran staffs were the ones to initiate coalitions, whereas new staffs tended to be "followers." New staffs tended to be more cautious in their actions, even in situations where they would have had the support of other staffs.

“Because of the natural cohesion between myself and [the other two veteran members of the team], we’ll appear to make a statement vis-à-vis something we want to refer back to our manager. The newer workers tend to be a little more cautious, making statements like ‘We don’t want to rock the boat. You go talk to her. You seem to know more about this than I do. I’m taking a back seat.’” (*Therapist*)

Staffs that had been with the organization longer found it easier to initiate coalitions because of their common past experience with the psychiatric hospital.

“There are two other people who came with me [to this team]. Beyond that, everyone else is brand new, and not only brand new to us three, but brand new to each other. The vast majority of this team have never worked together, and that takes some cozying up. That takes some familiarization. That takes some getting-to-know-you kind of experience.” (*Therapist*)

It is possible that some of these differences were due to new staffs having a more immediate and narrow focus because they lacked the past history.

“They [new staff] tend to assess things in how it affects them in the here-and-now, with a fairly narrow focus, whereas for some of us older staffs, I think we tend to look at more of an overall organizational thing, the larger picture.” (*Therapist*)

Due to the limited size of the sample in this study, it is not possible to make further comparisons between new and veteran staff members around coalitions. It would not be surprising, however, to find that long-term employees would indeed find it easier to form coalitions because of their common background.

Thus, coalitions changed from being based almost exclusively on union matters before the organizational separation, shifting in part to coalitions formed around cultural issues after the structural change took place. The union coalition was weakened by the organizational split, and in some ways substituted for coalitions around cultural issues in the Franco-phone and Native clinics.

It is reasonable to assume that coalitions intensified uncertainty, principally for senior management. One of the strengths of coalitions for staffs in this study was that it allowed members to speak as a combined voice. This helped prevent their isolation as individuals.

One of the potential risks of any type of coalition is that the actors cannot control the actions of the others. While we did not find any evidence of this in the data, two-step

coalitions carried the risk of being discovered, and consequences may have ensued. Another risk of coalitions in the current study was that some staffs were described as “hot-heads” who would constantly try to gain the support of others, regardless of the value of their arguments.

In summary, coalitions were viewed from several perspectives. There was evidence of lateral coalitions (e.g., between unionized therapists) that seemed to weaken over time. Coalitions seemed to form along team lines or within cultural groups rather than following union lines. We also found evidence of external coalitions, as shown by the example of staffs aligning with their Community Advisory Committees around cultural questions. The fact that coalitions formed laterally and externally demonstrated the constant interplay of power variables within the organization.

There may have been other factors that came into play for coalition formation. Pfeffer (1981), for example, suggests that factors such as age, rank in the organization, educational background, length of employment in the organization, and personal values all may influence coalition formation. We were not able to explore these individual factors with the exception of veteran versus newcomer status, however, because they were beyond the scope of this study.

6.2.5 *MANAGING THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION*

The emphasis on following the proper lines of communication in the organization provides evidence that strong dynamics were at play around this theme. Two principal dynamics emerged in this respect. These include enforcing lines of communication by senior management, and crossing of boundaries by senior management and lower-level staffs through legitimate and personal links.

Enforcing the lines of communication:

Enforcing the lines of communication in the organization was an element that all participants discussed as an important theme, whether they agreed with it or not. According to the official structure of the organization, therapists and secretarial staffs report to their team leaders. Team leaders, in turn, report directly to the Executive Director. Team leaders

also sit on their respective Community Advisory Committees. The two Co-ordinators, for their part, report only to the Executive Director.

In terms of minimizing their contact with therapists and clerical staffs, senior managers were adamant about enforcing the boundaries as a strategy to ensure that roles remained clear in the organization.

“I’ve tried to sever [direct contact with staff], not that I don’t want to talk to them, but they have a manager, and the manager is being paid to do a supervision job. Therefore, I firmly believe that they have to give them a place, and so when I have people calling directly I redirect them back to the team manager... I believe that if you’ve got a structure, use it.” (*Senior manager*)

“I have no problem [with staffs contacting management] as long as there are processes, processes are clear, processes are respected and there’s respect for the roles that people have... It’s the day that it gets into what should be day-to-day operational management, management’s arena, that if staffs want to get into that on a day-by-day basis, my god, you’re into chaos of who’s managing what and where.” (*Senior manager*)

Therapists and clerical staffs, on the other hand, described the setting of boundaries as rendering the organization inefficient.

“I got into this ridiculous situation with my team manager, who was communicating with the Executive Director, then he was coming back and communicating with me. I’m trying to find out what money I am entitled to attend a conference, and he’s playing this gopher role.” (*Therapist*)

Common across all of the interviews was that the role of the team leaders was highlighted as central to the organization. Senior management viewed the team leaders as necessary conduits for all information from upper levels. Lower level staffs, on the other hand, described team leaders as just another layer of management. The two Co-ordinators, for their part, described themselves as dependent on the team leaders to implement the proper lines of communication because they did not have direct authority over staffs or team leaders. Clerical staffs described themselves as uninvolved in these disputes, although they described the layers of the organization as sometimes inefficient. As for the team leaders and their role in enforcing the lines of communication, these participants described themselves as the link between upper and lower levels of the organization who would move issues up and

down. None of the team leaders felt comfortable in enforcing the lines of communication, however, and they described it as an unpleasant but necessary part of their job.

Limiting the role of the Community Advisory Committees:

Regarding the Community Advisory Committees, senior and middle managers were quite vocal about limiting the role of the Committees, and they accomplished this through strict adherence to the organizational hierarchy. Senior managers, for example, did not want to see their formal powers eroded by having Board or Committee members becoming involved in day-to-day business.

“The responsibility of the Board should be on policy development, strategic direction-setting and Executive Director evaluation and performance appraisal. But he manages what is below him, within the context of the policies that have been developed. If they start breaking those lines, or I start breaking those lines, there’s a problem.” (*Senior manager*)

As a strategy to enforce the desired roles, the Executive Director used training session manuals to guide Board members in their role. This is linked to a deep-level strategy, socialization, which we will discuss later in this chapter.

Team leaders were similar in their desire to control the extent of Committee members’ involvement in the day-to-day functioning of the organization. Their strategy involved putting the focus of Committee members on longer-term issues as opposed to operational ones.

“They [Committee members] should stick to programming, vision, direction, and those kinds of things. I use them as a resource, not really for day-to-day stuff, but if there is something that is going to impact on the programming, for example if I wanted to bring forward a prevention program for date rape in high schools and I have a manpower problem, they say ‘Go with the Cadillac model. If you’re going to go to the school boards, you’re going to be judged, so don’t scrimp. Wait if you have to’. I thought that was good advice and I should take that into consideration.” (*Team leader*)

One of the important dynamics related to enforcing lines of communication was that therapists and clerical staffs had recently gained access and a recognized role on the Community Advisory Committees. Senior and middle managers thus were inclined to limit the role of the Committees because staffs now had a voice in them, implying a loss of formal

power and a narrower margin of freedom for the managers. Senior managers, for example, could no longer fully control access to the power holders (Board and Committee members) of the organization, nor could they control the flow of information to the Committees as easily as in the past. Team leaders also had an interest in confining the role of their Committees for the same reason. Therapists and clerical staffs, for their part, had gained legitimate power that would now provide them with access to power holders and access to information they may not have had otherwise.

Justifying crossing hierarchical boundaries as a “consultation process”:

Given the strong emphasis of administration on the management of boundaries, it was not surprising to find many examples of staffs trying to cross or rearrange these boundaries in their favor. By the crossing of boundaries, we are referring to persons bypassing the formal communication mechanisms of the organization.

Ironically, while senior managers constantly reminded employees that they were required to follow proper lines of communication, they were among the first to break their own rules. More particularly, the Executive Director decided to bypass the union to announce and discuss the financial difficulties the organization was facing. The Executive Director discussed the seriousness of the situation and asked for staff input on possible solutions in his group meetings with therapists and clerical staffs in each satellite clinic. He explained this as an attempt to increase direct communication with staffs, but the union strongly opposed it. The union claimed that it retained the rights for bargaining, and that any discussions about changing working conditions or job security were its domain. Union representatives thus claimed that senior management was not playing by its own rules. This led to accusations that senior management used these meetings to play staffs against their union and to create divisions within it.

While the union opposed the bypassing of formal lines of authority, there were occasions where therapists turned this into an opportunity. Several therapists, for example, were working on a joint project with other local social service agencies, and the Executive Director wanted to keep abreast of all aspects of the project. He often involved himself in the decisions of the group and wanted the project to take a particular direction. Staffs resisted his

involvement and at one point found it very difficult to modify his vision of the project. Their strategy was thus to support the Executive Director's desire to be involved instead of opposing it.

“We had been resisting running this program that he wanted, just resisting it, trying to frame it, trying to put it into something larger, trying to modify it. None of the things were working. We were frustrated finally and tried another way. [The project] had come from the Executive Director to us. He had bypassed his hierarchies. He bypassed his own structures, his team leaders, so the strategy involved using the structures that were there, and asking him to make the hard choices. [Normally], when we wanted to initiate a proposal, we had to do work plans. This one came to us bypassing the structure, bypassing the procedures of the work plan. What we did then was to give him two plans and say to him, ‘Choose. Here’s the work plan to get you what you want that is agency-based, that you can control directly and you’ll lose one worker. It’ll cost you one full-time worker. Here’s another work plan that’s community-based. You’ll lose control, you won’t control this program, but it should come about, maybe not in the way you want it but it will come about. It will cost you one worker one day a week. The other one will cost you one full worker’... So in that strategy, A was a compromise to go and run the program, and B was to throw it back into his court until the tough issues that need to be resolved were resolved, using the structures that will allow you allies in the system.” (*Therapist*)

In essence, the strategy involved using the lines of communication in the same way as they had been manipulated by the Executive Director, and to do so in an open way. The first step was to accept the Executive Director's position, thus taking a “step down” and respecting his position, then proposing choices or alternatives, and finally transferring the entire responsibility of decision to him. This also had the effect of promoting alliances for the therapists in the sense that they now had legitimate external partners with whom they could align.

Other strategies related to the crossing of boundaries included developing personal relationships with persons higher in the organization, and participating on various ad hoc committees. Some therapists and clerical staffs, for example, had developed personal relationships with the Co-ordinators, allowing them to telephone the Co-ordinators to address their concerns directly rather than going through their team leaders. This did not appear to be a prominent dynamic, however, as the Co-ordinators felt it would lead to more confusion about the policies and procedures and the roles of the team leaders. Senior management, on

the other hand, encouraged the participation of therapists and clerical staffs on ad hoc groups such as the newsletter committee. Some therapists admitted this helped them bypass their team leaders and access senior management directly.

As for team leaders, the Executive Director's actions of bypassing them had the effect of reducing their formal authority. On examining the organizational chart, the position of the team leaders in the hierarchy gives them access to senior management, therapists and clerical support staffs, as well as to the Community Advisory Committees. Normally, it would be the team leaders' responsibility to negotiate and develop external projects, but because of the heavy involvement of the Executive Director, this was difficult. Involvement from senior managers limited their margin of freedom. Also, such dynamics tended to 'sandwich' the team leaders between upper and lower levels in terms of trying to meet the demands of each level. Regarding the Community Advisory Committees, the influence of the team leaders was diminished when therapists gained access to the Committees. This allowed the therapists to legitimately bypass their team leaders and the Executive Director in dealings with higher levels. It also meant that issues that normally would be in the management realm could not be filtered effectively nor fully controlled by senior managers and team leaders.

In terms of differences between veteran and new staffs in using lines of communication as a strategy, it was difficult to establish any similarities or differences because all senior managers and three of the four middle managers were new to the organization.

In summary, the organization's Board of Directors legally sanctioned participation of staffs in the Community Advisory Committees, and it changed the power balance of the organization by creating new zones of uncertainty. Opening the formal lines of communication did not seem to have a "corrective" effect on conflict within the organization, however, as it may have been desired. Instead, it appeared to maintain or heighten the conflicts because staffs could now bypass the traditional lines of authority. Emphasizing reporting relationships and lines of communication was one way that senior management tried to deal with the new organizational reality. Ironically, the more the lines of communication were emphasized, the more the participants tried to develop informal ties.

The dynamics of enforcing and crossing the lines of communication had several implications for the organization. First, they blurred the traditional employee-Board of Direc-

tors roles in terms of responsibilities. An example is therapists who fought for and gained access to their Community Advisory Committees. One of the consequences was that middle managers no longer occupied a central position in the organization, thus affecting some of their ability to manage information and access to power holders. Second, enforcement of lines of communication through procedures was met with resistance and attempts at short-circuiting them. For human service organizations such as the one studied, this may occur through openly developing legitimate external alliances, such as participation on common community projects. In addition, turbulent organizational change appears to open the lines of communication for lower level staffs by presenting them with new opportunities, more particularly therapists. Manipulation of zones of uncertainty around these issues is thus to be expected.

6.2.6 *DECEIT*

The Random House Dictionary (1980) defines deceit as a trick or falseness. In terms of power strategies, this implies using a source of power in a covert way so that the target of the deceit has no knowledge that such action has taken place, at least until it is too late.

While we did not find any indications that the participants had used deceit as a power strategy, there were many accusations that deceit had been used, primarily from therapists. The presence of such accusations raises possible dynamics around this strategy.

Mistrust of information and discounting it entirely:

Most of the accusations of deceit revolved around the manipulation and management of information. Referring to the Community Advisory Committee meetings, one therapist described the minutes of the meetings as filtered and often false.

“Minutes are edited... [Management is] revising history according to [its] own view of the world, and that’s very effective. If you respond to something and say ‘I think that policy stinks’, that would be edited to read something like ‘Staffs raised concerns about ...’ Sometimes it’s even more blatant. Things are just left out. They disappear.” (*Therapist*)

Many of the feelings around deceit seemed linked to past union-hospital experiences that were negative and that led to much mistrust. Many therapists, particularly veteran staffs,

said they could not rely on the information that senior management at the hospital provided to them. This appeared to carry over into the new organization, even though all the senior managers were new employees with no ties to the old organization.

“There are lies... They just don’t give you the accurate truth... It’s difficult to have confidence in them. You mistrust people when that happens. It’s hard to trust them.” (*Therapist*)

Accusations of using deceitful tactics also were present around the financial cutbacks the organization was facing. Some staffs felt that senior management was using ‘scare tactics’ as a way to make staffs agree to their proposals for change.

“The reality was that they didn’t make any cutbacks at all, but they [scared us] for two or three months so that we would give in on certain issues... Those were underhanded strategies that were not necessary and that greatly affected staff.” (*Therapist*)

Therapists also felt that the Executive Director was purposefully bringing up divisive issues for staffs to break their solidarity and weaken them.

“I find he’s very strategic in what he does, and he tries to plot and set people against one another. He says things like ‘Well, it wouldn’t be a problem but we have to deal with these grievances from some of the clinicians’, and everybody knows the clinician he’s referring to but it puts the pressure on those clinicians... He brings up hot potatoes, divisive issues.” (*Therapist*)

In essence, it is possible that feelings of deceit emerged from the mistrust that existed at the psychiatric hospital and that was carried into the new organization. It does not appear that accusations of using deceitful strategies were based on any single event but developed as mistrust grew over time.

“Playing dumb”:

While most of the deceit strategies were blamed on senior management and related to downward relationships, there was an example where deceit was used within a lateral relationship. At one point during the negotiations around possible staff cutbacks, therapists in one satellite clinic felt they were not being informed enough of their union’s plans. They also felt an old boys network controlled the union. Their strategy was to work with their union steward and to pretend to have no knowledge about union procedures.

“My union is supposed to represent me, but it doesn’t really work that way. At one point we got mad and went to the union. We told them that our union representative didn’t want to talk to us. The union rep was there at the meeting, and we had planned everything in advance with her, of course. We are all strategists. The union asked her why she wouldn’t talk to us, and she replied ‘You told me not to talk to staff about the negotiations.’ The union then informed her that she could talk openly about the negotiations, to which she responded that she had no idea about what she was allowed to do. The union then admitted that many staff were new to the union, and that it had not properly trained its stewards about their role and rights.” (*Therapist*)

In this example, staffs deliberately pretended to have no knowledge about union procedures so that the union leadership would recognize it was not consulting enough with its members. Staffs initiated actions by “playing dumb”, so to speak, with the result of controlling some of the interactions of the other parties.

What do the examples above have in common? First, mistrust seemed to have colored the view of most therapists in that they could not have confidence in the Executive Director in particular, with some extensions to other senior managers. Second, negative experiences of the veteran staffs at the psychiatric hospital seemed to have continued in the dynamics of the new organization. This would imply that the new management was not able to break the organization from past history despite many attempts. Third, there is a noticeable absence of discussion about the team leaders through the data relative to deceit. There is absence of any evidence that therapists and clerical staffs used team leaders as shields or tools in deceit strategies. One possible explanation for this is that the team leaders avoided being triangulated in the negative relationship between the union and senior managers.

While there were many accusations concerning strategies of deceit, the very low number of such strategies implies that they were not a desirable means of achieving one’s ends. It may also be that the participants did not have the required control over situations so that their strategy remained undiscovered. Another explanation is that the participants may not have admitted to using tactics of deceit because of the negative connotation that these carry. Finally, participants said they did not want to reproduce the same patterns of behavior they believed senior managers used, thus avoiding use of trickery and deceitful strategies.

Whether the feelings of deceit described above truly reflect the actual use of strategies that senior managers used, or simply the perception that they were used, is an unknown

factor. In terms of relational power strategies, however, the feeling of being the object of deception was strong, indicating that uncertainty around accurate information existed. This supports other research by Frost (1987, p. 516), who found that “these behaviors are more noticeable in ... competitive situations, contexts where uncertainty is likely to prevail and the use of power is likely to be prevalent.”

It is noteworthy that accusations of using deceit through information management came principally from veteran therapists. While our data are too limited to fully explore this dynamic, this may be due in part to the heavier involvement of veteran staffs in union activities and their past experiences with the hospital.

In summary, there were strong beliefs in the therapist group that information was manipulated, withheld, or filtered purposefully to fit senior management’s objectives. As a strategy, however, deceit was infrequently used to increase uncertainty and margins of freedom. While therapists denounced the Executive Director and believed he had intentionally misled them through deceit, we found no evidence that this had actually occurred. In terms of the sources of power that came into play, the control of information was a strong factor.

6.2.7 *INGRATIATION*

The conscious establishment of a positive interpersonal relationship as a means of influencing another person characterizes the ingratiation strategy. It emphasizes a personal approach through flattery and the deliberate creation of goodwill. In this section, we will examine how ingratiation was employed as a strategy by the different groups of participants.

Openly valuing the skills of lower level staff:

For the senior management group, references to ingratiation revolved around the qualities that senior managers described as necessary to be effective in influencing others. Showing their own limits by demonstrating that they did not have all the answers to the organization’s ills, and admitting to their mistakes were described by the two Co-ordinators as effective tools to develop a positive relationship, particularly downward relationships with therapists.

“I kept telling [the employee] ‘I’m not the expert. You’re the expert.’ I was hired to get this work done, but I needed the expert opinions of those I was going to work with. I said ‘You tell me how I should make it work.’ With that attitude, [the employee] came around nicely, but it took a lot of my time.”
(Senior manager)

As the example shows, ingratiation included bringing out the qualities of the other person, and of valuing those qualities. Valuing the input of the employees also was important.

“I think it takes a certain gut instinct, but I think it also takes experience with a variety of professionals in a variety of settings, and an openness in saying to the person, ‘Here’s what I’m considering. I’m not clear on what the impact would be on you. Can you tell me?’ instead of saying to them ‘I want you to do this’, and then they give you reasons why they can or cannot. Instead, upfront giving them the opportunity to do that as part of the process.” *(Senior manager)*

When dealing with lower-level staffs such as therapists and clerical staffs, the two Co-ordinators explained that it was important for them to allow staffs the time and opportunities to express their opinions without cutting them off. It also was important to appear flexible and adaptable to the ideas of lower-level staffs.

Gentle persuasion:

‘Gentle persuasion’ was a variant of ingratiation that one senior manager used, particularly in upward relationships with other senior managers and the Community Advisory Committees. This was accomplished by laying selected facts on the table while never telling others that they were wrong in their decisions or opinions, and not confronting them directly.

Absence of use of ingratiation by the Team Leaders:

There were no examples in the data that senior managers used ingratiation as a strategy with team leaders. While providing explanations on the absence of such data may lean toward speculation, it is reasonable to assume that the focus of the energies of senior managers was on the therapists. Therapists represented the largest group of employees who were

gaining formal power through their participation on the Community Advisory Committees. Another explanation lies in the small number of participants in the senior management and team leaders groups, which may have reduced the possibility of obtaining detailed information on this strategy. It may also be that senior managers simply did not use ingratiation with team leaders. It is difficult to verify these hypotheses, however, because of the limited number of examples. There were no examples of ingratiation as a strategy by the team leaders.

“Being open and honest”:

The senior managers often described being open and honest as one of the keys to successful strategies, especially in times of turbulence. This was not easily accomplished, however, in that the level of trust in senior and middle managers was generally low. The two Co-ordinators thus attempted to depersonalize situations by focusing on process rather than persons.

“Let’s just assume that we’re messing up. That’s been an open, overt conversation often enough that I think it’s sunk into most people that it’s not the person. It’s the process that got us into difficulties when we got into difficulties, so let’s examine the process, free from personalities, to find a solution.”
(*Senior manager*)

The efforts of the senior managers to use a personal approach to exert influence over therapists and clerical staffs were not unnoticed by these groups. Many therapists, particularly in the Francophone group, noted that the Co-ordinators were often generally kind to them, and that they listened to their concerns despite trying to enforce the lines of communication. One therapist felt, however, that senior managers of the new organization could not match much of the understanding and support she had gained from her manager at the psychiatric hospital.

“[Our former team manager at the hospital] was unique. It was incredible what she did in giving us confidence [in our] work, giving me the confidence to go ahead, letting me to fumble for a couple of years and saying ‘Well, we tried this but it didn’t work. We’ve got to try something else. We’re going to throw that one out.’” (*Therapist*)

Thus, despite efforts by the senior managers to use personal approaches with staffs, comparisons with the past continued. The theme of lack of recognition of past work successes and experiences by new managers reappears under the ingratiation strategy.

In addition, all attempts at ingratiation through humor by the Executive Director were met with disinterest and mistrust by the therapists.

“He’ll pop around a corner and stick his tongue out at you or insult you just as easily as throw his arm around you and say ‘Hi, how are you doing?’ ”
(*Therapist*)

“He [the Executive Director] comes in and he makes these yucky comments. I noticed he does it to a lot of women, and I know [others noticed this too]. He came in and said ‘It’s my birthday’, looking for kisses and stuff, and we went ‘OK’ and we just turned around and kept drinking our coffee, and nobody said anything to him.” (*Therapist*)

Such an example shows the personalized nature of the conflicts between veteran therapists and the Executive Director and the difficulty of attempting to use any personal means of influence under such circumstances.

When examining the data from the clerical group, we found only a few references to ingratiation. One member of this group used humor actively.

“I find that humor gets me through my day every day, every day at work, because we’re in stressful times. I think you know that, with the economy the way it is, with never knowing from day-to-day, month-to-month, year-to-year if we’re going to get our funding for next year so we can operate... I try to use humor whenever I can... When you’ve worked in a place long enough and dealt with people long enough, you can sense what you can and what you need to say and not say to people to make them a little comfortable and to release their stresses. So, I do it with humor. I try. I don’t know if I always succeed, but I try.” (*Clerical staff*)

There were no other examples of humor as an active strategy by any other participant to establish themselves in the favor of others. This is not to say that use of humor was completely absent, but that it did not emerge from discussions about power strategies with the participants.

To further examine ingratiation as a strategy, we compared new staffs to those who had been employed at the hospital prior to the organizational separation. A fact that could not be overlooked was the strong importance that the two Co-ordinators, both newcomers,

placed on positive relationships with lower level staffs. This is perhaps because of their rank in the organization, along with their newness to the issues. It is reasonable to assume that both Co-ordinators worked towards calming the storms occurring in the organization. Part of their responsibilities were in fact to co-ordinate the different parts of the organization and to make them work together smoothly. Not having been involved in prior battles, it may have been easier for them to use ingratiation without fear it would be perceived as deceit. The same did not hold for the Executive Director, however, whose attempts to develop less business-like relationships with staffs failed. Several veteran therapists, who were conscious of attempts by the co-ordinators to instill more positive relationships, but who failed to see the point behind the Executive Director's attempts given the heavily strained relationship, corroborated this.

Dealing with 'old baggage':

Veteran staffs brought their past history into the new organization by using "old baggage", including attitudes and experiences. We are reminded that therapists and clerical support staffs comprised most of the veteran participants, while all but one of the senior and middle management personnel were newcomers to the organization. Veterans did not feel it would be productive to use ingratiation, especially with higher levels in the organization, and said any efforts to do so would be a waste of time. New staffs, on the other hand, did not have the same history and investment in the organization as veterans. Part of the personal approach for the team leaders was thus simply to lend an ear to the frustrations of therapists.

"There's maybe less emotion for [my supervisor] because we've been here for a long time, and I know that my history here plays a big part in how I feel about certain things. I kind of let myself run wild, but he knows us now, and he knows when we're doing that and he can kind of let that aside and take what we're saying." (*Therapist*)

An atmosphere of mistrust:

Besides past history, the question of trust seemed to be tied to this strategy. As mentioned earlier, attempts by the Executive Director to use humor to gain the favor of several therapists were rejected because the level of trust was extremely low.

It is interesting that in 16 of the 31 interviews in this research, there were no references to ingratiation, and a complete absence of references to ingratiation by the team leaders. When examined in the light of the avoidance of assertiveness and coerciveness as power strategies, it is interesting that the personal approach was not used more. There are several reasons for this. First, it is likely that the interview process did not gather all references to ingratiation. For this strategy, the participants may have resorted to spur-of-the-moment non-verbal or para-verbal means that they did not recall during the interview. This is supported by reviewing the transcripts of the interviews, where the participants generally spoke about what they said to others rather than about their physical behavior at the time. Smiles and other facial expressions, as well as body posture were not discussed as representing conscious strategies.

A second possible explanation for the lack of strategies involving ingratiation is that some of the participants may not have felt it was important or effective to use ingratiation in their interactions with others. It was shown earlier that rewards as a source of power were few and far between, and positive comments and encouragement also were rare. Under such circumstances, ingratiation may have been perceived as deceitful if it had been used because of the strong conflict that characterized the relationships between senior management and the therapists. The relatively low emphasis on ingratiation thus may be tied to the conflictual relationships that pervaded the organization. The use of ingratiation as a strategy requires a personal approach that depends on a positive relationship between the parties. It is reasonable to assume that it was difficult to make appeals to others, regardless of rank, under a conflictual relationship.

A third explanation is that ingratiation may have been accomplished by different means or strategies, or intermixed with other strategies. Appeals to higher authorities, for example, may have included some forms of ingratiation that were not detected by the researcher.

In addition, because of the timing of this study, it was impossible to determine if therapists would be using ingratiation in their new relationships with the Community Advisory Committees. No participant mentioned this strategy as one of the elements that would figure in their participation on the Committees. A follow-up study examining this would

provide further insight into this strategy. For the present research, we assume that since therapists were in a position of gaining power by participating on the committees, they would try to create goodwill by starting on a positive note, using the “foot-in-the-door” technique.

In summary, there was uneven use of ingratiation when comparing different staff groups. Veteran staffs, particularly veteran therapists and clerical staffs, did not discuss ingratiation as a power strategy that they actively used. The two Co-ordinators, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of personal qualities in minimizing the effects of the turbulence in the organization, and this was evident in their actions. There was little evidence of the use of flattery, although most participants discussed their desire for the creation of goodwill. Repetitions of past history and questions of trust may have led several participants to avoid ingratiation altogether to avoid perceptions of deceit. Charisma as a source of power did not appear to play a role. Margins of freedom were thus not necessarily increased or decreased through ingratiation alone.

6.2.8 REASONING

The reasoning strategy refers to using facts, information, and logical arguments to support one’s point of view. Invoking the reasoning strategy assumes that persons are rational and capable of drawing the correct conclusions from facts. In this section, we will examine different ways that the participants employed reasoning. While reasoning was not discussed as frequently as other strategies such as managing the lines of communication, different uses did appear for various participants.

Policies and procedures as the best way to deal with issues:

As one might expect, the senior managers tried to reason with lower level employees by invoking the policies and procedures of the organization, often citing these to the employees, and referring the staffs to the written manuals of the organization. The senior managers as the most efficient means of dealing with day-to-day problems described the policy manual and following proper lines of community as means of ensuring consistency. Thus, reasoning through the rules of the organization to settle differences of opinion or disputes

was a strategy that senior managers employed, particularly with the therapists. It also ensured that there would be an equal application of the rules to all staffs.

Invoking common sense:

Reasoning also took the form of invoking common sense. When asked what they drew upon in their reasoning strategies, one of the senior managers stated that she based herself on her own past experiences and common sense, and that she tried to transpose these to the present.

Comparing with other mental health centres:

Other examples of reasoning by senior managers included examining organizational processes at other mental health centres, gathering facts about their functioning, and using these facts in arguments to lower level staffs. When deciding on the number of paid hours that would comprise a full workday for the therapists, for example, senior managers surveyed similar organizations across the province and determined that 35 hours was the norm. They also considered working conditions at the psychiatric hospital in terms of working hours and built these facts into their arguments and negotiations.

Involving outside experts:

There was limited evidence that reasoning took the form of involving outside experts. The Administrator Co-ordinator felt that the senior management team did not have the necessary experience to carry out all of its labor negotiations with the union. Her deliberate strategy was to argue that labor negotiations were very complex, especially for new organizations, and that outside expertise would be needed to ensure successful negotiations.

“I felt that [the senior management team] didn’t have the total expertise, and so I talked the Executive Director into using external resources such as a local law firm, which took a lot of talking because the Executive Director is a very proud man and he’s very confident, to the point if you were wearing a white shirt he would argue that it’s black. I call it the art of gentle persuasion. I talked to him and said ‘Let’s use Mrs. H... She’s really good. She has a way of dealing with [difficult negotiations]’.” (*Senior manager*)

Presenting “hard data” to lower level staff:

Senior managers also attempted to use reasoning in dealing with the employees on the issue of financial cutbacks. By presenting “hard data” to lower level staffs, namely budget figures that showed a deficit and the difficulties of overcoming it, senior managers felt they could appeal to the rational side of the employees. Unfortunately, many therapists discredited the information they produced as inaccurate, distorted, and untrustworthy.

Non-use of reasoning by team leaders:

Team leaders were surprisingly silent about the reasoning strategy. Given their central position in the organization in terms of communications and their responsibility of implementing the rules of the organization, we expected many references to the reasoning strategy. This was not the case, however when we examined upward, downward, upward-downward, and lateral relationships. There are several possible reasons for the relative absence of the reasoning strategy among the team leaders. The principal reason relates to the underlying conflict that had pervaded the organization for several years. As discussed earlier, information coming or emerging from senior management levels was mistrusted because there was a belief that such information was managed or modified to suit their purposes. This led to the therapists gaining official access to the Community Advisory Committees, which they believed would address problems relating to control of information and communications. It is probable that reasoning was not the strategy of choice for the team leaders in their upwards and downwards relationships because the information and facts they would have used were not viewed as credible by lower level staffs. Another reason for the lack of use of this strategy is that it may have been disguised under the neutralization strategy that we will explore shortly under deep level strategies. Under the neutralization strategy, values and beliefs are woven into facts and information, making these stronger and more difficult to argue against. Other possible explanations for the absence of reasoning as a strategy include that it is difficult to change a person’s opinions by any means once their mind is made up. In essence, people don’t necessarily listen when the other person’s ideas are too different from their own, no matter how factual they are.

Showing benefits to clients of different ways of working:

For the therapists group, there was a relatively low number of references to reasoning as a strategy. Most of the examples relate to arguments with team leaders and senior managers about overtime work hours and the possible cancellation of certain intervention programs due to financial cutbacks. In all these examples, the therapists tried to show to senior managers the benefits of their points of view by arguing the advantages to clients and programs. Therapists occasionally intermixed this with their expertise and experience in the field. It appears that team leaders were bypassed in these arguments because all decisions relating to these issues were to be made by senior managers.

For the clerical group, there were no examples relating to the reasoning strategy. Because of their peripheral role in the clinical and administrative decisions of the organization, clerical staffs were less likely to invoke the reasoning strategy.

There were no particular differences in the reasoning strategy between new employees and veterans. Explanations include those already described above. Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine what level of insistence the participants placed on each of the strategies because the current research did not examine the intensity of each of the strategies.

The reasoning strategy, by definition, calls upon information as a source of power. This was clear in the examples that we noted. Expertise also was a factor in that the participants invoked the work experience and training and included them as rational arguments. Finally, questions of trust seemed closely tied to reasoning. When employees believed that the information they were receiving was not trustworthy or had been manipulated in someone else's favor, or if the information had no value for the opposing party, the reasoning strategy appeared weakened. Margins of freedom thus would not be increased under such conditions. This may be one of the principal reasons why the reasoning strategy was absent in many of the interviews.

6.2.9 APPEALS TO HIGHER AUTHORITIES

Kipnis, Schmidt and Wilkinson (1980) define upward appeals as invoking the influence of higher levels of the organization. While by definition, upward appeals involve lower

level staffs appealing to higher levels, we examined the data for interactions between all levels and in all directions of influence. This provided a more accurate picture of interactions around this power strategy.

We found only limited evidence of using upward appeals as a strategy to deal with the turbulent changes that occurred. While the evidence was weak, brief mentions about upward appeals did occur in the therapists group. Appeals to higher authority related principally to therapists bypassing lines of authority and requesting help directly from the Clinical and Administrative Co-ordinators. This was possible because of the personal relationships that several therapists had developed with the Clinical Co-ordinator. For the clerical support staffs group, two of the four participants had developed personal relationships with the Administrative Co-ordinator and they felt free to consult with the Co-ordinator if problems arose. This contrasts with the heavy emphasis that both Co-ordinators put on following the proper lines of authority. How is it that the Co-ordinators emphasized following the lines of communication while some therapists and clerical staffs felt they could bypass these same lines to consult with them? There are several possible reasons for this. First, the personal relationship that many had developed with the Co-ordinators increased their margin of freedom. Also, at least two participants mentioned that by virtue of their membership on agency committees (e.g., the newsletter and the negotiations committees), they could formally talk about issues with the Co-ordinators without fear of being told not to communicate with them. This was limited to a few participants, however.

The fact that the therapists group gained formal access to the Community Advisory Committees is an indication that appeals to higher authorities had the potential of becoming an important strategy for this group. Through their direct contacts with Committee members, the therapists group would now be able to use upward appeals as a strategy. Ironically, this was a strategy that was condoned by senior management and the Board of Directors. Unfortunately, the timing of our research did not permit further investigation of this issue.

The team leaders, for their part, did not refer to appeals as a strategy in the research interviews. While they have formalized access to persons higher in the hierarchy, for example on the Community Advisory Committees and in senior management, they did not resort to this type of strategy. This implies that their position grants them considerable access to the

different levels of decision-making in the organization. The team leaders do not have to use upward appeals as a “strategy” because it is already part of their day-to-day work.

There was only one reference to upward appeals in the senior management group, and this related to the Co-ordinators. In their positions, the Clinical Co-ordinator and the Administrative Co-ordinator do not have direct authority over the team leaders, therapists, and clerical staffs. As a result, the Co-ordinators are forced to deal with the Executive Director for all issues coming across their desk and having to obtain his collaboration to get things done. This sometimes put them in an awkward position in that all problems that occurred at lower levels had to be reported to him. The Co-ordinators described this as feeling like “snitches” against lower level personnel.

It remains that there were few examples of upward appeals through each of the levels of employees studied. This may be explained in part by the negative connotation that some staffs, particularly therapists, gave to such a strategy. Like the use of ingratiation, appealing to higher authorities can be viewed as “selling out” by some staffs. We did not find evidence of this, however. The small number of participants in this group prevented us from exploring this dynamic further.

Another reason for the limited use of this strategy relates to the strong emphasis on following prescribed lines of communication within the organization. Using upward appeals as a strategy was difficult because senior management continually enforced the lines of authority, thereby discouraging this kind of activity in the organization. In essence, for the entire group, upward appeals did not appear to be a prevalent strategy.

6.2.10 SANCTIONS

Earlier, sanctions were described as a source of power that applies rewards and reprimands to obtain desired behaviors or outcomes. When used as strategies, positive sanctions (e.g., rewards) and negative sanctions (e.g., reprimands) are powerful not only by their actual application but also by their potential use. Under the context of this study, sanctions are applicable only downwards (e.g., by senior managers and team leaders) because they stem directly from the formal authority of these positions.

In examining rewards and reprimands as sources of power in an earlier section of this chapter, we found that there were few examples of rewards and reprimands by senior managers and team leaders. As for reprimands as a strategy, there were no examples at all in these groups. Of the 31 interviews comprising this research, there were only seven interviews that had references to sanctions, six of these from veteran therapists, one from a new therapist. The examples we found stem from the following themes: sanctions for bypassing lines of authority, for non-collaboration, and for carrying out tasks not in one's job description.

Feeling that sanctions would be imposed for bypassing the lines of communication:

Bypassing the lines of authority was highly discussed by all participants in this research. For the therapists, one way of increasing their margin of freedom was by bypassing their team leaders and going directly to senior management with issues and questions. As described earlier, this prompted senior managers to place heavy emphasis on following the prescribed lines of communication. Some therapists felt there would be sanctions or retaliation if they tried to bypass these formal channels.

“They’re pretty stiff about their preferring everything to go through your team manager ... but it is violated I think on their end more often than permitted, because they can violate it whereas we can be in trouble... You’re kind of scolded if you forget and call the personnel office and want to know how much vacation time you have [without first going through your team leader].” (*Therapist*)

“I’m not supposed to phone the woman in payroll... You get reprimanded and told ‘Don’t phone downtown’. Part of it is controlling the communications.” (*Therapist*)

Thus, one form of sanction that was applied by senior managers and team leaders was a verbal warning concerning organizational processes. A much more serious and formal form of sanction that was described by therapists was the threat that team leaders could use performance appraisals.

“You are evaluated around here. It doesn’t mean much, but you do get evaluated.” (*Therapist*)

Although attributed to only a few employees, the above quotation refers to the fact that veteran employees in one of the satellite clinics had more years of clinical experience and expertise than their team leader. They did not attach much credibility to the performance appraisals that their team leader would carry out of their work. Nonetheless, at least two therapists felt that performance appraisals would reflect negatively on their employment record. This implies that the threat of sanctions also was a threat to the margin of freedom of some lower level staffs. In other words, the possibility of sanctions was a deterrent to certain behaviors in that it reduced uncertainty for management.

Sanctions for non-collaboration with senior management:

A further related issue is that there were perceived sanctions for non-collaboration. One therapist was quite adamant about working with senior management rather than against them because of the negative consequences that non co-operation would entail. While she was not specific about how retribution would take place, she felt that sanctions would be applied both personally and to the program to which she was attached.

Sanctions for expanding functions without permission:

There also was evidence that sanctions would be applied if certain clinical staffs tried to expand their job descriptions without permission. Just prior to this research, three veteran Child & Youth Workers had made an unsuccessful labor grievance against the organization, claiming that their job tasks were similar to other therapists who had a higher job classification. If the grievances had been successful, this would have meant not only higher salaries but also a higher job classification and more freedom in their interventions. This in turn would have meant increased professional discretion for them in their jobs. The Child & Youth Workers were not permitted by management to carry out therapy sessions with families, only with children. To enforce the decision, there was close monitoring of the tasks that the workers would carry out. The threat of sanctions was always present.

“We’re told that we can’t go back to how it was before, because at one time we did participate in the family meetings, and it seemed to be so much better when we did that because we had insight... There is nothing of that going on

anymore, and we're told very specifically that is not our job, that's not our description of our tasks to do, so we are not to do these things. We're told that very clearly... They want to make sure that we stick to our job description because if we do more, they don't want any grievances... I'm not saying that sometimes I just don't go ahead and [meet with families]. Sometimes I do, and sometimes I don't. I guess it depends how big the risk is. If I find that it's too risky, then I'll wait." (*Therapist*)

This dynamic was a long-standing one that carried-over from the psychiatric hospital, where the Child & Youth Workers had attempted unsuccessfully several times over the years to gain equal recognition as the other therapists in terms of job functions. They resented the lack of consideration of their capabilities and expertise by senior managers, and this led the managers to keep a close eye on their job functions. The perception that sanctions would be applied if they went beyond the boundary of their job description thus comes as no surprise.

The mention of "risk" nonetheless raises the possibility that some employees were using their professional discretion to increase their margin of freedom. Given the highly charged relationship of some therapists with their team leaders and senior managers, however, the actual imposition of sanctions would have increased the likelihood of further conflict with the therapists. While sanctions can be powerful tools to restrict the behavior of others, managers said that sanctions would reduce any remaining collaborative spirit, in effect upping the ante in terms of conflictual relationships. Senior managers and team leaders said they gained little from the application of negative sanctions, and this is noted in the relatively low emphasis on this strategy. In essence, there was enough conflict in the organization without adding to it.

Absence of positive sanctions:

In terms of positive sanctions, there was a complete absence of references to rewards such as praise or monetary compensation as a power strategy. Given the financial context of the organization, material rewards such as raises, bonuses, or extra time off were out of the question. Regarding psychological or personal rewards, we believe a low value was ascribed to positive sanctions, that the focus was on organizational efficiency and control, and that therapists and clerical staffs had low expectations that they would receive rewards of any

kind. In terms of power strategies, the threat of sanctions may have reduced uncertainty by constraining the margin of freedom of therapists. Due to the limited number of interviews and the methodology employed, however, it is difficult to provide further analysis of the absence of positive sanctions and the rather low number of negative sanctions. Further study of this aspect is merited.

6.2.11 WORKING TO RULE, BLOCKING PROGRESS, AND WITHHOLDING INFORMATION

Working to rule refers to meeting one's minimum work requirements in the organization while purposefully withholding any extra effort in completing one's tasks. Adapted to human service organizations, this may include slowing down one's work, restricting the number of clients seen in a given day, the outright refusal to work, and strike action. We have grouped working to rule, blocking progress and withholding information together because they each relate to exerting pressure and inhibiting the progress of the organization.

Working to rule:

There were only three brief references to working to rule in the thirty-one interviews comprising this research, and all three references were from therapists. Two of these came from new staffs, one refusing to work after 5 o'clock because senior managers would not approve flexible work hours when overtime occurred, the other feeling that creativity in his work was not being valued. This led these therapists to do only what was asked of them and no more. The third reference to working to rule came from a veteran member, who clearly stated that slowing down services or withholding them was not a strategy that she and most others would consider using for fear of retributions from management.

One of the central dynamics of working-to-rule as a strategy is that it may turn the rules of the organization in the favor of lower level staffs. As Crozier and Friedberg (1977) argue, while organizational rules may constrain the freedom of subordinates, they also restrict the margin of freedom of higher level staffs by reducing their discretionary power. In the example provided above, senior managers did not want the therapists to "flex" their work week (e.g., working more hours on some days, less hours on other days), and this ulti-

mately led one therapist to refuse to work evenings, when it would have been more convenient for many clients. This attempt to constrain the freedom of a therapist also constrained management in its ability to meet the requests of clients.

Withholding information:

Concerning deliberately withholding information as a strategy, none of the participants mentioned that it had any importance in the dynamics of the agency. As mentioned earlier, there were many accusations that information coming from management could not be trusted, but there were no examples of withholding information. Clerical staffs were in a position to be able to withhold information or to procrastinate because of the central role they played in communications in the organization. Team leaders also could have exerted much pressure and power, especially on senior managers, by delaying or not passing on information of critical events occurring in each satellite clinic. This ultimately would not have served their purpose, however. Withholding information was not a strategy that was apparent in the data.

There are several possible explanations for the very low number of references to this strategy. The strategy had the potential of exerting tremendous pressure on upper management because the expertise of the therapists was not easily replaceable and was essential to the organization. Management could not carry out the work of the therapists. Work stoppages would literally have brought services provided by the organization to a halt, leading to immediate repercussions in the community. This would have drawn clients into the organization's long standing conflicts. Up to this point, clients were not implicated and in all likelihood were not aware of them.

A second explanation lies in the fact that work stoppages or visible slowdowns would not have gained public sympathy. Mental health services at the psychiatric hospital did not have a high profile in the community when compared to medical services at other hospitals, and attracting media attention would have been short-lived. This was first shown in 1986 when one of the two directors of the children's outpatient clinic at the psychiatric hospital resigned from his position, protesting the lack of services to the Francophone popula-

tion. The media campaign he initiated against the hospital lasted only a few days, and the issue became once again a mostly internal one to the organization.

A third reason for the rarity of work slowdowns and strikes is that these are contrary to professional ethics affiliation and responsibility. As stated above, clients would have been drawn into the organizational conflicts if the professionals had decided to carry through with plans of work stoppages. The repercussions on staffs from the community may have been detrimental to the organization as a whole. Whether this is a dynamic that occurs in similar organizations or if it is limited to the current organization is unknown.

Not “rocking the boat” also may have been an issue for staffs in this new organization. Given that there was much uncertainty around job security, strike action and slowdowns would only have worsened the uncertainty. It also is important not to overlook the fact that working to rule is subject to reprimands or further sanctions by senior managers. While increasing and manipulating uncertainty is a key element in power games, staffs as a union were not ready or willing to carry through with actions that they felt would be detrimental to the organization as a whole. In essence, there was sufficient turbulence without adding to it.

6.2.12 MANAGING INVOLVEMENT IN THE ORGANIZATION; PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCE

The transcripts revealed many dynamics related to the intensity of the relationships between the organizational actors, particularly between the different hierarchical levels. By intensity of relationships, we mean the deliberate manipulation of the psychological or physical distance between persons as a means of exerting pressure. This strategy is not identified in the literature as a power strategy, probably because the focus has generally been on impersonal issues such as structure, authority, and control of information. In contrast, the participants in our study frequently discussed how issues related to psychological distance were important to them and how these were linked to power strategies and the manipulation of uncertainty. We thus add this section as an additional power strategy for the following reasons. First, strategies are defined as patterns in a stream of decisions. While the strategies outlined earlier all fit within the description of exerting power, a frequent dynamic appeared to re-

volve around staying out of power struggles. In our research, the participants sometimes went out of their way to minimize or avoid power struggles, leading us to examine these actions in terms of strategies. Second, the actions they described consistently involved power sources and their manipulation, and the use of distance as a psychological strategy was a highly visible strategy involving multiple actors implicated in power games.

Attempting to close the distance between organizational levels:

Two principal themes were related to this strategy in the data: senior managers soliciting input from lower level staffs, and disengagement of the therapists. The first theme refers to senior managers' attempts to solicit input from all employees about the financial cutbacks, ideas for the office layout, and suggestions for staff training. As described by all three senior managers, consultation with staffs was an important strategy in trying to break down the "we-they" dynamics between the managers and therapists.

"When I was [designing] the satellite clinics, for anything that I did, I would meet with [staff] by groups, and what was important for me was to get their input because I wanted them to feel that they had a say in the changes." (*Senior manager*)

"We decided to canvass staff to ask them the areas in which they thought they had strengths and could maybe be teachers to others and do some training of their peers, areas where they felt they wanted training, or areas where they were weaker if you will, and might want training on, to identify what the needs were, and to identify what skills we had within our own body and maybe could do things internally without necessarily going external." (*Senior manager*)

Thus, creating forums for the exchange of ideas and input from therapists around different issues was a way of keeping in touch with the different facets of the organization and decreasing the psychological distance between the levels. If successful, this would reduce the uncertainty that senior managers faced during the turbulence in the organization.

Disengaging psychologically and attempting to increase the distance between organizational levels:

As shown by their reactions, it is apparent that the therapists were very much aware of senior managers' attempts to decrease the distance between the groups. Therapists, for example, did not participate much on agency committees because they believed their input was not valued and would have no influence on decision-making in the organization.

“If we suggest something, they make it look like they’re going to look at it, but they really don’t. They don’t really co-operate with us in order to help us feel good about where we are and help us feel secure in this establishment. You don’t feel like you can trust too many people around here, and I’m talking about management way up. I have no respect for upper management because upper management does not respect what we do.” (*Therapist*)

When asked about what they did about these feelings of mistrust, most therapists described their actions as opposite to the goals of the senior managers. They seemed to disengage themselves from the agency psychologically.

“I just don’t bother. I won’t go out of my way to lash out at the person, but I’m not going to bother... I’m not going to put my name on a committee. I’m not going to go waste my time. People have done it too many times now and it gives nothing. At least if you saw that there was some kind of negotiation. I’m not saying that we have to win all the time, but at least to negotiate and meet halfway of something, but there’s none of that.” (*Therapist*)

“In a way I feel I’m here to do my job and collect my paycheck, and I don’t feel very committed to trying to influence change in this organization.” (*Therapist*)

“One of my strategies is a survival strategy, keeping quiet and just doing my job. That’s what I do. It’s really being asleep on the job! ... It’s like being a zombie. You just go through the movements.” (*Therapist*)

“I don’t have any goals for the agency, and I don’t have any goals to establish any other programs or design any novel interventions or anything like that. I just want to be able to come to work and do my job.” (*Therapist*)

Additionally, senior managers and team leaders reported unusually high levels of sick leave for the therapists group. These examples provide evidence of how physical and psychological distance were used as a strategy. We contend that by being passive in the organi-

zation, by withdrawing their collaboration and ideas, by acting as “zombies” and doing simply what they were told, the therapists were avoiding becoming triangulated or “getting caught in the middle”. In essence, there were conscious efforts by the therapists to distance themselves from the organizational politics. Besides being a psychological survival strategy for the therapists, passivity in their involvement also increased uncertainty for senior managers, who could not count on the ideas of the therapists to deal with the organizational turbulence. Sick leave and time off, for their part, were described by at least two therapists as the only option that prevented senior managers and team leaders from controlling them. Sick time was one of the means of raising levels of uncertainty for managers.

“I can’t function in a system where I’m going to lose my integrity. My only way is to get out of the system. There, management can’t control me. Our system is based on control, and I refuse to get involved in that... The things that interest me are now elsewhere outside this organization, and I’m disengaging myself. To learn to be ill makes a lot of sense to me. It’s the only way to go in a system that doesn’t respect me.” (*Therapist*)

As for the role of the team leaders in this strategy, one of the team leaders described her function as a protection that prevented upper level politics from affecting lower levels.

“My role is so central that I’m like the meat in the sandwich. I’m between levels. In my role, I’m like an umbrella and I catch the shit. [My staffs] don’t hear a lot of the stuff that happens above, and they don’t need to hear it... The teams don’t need to know all that garbage. The front-line, their job is to take care of the clients.” (*Team leader*)

The team leaders all agreed that the therapists and clerical staffs needed to be “heard” to address questions of mistrust, but they were at a loss to find the best means to deal with these issues. This problem was compounded by the heavy reliance of the senior managers on following the proper lines of communication while ignoring their own guidelines in soliciting input from the therapists. One of the team leaders described her actions as “just letting things happen” and letting the organizational dust settle. This was due to her view that during organizational turbulence, staffs in the organization took more isolated and polarized stances, therefore increasing the possibility that she would be in the line of fire between senior managers and therapists. By limiting her role, the team leader was effectively practicing boundary management.

Clerical staffs were relatively quiet on this strategy. Two of the four clerical staffs mentioned that they wished to stand away from the organizational politics and simply do their job. There were too few references from this group to draw any conclusions however.

In essence, managing one's involvement in the organization was more than just a coping mechanism, especially for the team leaders and therapists. In downward relationships, senior managers tried to address questions of trust and "we-they" dynamics by soliciting input from staffs. In contrast, upward relationships were characterized by therapists' attempts to avoid involvement in organizational politics while increasing uncertainty for senior levels of the organization through personal distance. Upward-downward relationships also were characterized by personal distance of the team leaders through non-involvement.

Comparisons between newcomers and veterans in this strategy showed some small differences between the groups. Veteran therapists particularly disengaged themselves from involvement in the organization's committees, except for union business. We believe a "contagion" effect occurred, however, in that newcomer therapists adopted some of the same attitudes of mistrust. Further comparisons between the groups are difficult because most senior managers and team leaders were newcomers. Their hierarchical position and responsibilities in the organization would lead them to be more engaged in the organization than therapists and clerical staffs.

This strategy represents a composite strategy that has elements in common with several strategies discussed above, principally ingratiation (addressing issues of trust) and managing the lines of communication, and that adds the element of control of psychological distance. The sources of power included in this strategy are controlling access to power holders (this role of the team leaders was minimized when senior managers bypassed them and consulted staffs directly) and managing information. The two principal dimensions of this strategy relate to personal and structural elements.

6.2.13 SUMMARY OF THE SURFACE LEVEL STRATEGIES

In summary, the data show that there were a variety of surface level strategies employed by the participants. Different groups of staffs emphasized some strategies more than others.

Many of the surface level strategies reflected conflict. The dynamics around assertiveness, bargaining and the clear absence of positive rewards, for example, were clear indications to any outsider that conflict was abundant and well entrenched.

Senior managers were very vocal about the strategies they used or intended to use. They tended to focus on surface level strategies relating to the structure of the organization such managing lines of communication. Strong emphasis on reasoning also was observed.

The team leaders did not resort to as many different types of surface strategies, particularly due to the background role amongst the conflicting relations between other levels.

Therapists, on the other hand, maintained strong negative power relationships with upper levels of the organization. Maintaining a psychological distance was a strong dynamic, along with many accusations that deceit and sanctions had been used against them. Clerical staffs, for their part, were relatively absent in the dynamics. They did mention not wanting to screw things up intentionally for their superiors and to do the best possible job for the organization.

Surface level strategies alone, however, do not account for all actions by the participants. By examining the deep level strategies in the next section, we will get a fuller understanding of the depth of strategies employed by the participants. As in the preceding section, we will present the deep level strategies in as much detail as possible. An analysis of the surface and deep level strategies will be discussed in Chapter 7.

6.3 DEEP LEVEL STRATEGIES

Deep level strategies are disguised through attachment of beliefs, giving added meaning to the arguments one puts forth. To paraphrase Frost (1987), these strategies attempt to distort the reality presented to others by embedding beliefs, values, or cultural patterns in the practices of organizations. Often, deep level strategies are hidden or grounded in the practices of individuals or organizations. There is not always the need for organizational actors to wield power in the system as they would use in surface level strategies.

In the following sections, we will examine deep level strategies and how the participants in this research used them. The four types of deep level strategies identified are naturalization, legitimation, neutralization, and socialization.

As with the surface level strategies, we carried out simple calculations to get a feel for the general emphasis placed on each strategy. The same methodological cautions discussed earlier for surface level strategies apply here. High emphasis is not representative of high frequency but is an indication of higher emphasis relative to other groups.

TABLE 8

**Comparison Of The Relative Emphasis Placed On Deep Level Strategies
By Different Staff Groups**
(*** above average, ** average, * below average)

Deep Level Strategy	Senior Managers	Team Leaders	Therapists	Clerical Staffs
Naturalization	**	*	*	***
Legitimation	***	***	*	*
Neutralization	***	***	**	*
Socialization	***	***	*	Not used

Deep level strategies represented 17 percent (n=162) of the total number of strategies uncovered. Table 8 reveals that higher levels of the organization placed more emphasis on deep level strategies than lower levels.

TABLE 9

**Comparison Of The Relative Emphasis Placed On Deep Level Strategies
— Newcomers Versus Veterans —**
(*** above average, ** average, * below average)

Deep Level Strategy	Newcomers	Veterans
Naturalization	**	**
Legitimation	***	*
Neutralization	**	**
Socialization	***	*

Table 9 compares the emphasis that newcomers and veterans placed on deep level strategies. Newcomers were more likely to use deep level strategies than veterans were. Several factors may explain this. As revealed in Table 8, senior managers and team leaders, who placed a high general emphasis on three of the four deep level strategies, are all newcomers.

The next four sections deal with the qualitative details of each of the deep level strategies. The chapter will end with a summary of the findings. Following this, Chapter 7 will discuss the relevance of the findings and come to some conclusions.

6.3.1 NATURALIZATION

When actors invoke the naturalization strategy, they depict the existing relations as the natural outgrowth of events or as part of natural law. This is aimed at preventing further discussion of the events, and it serves to preserve existing power relationships.

Falling back on what is known:

The senior management group provided only a few examples of naturalization. As described earlier, senior managers strongly emphasized the lines of communication in the organization, and evidence of this was observed in the way they invoked this deep level strategy. Often having no policies and procedures to fall back on, the Administrative Co-ordinator felt that she should fall back upon the policies used at the psychiatric hospital.

“In the absence of any administrative policy and procedure, I cover myself by saying we will follow whatever the hospital had unless it doesn’t suit. I always fall back to that... When we first started, for example, if it was an issue related to sick leave and I hadn’t written a policy on sick leave yet, I would fall back on whatever the hospital had in place... When we signed over to the [new] agency, when we signed over the collective agreement, we also said for now, we’ll follow whatever the hospital has and we’ll write ours as we go along. We were a little more ahead on clinical policies in that they worked on that for three or four months, because they felt those were really important... For the administrative ones, we knew we had the hospital’s policies.” (*Senior manager*)

The Co-ordinator reduced uncertainty by falling back to what was known to her (the old policies), thus reducing uncertainty for herself and lowering the margin of freedom of others. If there were disputes, this was an easy and natural way of saying “Do as you’ve always done until we tell you differently”, and it was an effective way of addressing any issues that might have come from resistance around policies and procedures.

Recalling past methods of doing things:

There were several examples where the naturalization strategy called upon past methods of doing business in the organization. A senior manager who was trying to increase the efficiency through new time reporting sheets, yet having to deal with past history invoked by therapists provided one such example.

“As much as staff wanted not to be reminded of whatever went on at the hospital, when I wanted to introduce a major change like a time sheet, I was faced with ‘That’s not the way we do it.’ Then I thought ‘On the one hand you’re telling me you want to change, and on the other hand you want to resist it.’” (*Senior manager*)

The above example demonstrates the dilemmas that the naturalization strategy created for the organization’s actors. Senior managers faced double messages from lower level staffs. On one hand, therapists and clerical staffs initially had high hopes for change; on the other hand, they were accustomed to a certain way of carrying out their business and were not willing to accept just any change. This put senior managers in a “no win” situation by not being able to please any of the parties with whatever actions they took. The reminder of “that’s not the way we do it” emphasized the dilemma in terms of a naturalization strategy.

Bring up inevitable future trends as a strategy:

When it came time to choose furniture for each satellite clinic, there was considerable opposition from some veteran staffs because of the possibility that all therapists would have to use computers.

“They resisted because a lot of my components were with computers in mind for the future... I was met with a lot of resistance from the others, then we started getting into conflicts about ‘Are you telling us down the road that we’ll have to use computers?’ I was just saying that we might as well have that in mind, because eventually computers are going to be here.” (*Senior manager*)

In essence, the Co-ordinator tried to emphasize to staffs that computers were inevitable in the organization, thereby trying to strengthen her position over other possible alternatives.

As for clerical staffs, discussions about computers seemed to fall within their functions in the organization. In many ways, their jobs relied on technology and thus it was not surprising for them to support the use of computers and to see this trend as inevitable.

“Natural” and inevitable cultural self-determination:

For the therapists group, there were only a few references to naturalization. In addition to the example provided above, this strategy involved elements principally related to culture and mistrust emerging from the past. Many therapists believed that cultural self-determination over mental health services was a natural trend from across the province and the rest of country, and that their organization could not escape it. For those therapists who agreed with the separation of the organization along cultural lines, invoking the naturalization strategy helped deal with issues around assimilation of culture, beliefs and norms. For those who disagreed with the organizational structure and its cultural guidelines, it was more difficult to argue one’s points because this was the “natural” and inevitable way to go.

Mistrust as a “natural” outgrowth of the past:

Regarding dynamics related to mistrust, the participants often discussed the past history of the organization. Many veteran therapists described it as “natural” for them to mistrust senior management because of their past experience with the transition of the organization. They seemed to justify their actions as consequences of the past history.

“I think that a sense of suspiciousness and careful regard for anything that management does is a carry-over from the hospital and the divestment. I think old history keeps rearing its head, and when they bury it, or can you bury it? It’s part of something that you carry with you, so that the same kinds of things don’t repeat themselves, so it’s a learning process, it’s a caution that we have. I think that is a direct result. I think it does create some difficulties for new staffs because they’re looking for direction that can come from management, even within this organization. People who were part of the old organization through the transfer are always reading behind the lines. For example, what does this mean? How is it being taken? How is it going to directly affect the workers? Have the lines been used correctly? Do we need more information, more clarification? Where is the information going? How is it going to impact on us as a group and individually? That’s important to recognize.” (*Therapist*)

The same worker alluded to differences between new staffs and veteran in their actions relating to past history.

“It comes up, it connects, and it could be what triggers it is individuals too. There may be an issue that I want to look at because it triggers me. For one therapist it may be one thing, for another therapist, something else. I think this creates some difficulties for new staffs, those who have a history, and those who don’t... Critically, one of the things people have gone through is that there were stressful times. It comes up for each one of us differently, and I’m not saying that’s good or bad, but it does have an effect. Personally, it’s watching and being careful.” (*Therapist*)

The emphasis on being careful and on watching the actions of the other actors in the organization were clearly linked to mistrust and rooted in the past. Senior union representatives, who rationalized their own actions by claiming that management would carry on as usual, as managers “usually” behave, echoed this. Any new trust was short-lived.

“As a union, we started talking with the executive director even before he was the executive director. We started meeting in fact with ‘Let’s try and do this differently than we’re doing things right now, because we were in such a state of war with the administration of the hospital. Let’s try to start off on a new foot to see if we can’t do things in agreement’.” (*Therapist*)

“I think because of the history, there is reluctance on some workers’ part to believe that it will ever change, that management is never anything but controlling.” (*Therapist*)

There was a belief that everything to do with the former psychiatric hospital was “bad” or undesirable, implying that new ways of doing business would be automatically better. Some therapists said that the new administrative staffs had reassured them of this from the outset.

“I think we were made a lot of promises and given a lot of reassurance prior to divestment that things of course would be better. Of course, they would be better. How could they possibly be as bad as they were with the hospital?” (*Therapist*)

Differences between veteran and new therapists in the organization were apparent in the descriptions that they gave of the past. Newer staffs had not experienced the long-standing conflict and turbulence and could only relate experiences that they had heard. Vet-

eran staffs, on the other hand, seemed to describe stronger links between the past and their current actions. This may be explained mainly by their involvement with the affairs of the psychiatric hospital, their former employer.

For the team leaders group, there were only three examples of the naturalization strategy, from two team leaders. The team leaders discussed culture as a historical trend that allowed Natives and Francophones to seek autonomy. One team leader defended the culturally led structure of the organization through the inevitability of culture as a guiding element in human service organizations across the province. By describing mainstream approaches to therapy as ineffective in the Native culture, the team leader emphasized that it was only natural for Native clients to return to the “Elders” and their traditional and historical ways.

Another team leader invoked the naturalization strategy by arguing that seniority should be the guiding factor for choosing offices during the move from the psychiatric hospital. The team leader felt that the “fairest” way of assigning offices to staffs was to go along lines of seniority, that this was the expected way of doing business, and that there was no other way of assigning offices without meeting with accusations of favoritism.

The third example of naturalization in the team leaders group referred to the need to adhere to traditional roles in organizations. Describing skirmishes between the senior managers and the Board of Directors over the Board’s insistence on expanding its role, the team leader mentioned that a widely held position in management circles was that boards should not interfere in the day-to-day functioning of organizations. The team leader was trying to point out that organizations always operated in this way, in effect, avoiding having to reinvent the wheel.

There were no examples of the naturalization strategy in the clerical group. This absence is noteworthy because clerical staffs could have used uncertainty over policies and procedures to their advantage by saying things like “We’ve always done it this way before so why change now.” The strong control over policies and procedures by the senior managers may have limited the scope and effectiveness of this strategy for the clerical group, thereby discouraging their use of it. Further study on this would be necessary to draw any further inferences.

Invoking future trends and a sense of destiny:

The examples provided above show that the naturalization strategy invokes a sense of history to show that one's actions are based in natural law or are 'destined to be' because of trends emerging from past history. This in effect passes some of the responsibility or blame onto past history, making it more difficult for other parties to question the person's actions. The fact that past events cannot be changed and that historical practices and trends are considered markers for future change compounds this. The naturalization strategy also appears to place additional value and pressure.

Thus, in terms of power strategies, change efforts may be resisted or slowed down by claiming familiarity with past ways of doing things. The therapists group distinguished itself from the others by clinging to past history to justify its mistrust of senior managers. This was particularly true for the veteran staffs. The senior managers, on the other hand, found it difficult to counter this method of exerting power because doing so would have amounted to denying the negative past experiences of veteran staffs. Their focus seemed to be on structural and functional issues such as policies and procedures. The team leaders, for their part, did not try to prevent or counter the actions of the groups, but focused instead on the inevitability of culturally determined services.

One possible explanation behind the infrequent use of this strategy by senior managers was that they could not easily invoke the past. Invoking natural laws such as "This is the way we have always done things" requires that the persons have experienced the past of the organization or at least have intimate knowledge of it. This was unlikely in the current context given that all three senior managers were new to the organization, whereas the majority of therapists were veterans.

The naturalization strategy invokes the past in direct ways by stating that things have "always been done this way, why change now?". The strategy also addresses power in more subtle ways by tying one's actions to historical mistrust that has existed in the organization but not being quite so forceful as in the direct approach. It is evident that veteran members are at an advantage over newer staffs because they may invoke both more easily. Newer staffs must resort to using examples that are more far removed from the experiences of the participants who have gone through the organizational turbulence.

One of the consequences of the naturalization strategy is that it may help depersonalize potential conflicts by giving the appearance of distance. Another result is that personal values and beliefs are included to exert more pressure.

In terms of sources of power, the naturalization strategy in this study borrowed mainly from authority and expertise (senior managers), and culture (therapists). Because of its strong ties to “natural” and historical rules or ways of doing things in the organization, this strategy emerges from issues relating to the past.

6.3.2 LEGITIMATION

Legitimation refers to invoking “higher-order” (Frost, 1987) explanations such as loyalty as a strategy. This makes it difficult for others to question one’s explanations since the reason advanced is in terms of loyalty or sacrifice. This effectively adds legitimacy to one’s point of view. While there were few examples found in the transcripts, we examined legitimation in each of the four employee groups of this study, and we found that there were differences in the way they dealt with the strategy

Showing concern for the well-being of the other:

In the senior administrative staffs interviews, two examples were found. The first relates to the illness of a therapist. The therapist had been off work several times in the past months due to illness. One of the Co-ordinators wanted to communicate directly with the employee’s physician to obtain more information about the string of absences due to illnesses. The employee naturally refused to allow administrative personnel to talk directly to the physician, believing this was an infringement on her privacy. As a strategy, the Co-ordinator invoked her concern for the well being of the employee:

“[The Co-ordinator] said ‘It’s because we’re concerned about your health. We want to know if there’s anything that this agency can do to help you?’” (*Therapist*)

While giving the appearance of genuine concern for the well being of the therapist, the Coordinator’s actions were interpreted by the therapist as a control strategy. The therapist feared that unwanted information would end up in her personnel file.

Using the principle of fairness and equity:

The second example of the legitimation strategy referred to issues of fairness and equity. During negotiations to establish a contract for the employees, the senior managers were faced with many options as to job benefits and working conditions for its different sets of employees. To avoid accusations of favoritism or of neglect of certain groups, senior managers entrenched their decisions in a philosophy of “fairness”.

“I came in trying to change, wanting to improve. I thought there was a lot of room for improvement. Administratively, I wanted to be fair. I think that was the biggest thing. I wanted fairness, I wanted equity, fairly distributed within all sectors of the agency. I have a firm belief in that.” (*Co-ordinator*).

In this example, the Coordinator clearly identified her values and beliefs on this issue. She used a higher order explanation related to fairness, making it harder for others to question her decisions around the benefits.

It is notable that there were no examples of strategies by senior managers invoking employee loyalty to the organization. Since senior managers are responsible for ensuring that the organization’s mandate is fulfilled, we expected them to call upon the professional responsibilities and accountabilities of other employees to carry out this mandate. This was not the case, however, and there were no such examples of legitimation from the three participants in the senior management group. Several reasons may explain this. First, deep level strategies are more difficult to discern than surface level strategies. This is because deep level strategies are extensively disguised in the rules and values of the actors. Second, the semi-structured interviews that were held with the participants may not have provoked discussion about this deep-level strategy. Third, we have every reason to believe that managers felt that legitimation strategies could not be used because of the poor reception they would have with lower level staffs, namely therapists and clerical staffs. Trying to invoke another person’s loyalty, for example, may require that the person calling on the strategy have a shared past history with the others. The level of trust between the senior managers and other levels also was low, bringing into play issues of credibility and motives behind the strategy.

It also is necessary for an actor to have a valid situation or opportunity to use the legitimation strategy. If a person tries to invoke loyalty to an organization without having a pretext to do so, nor any credibility in the eyes of the other, the action may be seen as artificial or insincere. In the example provided above, there was a valid context, that of illness, but the accompanying mistrust in the organization seemed to negate the effects of the strategy. The belief that the senior managers were untrustworthy was a strong one that guided the behavior of the employee.

Calling upon the principle of unity between all levels:

As in the senior management group, the team leaders rarely used the legitimation strategy. Only one clear example identified. Due to the financial difficulties faced by the organization, senior managers and team leaders attended a retreat to brainstorm around this problem. One of the ideas to come out of the session was that managers would not be exempt from the cutback any more than other staffs.

“We came up with three basic principles. If indeed we’re in a situation where we have to deal with a shortcoming or shortfall in funds, ... management and staff will bear the burden equally. It should have the least impact on clients. It should have the least impact on staff. That includes everybody.”

(Team leader)

By invoking a principle of unity with other staffs regarding the financial difficulties, the senior managers and team leaders thus tried to express a tone of personal sacrifice, and showed that they would not be exempt or receive special protection from the financial troubles of the organization. Combined with the principle of having the least impact on the clients, the two groups aimed to increase the legitimacy of their arguments. There were no other examples of the legitimation strategy in the team leaders group, however. Reasons for this are similar to the senior management group, including their lack of past history with the organization and its players.

Questioning the work ethic and values of others:

The therapists provided a few more examples of this deep-level strategy. By describing the organization as valuing the needs of the Ministry of Community and Social Services,

rather than client or staff needs, some therapists seemed to take the position that their work ethic was superior to the senior managers.

“I find this agency has a difficult time taking an ethical position and sticking to it. I find they’re very much concerned about how [the Ministry] perceives them. They want to be liked by [the Ministry]... If [the Ministry] says ‘This is our position’, and it’s 180 degrees from the position that they took yesterday, this agency would be behind them tomorrow and have no problem rationalizing that.” (*Therapist*)

Many of the therapists interviewed agreed the organization was overly influenced by the Ministry’s needs. By bringing into question the values of the organization and where their focus lay, the therapists in effect legitimized their arguments and brought them into the abstract realm of values. Some therapists legitimized their attitudes and resistance by claiming that the best interests of the clients were at stake, even if the resistance contradicted the will of the administration.

“I would use my magic wand to make it good here, to get our ship together and do what’s best for the clients that we see, and never mind about the crap that goes around us.” (*Therapist*)

Many therapists also were weary of claims by the organization that it was doing things ‘for them’.

“Sometimes we’ll go into big meetings and they’ll say that they try to do all these nice things for us, and I say bull crap on that, you’re just looking out for your old budget and what’s important to you. You don’t really give a hoot about the people below you.” (*Therapist*)

One therapist recalled the values and philosophies that guide therapists in describing her reactions toward the level of conflict in the organization.

“I find it really hard that as a group of human service providers who know an awful lot about systemic change in families, we never apply the theories to our own kind. I find that just outrageous.” (*Therapist*)

Invoking her professional values legitimized this therapist’s actions of not participating in confrontational actions with other members of the organization.

In essence, there is thus evidence that attempts by management to legitimize actions by calling on higher order explanations such as those described above often failed. Therapists often brought out the question of the credibility of the managers in such cases by align-

ing themselves philosophically with their clients. This strategy also would have the effect of countering attempts to use referent power and the ingratiation strategy.

Not wanting to “screw things up” for management:

The clerical group, for its part, provided a few examples of the legitimation strategy. All participants in this group emphasized that they would not intentionally “screw things up” for management, even if they disagreed with what management wanted.

“I feel that as an employee that not only you are representing your agency, but you’re representing the Director in whatever capacity you’re in. I’d think an agency is only as good as the people working in it, and I don’t know the right terminology, but the people they serve. Because we are a health agency, to me, how we present ourselves says a lot not only for us but also for our Director.” (*Clerical staff*)

“My loyalty is to the agency first. Yes, it’s to staff, because I like people and I like all staff, old and new alike. Whether I like it or not, I’m professional enough I can work with them, all staff, old and new. I’ve always said you don’t have to like me, and I don’t have to like you, but we’re professionals and we have to work together, so let’s do the best we can.” (*Clerical staff*)

Sharing responsibility equally with all levels:

Other examples of legitimation in the clerical group relate to invoking the shared responsibility of saving money to help the organization as a whole. The goal was explained as trying to encourage others to contribute to the saving, and possibly not to be singled out or giving the appearance of favoring the financial cuts.

“We know that there are going to be cuts... I guess everybody has a responsibility of saving, saving one way or another... So, you look around for the best prices. It might be nickel and dime, but at this point, if we can save five hundred a month on supplies, purchases, then I don’t care, it’s only five hundred dollars a month, but if everybody does it, then [we’ve saved money].” (*Clerical staff*)

Thus, the clerical group cited loyalty to the agency and the shared responsibility of saving money as important in guiding their behavior during the turbulent events that occurred. This may explain in part why coercion and controlling information and communications between different parts of the organization were not used as strategies and sources of

power. Coercive actions, for example, would contradict the value of loyalty to the organization. Controlling information, such as withholding or leaking confidential information to union members also is contradictory to the allegiance the clerical staffs described to their employer. Despite the centrality of their role in information flow, the clerical staffs did not appear to engage in any strategies that would contradict their values of loyalty to the organization.

In summary, there appeared to be limited use of legitimation through invoking sacrifice and doing things “for the good of the organization” in downward relationships (senior management → therapists). The low level of trust between the two groups may explain the infrequent references to this strategy. There did not appear to be a great deal of loyalty to the organization, thereby making it more difficult for higher managers to invoke this strategy. It appears the therapists group attempted to invalidate the strategy by clinging to issues of mistrust. Loyalty to an organization might be considered an afterthought in situations where trust is low and one’s job security is on the line.

In upward relationships (therapists → senior management), therapists did invoke this strategy by stating that they had been loyal to the organization for many years, and that their intentions were “in the best interests” of the clients. In upward relationships, thus, therapists legitimized their resistance to organizational changes through the needs of the clients. Their reactions to attempts by managers to invoke loyalty seemed to revolve around issues of trust, particularly for therapists who had many years of experience in the organization. This also possibly relates to the lack of recognition by senior managers of past history and of the value of certain intervention programs. In other words, therapists did not place much value on loyalty to the organization because they needed signs that the company “cared” for them and was fighting for them. It would be reasonable to assume that the therapists felt they needed something in return for their loyalty, but that the organization was not in any position of doing this, especially in times of financial cutbacks.

The legitimation strategy in up-down relationships (senior management ← team leaders → therapists) was used by one team leader to show he would not be spared from the effects of financial cutbacks, thus in some ways trying to reach out to the therapists and bringing himself closer to them.

Thus, it seems that this strategy was tied to dealing with issues or dynamics of trust and mistrust. The relative lack of use of this strategy also may be explained by the absence of altruistic feelings toward the organization.

6.3.3 NEUTRALIZATION

Neutralization is a strategy that attempts to treat one's viewpoints and positions as neutral by universalizing them as positions shared by everyone or by important segments of society. One method identified by Frost (1987) to accomplish this is by treating one's arguments as rational and thus value-free. In this section, we will provide several examples from the different employee groups to compare how the strategy was used.

The neutralization strategy revolved around three principal themes: cultural sensitivity, employee and client participation and control in the agency's functioning, and issues dealing with the past.

Justifying hiring practices through ethnic identity:

As described earlier, ethnic identity was often at the forefront of conflicts within the organization, both historically and at the time of the study. Senior management felt that 'mainstream' services did not meet the needs of cultural groups, and they justified certain hiring practices and job advertisements on the basis of factual clients needs.

“When it came to hiring our first unionized Native clinician, what skills and functions or what skills and qualifications did we want for that position? Did we want the same skills and qualifications that were there for the clinicians on the Anglophone and Francophone [teams], or did we want something different if we're saying that we have to have a different team, a different approach. The Native community has always argued that the mainstream services don't respond effectively to Natives, and Natives don't access the traditional services that we have in the mainstream services. Why? The White man's approach, solution or mind set does not necessarily answer the native approach. It doesn't include the Native component, world vision, etc.” (*Senior manager*)

The union, on the other hand, felt quite the opposite as it did not believe that language skills were a necessary requirement to carry out the therapists' functions or to meet the needs of the clients. The union president felt that the only reason that Francophone posi-

tions were protected was that they had the backing of the French Language Services Act of Ontario. He argued that no such protection existed for the Native group, that the Natives had not won any of the legal battles on such ground, and that consequently hiring practices for the Francophones should not be extended to Native positions.

To neutralize the union's contention that special hiring practices were unwarranted, senior managers and the Board of Directors aligned themselves using established facts to prove that traditional intervention did not work with Natives. The team leaders group joined with senior management and described similar difficulties with the union, stating that a single hiring structure was not satisfactory because it would not meet Native needs. There were clear attempts by the team leaders to combine moral authority for control over cultural issues with facts showing that traditional therapy approaches did not work. In essence, they intermixed value judgments with "objective" assessments that non-Native therapy would fail.

It is noteworthy that for the therapists group, staffs were divided about their union's position. While it was not the objective of this study to focus solely on the cultural dynamics that occurred, several dynamics around culture were noted between therapists. Some therapists accepted the ethnicity arguments, but others felt that non-Natives could easily carry out the job functions. Experienced therapists, for example, could pick up on cultural dynamics and deal with them. Thus, for issues surrounding ethnicity, there was evidence that expertise, job experience, and factual information were used as a source of power to bolster arguments for both sides.

Employee and consumer participation as the "right thing to do":

Employee and consumer participation in running the organization was a second theme that involved the neutralization strategy. Planning a new organization is a large task by any means, and the mental health centre that we studied was no exception. While the final organizational model had been in place for some months, there remained many heated discussions around the structure that was adopted. Senior managers, for example, felt they needed some degree of control over the functioning of the agency and were reluctant to hand over some management tasks normally assigned only to senior managers. Therapists, for their part, put much energy into trying to gain additional say in the organization's deci-

sion processes. First, the therapists brought to light that bottom-up organizational models were better than top-down approaches. They argued that experiences in other provincial and American social agencies showed that organizations could not represent their community effectively if community partners were not integrated into the structure. They also argued that citizens were not represented in the current organizational structure.

It is reasonable to assume that when therapists invoked the neutralization strategy, by showing the factual benefits of community participation, they increased the level of uncertainty for senior management and the Board of Directors of the agency. This included the possibility of less control for senior management over the operations of the agency, increased risk, and the potential for outside parties to influence the direction of the organization. The therapists group achieved this in part with the neutralization strategy by emphasizing the ‘objective’ nature of their arguments, and by rationalizing community participation through the experience of other human service agencies. Combined with the legitimation strategy, where the values of fairness and equity were brought into play, this was a strategy that attacked the issue from several angles.

The team leaders, for their part, also combined the neutralization strategy with the legitimation strategy, but in the context of showing to staffs that their participation was desired, not resisted. Because of the high levels of mistrust in the organization, senior managers and team leaders had some difficulty in convincing therapists that they truly needed their input for the financial and organizational problems that faced the agency.

“What we were attempting to do was to consult with them as a way of developing some notions of what could be done and the financial implications ... and to have some dialogue on it. I think, maybe in our naiveté, management wasn’t able to arrive at that for the reason that it was seen that it should more appropriately be dealt with at the negotiating committee. But I can honestly say, the intent was not ... to whittle away at the union’s position or to attempt to negotiate. It was purely out of that need to want to democratize the discussion, to seek consultation when possible. I guess that shows that you can’t always win even though your intent may be appropriate.” (*Team leader*)

In our interviews with the therapists, it was evident that they mistrusted financial information and facts provided by senior managers. Attaching the values of consumer partici-

pation, democracy, and ‘honest discussion’ to information and facts was an attempt to deal with this mistrust to increase their significance and influence.

Also under the philosophy of staff participation was the Executive Director’s attempt to approach staffs directly about the financial problems of the organization, without first going through the union. As shown earlier, this represented breaking his own rules about crossing the normal channels of communication, but it was carried out under the guise of cooperation, harmonization and rapprochement with the therapists and clerical groups. By showing the rational benefits of increasing staffs’ opportunities for input, senior managers hoped to open up the dialogue between the two groups. This action was necessary because therapists and clerical staffs had recently gained observer status on the Community Advisory Committees, something that the Executive Director could not oppose. By using rational and philosophical/moral arguments in combination, however, this allowed senior managers, particularly the Executive Director, to approach staffs without first dealing with the union. In other words, the neutralization strategy was an attempt to show that it was not just a personal value they held, but that it was grounded in the betterment of the organization through increased efficiency, cooperation, and better services for the clients.

Combining impersonal factual arguments with intentions of honesty and collaboration was thus a strategy that was attempted in downward relationships with therapists. The long history of mistrust between therapists and senior management, however, in some ways negated the effects of the strategy. Senior managers and team leaders could not totally bypass issues of trust with this strategy.

Different ways of overcoming history:

The third major theme related to the neutralization strategy was one of dealing with the past. Given that all three senior managers, three of the four team leaders, and all the members of the Board of Directors were new to the organization, it is not surprising that there were contrasts between old and new ways of doing things. Senior managers and team leaders wanted to part with the past. This first became evident when they requested that the researcher avoid reviving old skeletons. Therapists, for the most part veterans of the organi-

zation, felt that their past contributions and experiences should not be ignored. Thus, there were many issues around past history that created tension within the organization.

To deal with some of these issues, the different groups in the organization invoked the neutralization strategy, but in different ways. Senior managers and team leaders, for example, tried to show the efficiency of their new policies, procedures, models of intervention, and materials such as furniture. “New” was equated with “better”. It is reasonable to assume that the senior managers, Board of Directors, and team leaders felt they had to provide different management styles than in the past, or consequently face the same old problems that existed before the organizational separation. Thus, “new ways are better” implied that past ways were outdated and wrong.

The therapists group, on the other hand, felt that managers should not claim that things were better because they had no past to compare to.

“Upper management, often times at meetings, [assumed] that they as an agency were better than what was before with the hospital. They were trying to make themselves [better]. It is not the case at all.” (*Therapist*)

“I didn’t like the idea that they were going to bad-mouth the other place, but they hadn’t been there... I say ‘No, you didn’t live that other part. No, it’s not perfect, but you’re far from being perfect too.’” (*Therapist*)

Therapists also felt distant from senior managers, and they continually felt little value was placed on their job skills and past experience. This was particularly true of veteran staffs, but several newcomer therapists also expressed it.

“How can you form an opinion on a team when you don’t know the type of work they do. [Senior managers] don’t know. They don’t have the right [to form an opinion].” (*Therapist*)

In terms of a strategy, some therapists thus emphasized the lack of knowledge of senior managers with regard to front line job functions and the skills required to carry them out. From the perspective of many therapists, this was described as an ‘objective’ fact because they felt they could show that senior managers did not share a common history with them. They also emphasized that the managers had not lived through several years of uncertainty. In essence, therapists embedded their own values (rejecting many attempts by manag-

ers to include them in decision processes) through rational means (managers did not have sufficient knowledge of front line work to make decisions about it).

There were no examples of the neutralization strategy from the clerical group. As for the other strategies, we feel that their distance from some of the organizational issues explains the absence of this strategy in their group.

In summary, the neutralization strategy borrows elements from the reasoning strategy and from information as a source of power, and tries to increase the value of one's position by combining value judgments with 'objective' facts and information. This strategy is obviously an attempt to appeal to the rational of other actors, but with additional emphasis on trying to reach into value system. In downward relationships (admin → union, team leaders → union), we found that higher level persons tried to deal with issues of trust and past history to show it's not just a personal value judgment or opinion, but that decisions were grounded in facts. Upward relationships, on the other hand, were characterized in some cases by arguing that job experience and training could substitute for cultural upbringing. There was much division among staffs for this dynamic, however, which meant that it did not have the widespread support in the therapist group.

While there are similarities between the neutralization strategy and the reasoning strategy, there are also several differences. The two strategies are alike in that they appeal to the rational side of actors by calling upon facts and information, for example. The neutralization strategy, however, goes further by integrating value statements, invoking cultural sensitivity and moral authority over organizational issues. For organizational actors, enhancing one's arguments with abstract values appears to have the effect of increasing uncertainty. When value judgments are intermixed with 'objective' or factual information, they are more difficult to discern, yet can exert considerable power.

6.3.4 SOCIALIZATION

The socialization strategy relies on mechanisms of learning and orientation to shape the attitudes, behaviors and interpretative schemes of some actors, to the benefit of others. (Frost, 1987) As for the sections above, it is useful to distinguish between the different hierarchical levels in the organization in analyzing the strategy.

Using training manuals for the Board of Directors:

In the senior management group, only one of the participants, the Executive Director, spoke about this strategy as a conscious effort to guide and shape the behavior of others. The Executive Director's efforts were aimed at three targets: the Board of Directors, team leaders, and therapists. For each of these targets there was a particular flavor to the socialization strategy. For the Board of Directors, for example, the Executive Director was clear about his concern that the Board might overstep its boundaries and try to extend its role into the day-to-day business of the organization. Confining the role of the Board was important to minimize its power, and orienting and directing its members toward a particular role was a way of accomplishing this.

“We've given the [Board of Directors] a board and administrator publication which shows what the role of a board member should be versus that of the Executive Director. There is a board members' ethics section at the beginning of that thing which talks about things that as a board member, well, decisions that you take or are made by the board as a whole, the special role that exists between a president and an Executive Director, all those kinds of things... The responsibility of the board should be on policy development, strategic direction setting and Executive Director evaluation and performance appraisal. But he manages what is below him, within the context of the policies that have been developed. If they start breaking those lines, or I start breaking those lines, there's a problem... The manual tells them what is and what isn't.” (*Senior manager*)

The example above provides evidence of the socialization strategy applied in an upward relationship at the highest levels of the organization. The Executive Director's use of a board members' manual allowed him to orient and shape the attitudes and behaviors of the board members to a certain degree, while solidifying his own points of view through the process.

Work retreats as a way of clarifying lines of communication and responsibilities:

In downward relationships, the Executive Director employed work retreats and consciousness-raising exercises as a method of orienting his middle and senior level staffs.

“We did an exercise to see where we are in our organization in terms of problems and in terms of needs. We looked at our group management process. We have different exercises. I tried to show at what point, in the exercise we had, that they were open to the input of others, at what point they seemed to always to be the one who was influencing to rule overall, and influence the decision we took on something. By the same token, we showed what the correct answers were on something and they could compare that to theirs.” (*Senior manager*)

This form of orienting the staffs was described as helping people become more aware of how they influenced others, so that there would be more likelihood of a shared vision between them all. By describing “correct” answers, as per the training manuals, the Executive Director was in effect favoring his reality over others. The intent was to have an impact on the lines of communication, on creating a shared vision within the organization, and clarifying of the roles of each member of the management team.

Raising awareness of cultural identity as a means of entrenching power over time:

Regarding the team leaders level, there were a few examples that showed that this strategy was accessible to their level in the organization. The team leaders were clear that issues relating to the Native culture required long-term education of all staffs, including the upper levels of the agency. Recent agency-wide training on native cultural awareness was held but was described as controversial because the trainer appeared to be on a “cultural bandwagon”. In the eyes of the therapist staffs, these workshops backfired because they attempted to “convince” rather than educate, and to give moral speeches about the rights of Natives and Francophones rather than to show the benefits of increased cultural tolerance. The team leaders felt that cultural sensitivity had to be developed, however, even if over a long term. Continual exposure to Native issues by increasing their presence in the organization, and not “rocking the boat” were described as successful tactics within this strategy. The team leader thus employed the socialization strategy in up-down relationships, aiming her sights on the agency as a whole. Our informal discussions with the team leaders would lead us to believe that increased tolerance could only help them increase their cultural power. The socialization strategy was a means that, when spread over the span of several years, would

entrench cultural identity, making it more difficult for senior managers and the Board of Directors to direct their affairs.

Focusing on clinical themes with higher authorities:

For the therapists group, as in the team leaders group, there were few examples of the socialization strategy. The two examples we found related to orienting senior managers and the Board of Directors to the values and philosophy of certain clinical programs. Primary prevention programs, for example, did not appear to be the focus of the new administration's intervention efforts. The therapists thus felt it important to reorient the upper levels of the organization to match their experience, skills, and clinical preference, in essence, enhancing their expertise power. One factor that entered into play, however, is that half of the new organization's members, most of them therapists, brought with them a past history that the new managers had great difficulty in uprooting. For therapists and clerical staffs, it is reasonable to assume that orientation of new staffs would focus on "bringing them to their side", whereas administration focused on the newness and uniqueness of the organization with its new employees.

In summary, the socialization strategy was employed by senior level persons in the organization to ensure that all worked toward a shared vision. As Pfeffer (1992a) points out, however, developing a strongly shared vision takes time and effort. This may explain why so much time and energy was expended over two years to train the Board of Directors.

It is difficult to determine whether there were differences between veteran and newcomers for the socialization strategy. It would appear at first that newcomers were the primary users of the socialization strategy because almost all of our examples come from the senior managers and team leaders groups. On closer examination, we find that these two groups occupy the highest positions in the organization. Our evidence shows that higher levels used socialization across all levels, whereas lower level staffs tended to keep it within their own level. More exploration of this is warranted.

6.4 SUMMARY

Regardless of their hierarchical position or years of employment with the organization, the data clearly showed that all participants employed or had to deal with power strategies during the organizational turbulence. All the participants were involved in power relationships, some involving minor actions, others involving outright disputes and open arguments between levels. One level in particular, clerical staffs, was less involved than other levels in the power plays of the organization, and this was explained by their more peripheral role. Nonetheless, the clerical group was fully aware of the difficulties and dynamics between organizational levels, and it would be misleading to believe they were immune from these organizational processes.

We rarely found “pure” types of strategies. Different categories often overlapped in the actions and beliefs of the participants. We nonetheless presented them separately in this chapter to provide detailed examples of how they were used.

We found clear distinctions between surface level and deep level strategies. Deep level strategies displace the responsibility from the actor to more abstract elements such as culture, ethnic identity, or loyalty. Several of the deep level strategies, such as neutralization, resembled surface level dynamics but they integrated values and beliefs, thus increasing their social pressure. Deep level strategies seemed to diffuse pressure away from the person invoking the strategy and to shift the emphasis to other issues.

The various groups were uneven in their use of strategies depending on their hierarchical level within the organization. This would be explained in part by the potentially larger pool of resources at the administration group, which permutated to different ways of exerting direct and indirect influence. Another reason relates to the different opportunities of the groups to exert power and the dilemmas facing them.

Analysis of the deep level strategies brought to light strong evidence of clashing beliefs regarding the past and the future, something that was not always evident in the surface level strategies. Values linked to the past were more clearly evident in deep level strategies.

The current chapter has described the power strategies as presented by the participants. In the next chapter, we will analyze the strategies in terms of relationships and dynamics within the organization.

Chapter Seven

Discussion

“One of the guiding principles at the management table has been and continues to be let’s not make the same mistakes. At the very least, let’s not make the same mistakes. Let’s make new ones.”

(Team Leader)

“There may be a crisis that comes up, and depending on how you look at that crisis, you can either see it as nothing but a dark hole or you can see it as something with opportunities that can be used to improve things.”

(Senior Manager)

This research examined power strategy formation of employees in a mental health organization that went through a protracted and difficult divestment from a psychiatric hospital. The central questions we addressed were: What kinds of strategies emerge when there is turbulent organizational change? How did the employees deal with the turbulent events? How are their power strategies similar or different? What relational power patterns emerged around the power strategies?

When asked for three words to describe their organization, the majority of participants in this research used words such as confused, struggling, divided, suspicious, hierarchical, manipulative, and untrustworthy. While these words may have different meanings in different contexts, they nonetheless convey a particular impression of the changes that occurred. They indicate that the organizational changes were turbulent, often unpredictable, sometimes personalized, and that they existed in a very tense climate. Upon examination of

the data, we may ask what the participants have taught us about strategy formation. Our research suggests that the answer might differ, depending to whom one would speak. As Kipnis, Schmidt and Wilkinson (1980) put it, it would seem everybody was influencing everybody else in the organization, regardless of position or rank.

The four groups of staffs (senior managers, team leaders, therapists, and clerical staffs) had some common elements between them. They all faced an organizational split from a well-established psychiatric hospital, shared a generally similar political environment, and all were mandated to work in one capacity or another towards improving the mental health needs of their clients. They also were interrelated through their functions and power relationships. On the other hand, as characterized in Chapter 2, professional organizations rely on the skills and knowledge of their professional staffs who have a high degree of training, specialization and autonomy in exercising their skills. The four groups of staffs differed considerably along this dimension, revealing patterns relating to strategies used.

The first section of this chapter will review the findings of Chapter 6 for surface and deep level strategies in light of power relationships. The second part will examine the important features of these relationships and contrast them to the theoretical approaches to strategy formation discussed in Chapter 2. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the empirical contributions and the implications for future research.

7.1 DISCUSSION OF THE SURFACE AND DEEP LEVEL STRATEGIES

A first observation is the variability of the strategies between the groups. Depending on who the actors were and their position within the organization, certain strategies were emphasized more than others. We will examine these in the sections below in the context of who exercised the power strategies in each of the hierarchical groups. Power strategies will be examined in terms of downward, upward, down-up, and lateral relationships to examine the interactions between the groups.

7.1.1 Downward relationships (senior managers → lower level staffs)

Organizational members involved in downward power relationships (e.g., senior managers to therapists and clerical staffs) had the fullest range of sources of power and

strategies available to them, yet senior managers clearly emphasized some strategies more than others. They discussed at length the importance of maintaining clear boundaries between hierarchical levels to ensure consistency and clear communications. There were thus many references in this group to managing lines of communication. Senior managers, however, often broke their own official lines of communication by bypassing the team leaders and the union. They justified this as soliciting input, flattening the hierarchy, and increasing collaboration. Ironically, as they emphasized boundaries, the senior managers also put much energy into decreasing the “we-they” dynamic between senior managers and lower level staffs by breaking their own rules.

Concerning sanctions as a strategy, we found no data showing use of sanctions by the senior managers over other staffs. The perception by therapists that senior managers had used sanctions was evident and very strong, particularly around breaking lines of communication, but there was no direct evidence of actual sanctions. In addition, there was absence of positive sanctions such as rewards. Under the tense climate, sanctions in the form of rewards would have been received with much mistrust. This is perhaps because “hard” tactics such as sanctions are generally less well perceived than softer means (Guilbault, 1984; Falbe and Yukl, 1992). In an environment where senior managers needed every ounce of collaboration from other groups, these could have weakened other strategies such as reasoning and bargaining. Our data seem to support Lam’s (1997) research in the industrial literature that the use of demands, threats, or intimidation are often not used because they are not generally successful in convincing staffs to comply with policies.

There appeared to be an overlap between lines of communication and authority/legitimate power, and imposing sanctions. Authority power relies on recognition of the person’s authority, while lines of communication rely more on impersonal personnel policies and procedures as the guide to behavior. The emphasis on lines of communication acted as a boundary between levels. It also is evidence of how authority power was exerted, but in a more depersonalized sense. It may be argued that senior managers believed that breaking their own rules, while at the same time emphasizing that others should follow the proper lines of communication, would make it easier for them to obtain information, cooperation and assistance. In other words, “if we can’t get it from the union, let’s get it directly from the

therapists.” It may be hypothesized that middle managers were bypassed completely because the target of the change efforts was the therapists group. Aimed at the therapists group, upper level strategies thus took on a rational flavor at both surface and deep levels.

Senior managers used ingratiation to show they valued the skills and qualities of the therapists. Senior managers also openly admitted some of their own shortcomings so as to show that they did not have all the solutions, were “human”, and that input from the therapists was needed and valued.

The senior managers frequently used reasoning by pointing out facts and logical explanations for their points of view. This implies that senior managers felt they could use information and facts to appeal to the rational side of lower level staffs. Past events and mistrust of information were difficult elements for senior managers to deal with, however, and this negated many efforts of reasoning. Nonetheless, the resistance to information from below did not discourage the senior managers to use this strategy, seemingly in the belief that lower level staffs would ‘come around’ to their point of view sooner or later. The evidence shows this strategy was likely a poor one for quick results due to the high resistance present.

Bargaining was a strategy in which senior managers engaged, and this took on several forms. One was of increasing the sense of urgency by emphasizing the financial situation and possible effects on staffing. This relied almost entirely on information as power, and was used to create a very visible crisis. This provides some evidence that the more visible information is, the more it can be manipulated into producing a crisis or urgency. How successful the manipulation is seems to depend heavily on the credibility attached to it.

A second form was of opening up the consultation process to include all employees, thus bypassing the union. Also, by presenting several options to staffs, as opposed to a single option, senior managers minimized accusations they were not willing to consider alternatives. There were indications that the bargaining process used by senior managers was aimed at splitting labor union solidarity by pitting employees against their union. Overall, the bargaining strategy was weakened because lower level staffs mistrusted one of the sources of power it was based on, information. To paraphrase Kotter (1996), the value of the information was reduced so that the therapists saw no tornado-like threat, which is one reason their sense of urgency was lower than the senior managers.

Managing personal involvement in the organization was one of the strategies that senior managers focused on by soliciting and valuing input from lower levels. In an effort to break down the “we-they” dynamic with lower level staffs and to counter psychological distance with therapists, senior managers and team leaders sometimes turned to a “listening mode” with lower levels.

Although the two Co-ordinators often had to appeal to the Executive Director’s authority to deal with issues from team leaders (who did not report to the Co-ordinators directly), the senior managers did not emphasize appeals to higher authorities. The Co-ordinators avoided this strategy because invoking the authority of higher levels in the organization made them feel like “snitches” against lower levels. This is an example of staffs having a source of power and the hierarchical position to use it, but with a context that would have made the strategy backfire. This is strong evidence that access to, or possession of a source of power is not enough to use it successfully. The context for it must be right.

As for working to rule, there was no discussion by the senior managers that they or other levels had engaged in this strategy. This strategy would be incompatible with the leadership role of senior manager in the organization. Also, we found no evidence of coalitions in the senior managers group, although there were indications they tried to ensure consistency between them by emphasizing lines of communications with all lower level staffs.

Old baggage and mistrust of information were strongly tied to the avoidance of charisma or appeals to altruism by senior managers because these strategies would have carried a negative connotation. This is probably due to the context of mistrust that would have nullified these strategies. Assertiveness as a strategy was absent, despite the high level of mistrust. One explanation for this is that assertiveness was not deemed compatible with reducing the intensity of already strained relationships. There was little senior managers would gain by using assertiveness with lower level staffs.

We did not find examples that senior managers had used deceit as a strategy, although this was contrary to the perception from lower level staffs that it had been used a lot. Accusations of deceit and manipulation of information from lower levels seemed tied to the past, even if none of the senior managers had been employed by, nor had links with the former organization. Managers of the psychiatric hospital transferred “old baggage” to the

new organization's managers by attribution. The past thus became an essential element in the perception that deceit was used and in mistrust.

The interviews with senior managers revealed several examples of deep level strategies. It is hard not to notice that each of the senior managers placed more emphasis on elements related to deep level strategies than the team leaders, therapists, and clerical staffs. Several reasons may explain this. First, higher levels in organizations generally have more sources of power at their disposal. It is reasonable to assume that because the pool of sources of power is larger, the number of permutations around these sources of power is larger. Second, despite having a larger pool of sources of power, senior managers often were frustrated at the constant resistance of lower level staffs to all kinds of issues. It is reasonable to assume they had recourse to deep level strategies to supplement a power base weakened by the long and protracted period of change and turbulence. The empirical evidence in the present research supports this. Third, it is likely that the higher up one is in an organization, the more elements of turbulence one has to deal with. It also is possible that higher ups can initiate or worsen turbulence due to their position and sources of power. While the sample size of this study was too small to draw generalizations on this issue, the evidence indicates that senior managers made every effort to minimize turbulence. Further research in different organizational contexts could elucidate this.

Higher levels of the organization, particularly senior managers, constantly focused on the future and on bringing in new elements to the organization. This is partly due to their inability to invoke the past since this was the realm of other employees who had been there longer than all the senior managers combined. At the risk of over-simplifying, a description of the beliefs of the senior managers was “out with the old, in with the new”. They focused on provincial trends as the desired direction to follow, presented them as inevitable, and thus tried to invoke a sense of destiny for the organization. In essence, these actions made it “natural” to move on and not to stay with the present. Naturalization was thus a strategy that presented organizational change as a force that was beyond anyone's control. Senior managers were unable to invoke and manipulate the past because they did not share organizational history with veteran staffs. Focusing on the future was one of their means of dealing with it.

Legitimation as a strategy was invoked by the senior managers in the form of showing concern and caring for others, and by invoking the principles of fairness and equity to defend their decisions. Legitimation also took the form of calling on the unity of all staffs in facing the difficulties of the organization, ensuring that lower level staffs knew upper levels would bear the brunt of the problems equally with others. Senior managers did not invoke loyalty to the organization as a strategy, however. This is perhaps because loyalty is implied from the moment one is hired by an organization. More likely, invoking loyalty as a legitimation strategy would have been too transparent and would not have been viewed with much credibility from lower level staffs, particularly the therapists. In this sense, legitimation had its limits as a strategy, and this may explain its limited use by senior managers. Lack of credibility and low levels of trust were factors that weakened the legitimation strategy. This parallels the weak use of ingratiation and referent power.

Neutralization was the deep level strategy that the senior managers described the most. As used in downward relationships, the neutralization strategy was a mix of hard facts to reach the rational side of employees and beliefs that culturally led services were morally correct (e.g., provincial legislation mandating protecting the right to culturally appropriate services). This made it very difficult for employees at other levels to question this issue without creating internal divisions amongst the various groups and putting people into different camps according to their opinions. In essence, this strategy was very potent and effective in reducing opposition as it was used in downward relationships.

Socialization, the last of the deep level strategies, was used in downwards relationships to develop a shared vision and a common understanding of the organization's functioning. Raising the consciousness of staffs about their own styles and behaviors, and comparing them to "correct" answers from training manuals was one way that senior managers attempted to influence others using the socialization strategy. When viewed in the context of the consistent and deliberate focus on following formal lines of communication, one begins to understand how higher levels in the organization combined surface and deep level strategies to inculcate in others their beliefs and attitudes about how things should be run.

In summary, downward relationships were characterized by backing away from past ways of doing business and moving forward into the future. The values and beliefs of senior

administrators around “newer is better” and “newer means less problems” were evident in many of their actions (e.g., new furniture, focusing on the new lines of communication). These values and beliefs were rooted in avoiding past mistakes and the past in general. This was equally applied to newcomers and veterans of the organization because of the perceived shift that they would fall back to old ways of doing business. The evidence shows that emphasis on structural strategies (e.g., use of proper protocols, policies and procedures, lines of communication) seemed grounded in parting with the past. Thus, the empirical data reveal heavy emphasis by senior administration personnel on deep level strategies.

When examined within the historical context of the organization presented in Chapter 4, we find more evidence that relationships moved away from past ways of business and forward to new ways. The emphasis on lines of communication, also large doses of reasoning and presenting facts were ways that upper level staffs believed they could ensure consistency and move toward their objective of creating an entirely new organization. It also reveals that senior managers tended to focus on strategies related to the structural dimensions of the organization as opposed to more person-oriented strategies.

The literature on industrial organizations often cites overcoming history as an important component of change strategies. (Kanter, Stein & Jick, 1992; Kotter, 1996) There is every reason to believe the same dynamic holds true for the human services sector. There was considerable evidence of a chasm between senior management’s mandate to start the organization on a new foot, and attempts by employees at other levels to hold on to the past. Therapists did not embrace change in the new organization, despite the difficulties they had with their former organization. Upon examination of the data, the new organization was deliberately designed from the outset to be incompatible with the old one to break with old patterns. There was a struggle to break with the past.

Senior managers, who were purposefully chosen because of their newness to the organization and their distance from old issues, insisted their strategies were positive for the growth of the organization. Although they faced major difficulties ahead, they were convinced that their choices and strategies provided a clear and consistent course for the future. Their strong focus on a predictable structure, such as lines of communication, indicates this.

Senior managers also were more likely to integrate deep level value and beliefs into strategies than the other groups.

On a deeper level, senior managers ignored or devalued anything to do with the former organization while espousing everything new as desirable and better. Additionally, cultural identity was woven into hiring practices, thereby increasing somewhat their margin of freedom in making hiring decisions and structuring the agency. Senior managers also invoked the values of social participation and cooperation by seeking input. On the other hand, strategies aimed at improving personal relationships, such as the ingratiation strategy and socialization could not be used because they did not have the required power bases and credibility. These were not successful in breaking with the past.

The actions of senior managers of disengaging from the past are consistent with what Lewin (1951) calls “unfreezing” or breaking with past or entrenched patterns of doing business. From another angle, however, it shows that veteran therapists were actively trying to prevent “unfreezing” by focusing on the past. They also co-opted actors external to the organization and invoked deep level strategies. These included calling upon the reverse set of beliefs held by managers about “new is better”. Claiming a superior moral ground and ethics also helped the therapists to block change. The present study provides evidence that the unfreezing process involves more than just structural change and that deep level processes are present.

In the industrial literature, Kanter, Stein & Jick (1992) have found that chaos arises out of change that occurs too quickly or that is out of synch with a phased-in approach to change. We do not believe a fast pace of change was a factor in the organization we studied. Quite to the contrary, the change process lasted several years and participants complained that they never thought they would see the end of the turbulence.

One of the most important factors for the organizational turbulence was thus conflict with the past. For senior managers and their Board of Directors, departing with the past was desirable and in some sense mandated. The sense of “Let’s start from square one” was very strong in some groups, but the mindsets and experiences of each of the groups differed greatly on this, as shown in their strategies. In essence, the new senior administrative team, along with its new Board of Directors, were experienced in their own right and wanted to

make the new organization a completely new one. Unfortunately, veteran staffs translated an upper management belief that “new is better” as “they don’t want us.”

Thus, senior managers, who engaged principally in downward relationships, engaged in strategies that addressed structural as well as personal aspects or their power relationships, resulting in a mix of direct and indirect means of influence.

7.1.2 Up-down relationships (senior managers ← team leaders → therapists and clerical staffs)

Up-down relationships originated in the group of team leaders, who like the other groups, tended to focus on some strategies more than on others. Openly managing psychological involvement took the form of “staying out of the way” and not becoming a third party contributing to the dysfunctional dynamics between other levels. The team leaders avoided getting triangulated in disputes between senior management and therapists, and they avoided alignments with upper and lower levels. This is partly due to senior managers bypassing them and addressing staffs directly. Despite their potentially easy access to the power sources fueling these strategies, the team leaders seemed to put some distance between themselves and the politics of the organization to avoid getting caught in the cross-fire. Thus, psychological distance, limiting involvement in disputes between other levels, and some degree of passivity towards the organization’s larger issues were part-and-parcel of their actions.

Due to their position within the organization, there was evidence that team leaders joined in coalitions with their respective Community Advisory Committees. They often sought the support of their Committees (against senior management’s wishes) to modify clinical programs. This was often intermixed with the issue of cultural identity in the Francophone and Native units. It is reasonable to assume that the team leaders were “sandwiched” between senior managers and therapists, leading them to seek the support of their Community Advisory Committees. When they were caught between the two parties, aligning with this legal body often allowed them to exert power they would not ordinarily have had.

We find it interesting that there were few references from the team leaders to managing lines of communication as a strategy. While therapists continually accused senior manag-

ers of breaking their own rules when it came to respecting lines of communication, and while senior managers strongly felt it was within their purview to bypass team leaders and talk directly to therapists at any time, the team leaders were silent on this issue. Contrasting with senior managers, the team leaders were not likely to change the existing dynamics because of the strong negative overtones and the risk of being pulled into other problems. From an outsider's point of view, it would seem that the team leaders were absent. When examining these dynamics in relation to other strategies, however, it becomes apparent the team leaders chose to ally with their Community Advisory Committees. It also is an indication that they were staying out of the line of fire and sought refuge in a legal and cultural entity.

Ingratiation was only lightly used in terms of listening and presenting a calm face to situations. Team leaders did not show evidence of actively using this strategy to avoid getting caught in the crossfire. Rather, their avoidance patterns seemed to take precedence.

From the team leaders, there also were very few references to altruism, assertiveness, bargaining, deceit, appeals to higher authorities, reasoning, sanctions, and working to rule. The team leaders did not use reasoning as a strategy because in their role, they would have repeated the same arguments that senior managers had used. Likewise, the team leaders did not use reasoning with senior managers for the same reason.

The team leaders were clearly bypassed in bargaining dynamics, or they may have situated themselves away from the line of fire of bargaining. Bargaining was not within their role, however, so this may explain the absence of discussion of this strategy from the team leaders. Team leaders did not discuss sanctions as a strategy that they had used either in the positive or negative sense. Given the tense and negatively charged dynamics between senior managers and team therapists, we would have expected team leaders to have to impose some sort of order through sanctions, but this did not occur. Rather, team leaders seemed to step back to avoid getting caught in the crossfire, leaving senior managers with the task of imposing sanctions. As far as working to rule, it is reasonable to assume that the team leaders had to deal with these dynamics from the therapists group, but there was no evidence they engaged in these strategies. Doing so would have defeated their goal of managing and stabiliz-

ing front-line dynamics, and it would have given the appearance of aligning with lower level staffs.

In essence, the most prominent strategy engaged in by the team leaders was one of avoiding tense organizational dynamics, thus avoiding the crossfire between upper and lower levels. The evidence towards this is striking and was observed as non-involvement in many of the other strategies. Their own words of feeling “sandwiched” describes this well. If they favored the senior management side, the therapists would mistrust them. If they sided with the therapists, this would mean that upper levels would only have more problems and dynamics to deal with. Caught “between a rock and a hard place”, the team leaders chose to stay out of the line of fire and to avoid being triangulated or brought into the battlefield. A long history of mistrust between other levels seemed to be tied to this strategy.

Team leaders were relatively “absent” in the dynamics of the surface level strategies when compared to senior managers and therapists. They did not discuss surface level strategies to any great length, and participants at other levels did not deal very much with team leaders in their discussions. Examination of the data shows a bit more involvement of the team leaders in the deep level strategies, however.

For deep level strategies, references to naturalization in up-down relationships revolved principally around culture as a source of power. Team leaders defended culturally led services by describing them as natural and inevitable trends in human services. This offered some protection for their units during the organizational turbulence, particularly for the Francophone and Native clinics. Any cutbacks in funding in their units would be perceived as going against inevitable trends, and this would immediately involve the Community Advisory Committees and community pressure groups. We believe that the possibility of getting caught in the cross-fire between other levels pushed team leaders to seek the backing of external members, such as the Community Advisory Committees or other persons with clout in the community such as school board representatives who themselves are divided along cultural lines.

The legitimation strategy was not discussed much in terms of up-down relationships. One example used the belief that no employee, regardless of their level in the organization, should be exempt from bearing the problems of the organization. In essence, this strategy

was used to reach out to lower level staffs while not aligning necessarily with higher level staffs. It thus served to minimize accusations from therapists and clerical staffs that senior managers were protecting them. Other examples were few and far between, however.

The neutralization strategy was the most frequently used deep level strategy among all groups, including those in up-down relationships. In the examples provided by the team leaders, this strategy borrowed from the reasoning strategy in an attempt to appeal to the rational side of others (e.g., showing the ineffectiveness of the “white man’s” approach to Native children’s services) while adding moral authority for control of culture. “Objective” facts were used to veil value judgments to emphasize their points of view. In addition, by openly valuing staff participation and input, democracy, and honesty, the team leaders carved a position for themselves as the champions of participation while avoiding the crossfire between other levels. This was because relationships between higher and lower levels were very intense. This strategy was infrequently used, however, leading us to believe that they used psychological distance as a primary strategy leading their actions.

The relative absence of examples of neutralization as a strategy to deal with past history is noteworthy in this group. Being caught between a higher level that emphasized newness and lower level staffs emphasizing “old baggage”, team leaders took a side position to remain neutral and to avoid any cross-fire. Trying to veil value judgments within a reasoning strategy between two such extremes would have been very difficult and too transparent. As such, the non-use of this strategy may be considered a strategy in itself.

Team leaders were particularly sensitive to the cultural issues of the organization, and they employed the socialization strategy through agency-wide training. They also involved themselves in long-term training and cultural awareness changes by gently advocating the benefits of increased cultural tolerance, hoping this would have a spillover effect on others.

A carefully chosen mix of reasoning and value judgments about cultural differences was an important strategy for team leaders, although generally in lesser amounts than the senior managers. From the description the team leaders gave of the organizational dynamics, it is reasonable to assume that they were fighting any attempts at triangulation or bringing them into the fray. This was partly due to the structure of the new organization, but their non-involvement in the crossfire between other levels was too evident for simple structure

to explain. With the strong control and involvement in the organization by upper levels, team leaders were in effect displaced from some of their responsibilities. It is reasonable to assume that team leaders felt disempowered over time, leading them to avoid the crossfire between levels, and leading them to seek other sources of power such as cultural alignments with their Community Advisory Committees. Their absence in the interactions between other levels, despite their centrality in the organization, thus may have been a deliberate one.

While there were not numerous examples in the data, the team leaders seemed to focus on cultural issues when they discussed future trends, clinical practice, and training. The team leaders may have been refusing to play their superiors' game through passive resistance. They re-empowered themselves by aligning with the Community Advisory Committees through surface (coalitions) and deep level strategies related to cultural identity. In some ways, this prevented them from becoming entangled in the poor interactions between upper and lower levels. Given the strength of the tensions in the organization, active involvement in those interactions would have been counter-productive.

In other research on a more social-psychological level, Oshry (1991) examined interactions among “tops”, “bottoms”, and “middles” of industrial organizations. He found that dynamics surrounding middle managers could lead them from being normally confident and competent people to “ineffective and self-doubting wrecks”. Oshry suggests, among other things, that middle managers should integrate with other middle managers to break out of conflict and paralysis. They also should adopt the “top” roles when required, and the “bottom” roles when needed. Oshry calls this “appreciating the differences” by acknowledging the characteristics of upper and lower levels.

We did not find any of the dynamics described by Oshry in terms of adopting top or bottom roles, nor did we find evidence of the team leaders aligning between themselves. The team leaders simply carried out their tasks and went along with their superiors' demands when required. Their focus was on avoiding becoming a third party contributing to dysfunction between other levels, aligning with external sources of power, and invoking cultural identity to set boundaries between themselves and senior managers. Further research into the dynamics of middle managers is warranted, particularly in terms of deep level power.

7.1.3 *Upward relationships (therapists and clerical staffs → team leaders and senior managers)*

Upward relationships of the participants were characterized by dynamics related to crossing formal lines of communication. While we found few examples of the therapists crossing lines themselves, their perceptions that senior managers constantly broke their own rules around this issue led them to considerable disengagement in the organization. Psychological distance, in the form of ignoring senior management's attempts at collaboration, was a key dynamic tied to management's attempts to cross lines of communication. As the therapists described it, disengagement also was a result of feeling misunderstood. They felt senior managers and team leaders had no appreciation for their past work experience and expertise.

Some therapists used assertiveness in attempts to redirect the work of team leaders and senior managers. Assertiveness was used to intensify upward relationships between therapists and senior managers, and it counteracted attempts by management to stabilize and diffuse situations. It was one of the factors that drove senior managers out of their "comfort zones" and required further actions on their part.

Coalitions were discussed at length by the therapists, both in terms of union solidarity and in terms of ethnic identity in the Francophone unit. We also saw evidence of co-optation of external sources of influence. The group of therapists made many more references to coalitions than any other group. It is interesting that there was no evidence of coalitions with the team leaders. As mentioned before, this may be explained by the strong negative interactions between upper and lower levels, enough to reduce the effectiveness of any possible coalitions with the team leaders. Added to this was the relative absence of team leaders concerning any buffering effects between therapists and senior managers. It is probable that the team leaders would have been even more sandwiched than they were.

Bargaining was an important strategy for the therapists at the onset of the new organization, particularly for protecting existing salaries and working conditions. Several therapists, particularly those closely tied to the union, were outraged when traditional labor union bargaining was bypassed and apparently transformed into "staff consultations" by senior management, thereby reducing the pressure that could be exerted by bargaining.

It is noted that there are ties between the bargaining and coalition strategies. Bargaining as a unit required the support of group members, which lagged at different times. The union did not always have full support of its members, therefore lowering the potential effect that bargaining could have had.

Therapists had little recourse to working-to-rule and sanctions. Work slowdowns could have intensified the pressure on higher levels of the organization and consequently increased uncertainty, but therapists explained they had little precedent to carry out such actions, and they did not have the energy. They stated that working their regular hours, and not withholding regular service was their focus. Working to rule might have had a strong backlash against the therapists given that they did not want to involve clients in their battles. Also, strategies such as sanctions required sources of power that may not have been available to therapists. They nonetheless discussed at length their perceptions that sanctions would be used on them for any actions deemed inappropriate by management.

This group of staffs used ingratiation infrequently. Since most had 'old baggage' they carried into the new organization, they felt this strategy was a waste of time. Veterans might have perceived actions by newer staffs along these lines as brown-nosing.

Reasoning also was a strategy for which there were few examples in the data in upwards relationships. (Most references to this strategy came from the senior management group). One explanation is that due to the highly strained relationship between senior management and therapists, the latter felt that trying to use facts to inform and to influence was to no avail. Therapists placed little value on information and facts provided by the administration, thereby muting its effect as a power source and lowering the possibility of its manipulation in a strategy.

Appeals to higher authorities saw limited use by the therapists because of the heavy emphasis on following formal lines of communication. They nonetheless bypassed these lines to discuss issues with the two Co-ordinators on several occasions, and this was cloaked in their participation on committees where they knew the Coordinators would be present. The new presence of therapists on the Community Advisory Committees, however, could possibly reflect this strategy gaining importance. Because of the early timing of this study we were not able to investigate this further.

Only the therapists group mentioned deceit as a strategy that was employed, but not for an upward relationship. This was used internally, within the therapists group, to clarify issues with the union. This strategy was not employed against other groups. It is noteworthy, however, that there was strong emphasis by the therapists group that deceit had been used against them in terms of misleading and incomplete information.

Not surprisingly, the therapists group did not use altruism. It would have been difficult for this group to invoke altruism or have any credibility attached to it given the conflict in the organization. There were no indications, however, that employees put in less than a full day's work, although there was little motivation to do overtime.

Clerical staffs also were involved in upward relationships. Compared to the therapists, team leaders and senior managers, the clerical group was relatively absent in all the surface level strategies, however. They did not describe themselves as directly involved in the power plays of the organization. This does not imply they had no stake in the events that occurred nor that they were powerless, but that their role was more a peripheral one when one examines the organization as a whole. Battles in the organization traditionally did not involve clerical staffs.

In contrast to downward relationships, upward strategies seemed focused on keeping the past alive. Discussions around crossing formal lines of communication, maintaining a low involvement in the new plans of the organization, and some bargaining to maintain existing working conditions were the predominant dynamics. Lower level staffs, particularly those affected the most by the change strategies from above, seemed more likely to describe the changes as turbulent compared with other groups.

Therapists came up with ways to minimize the potency of the naturalization strategy as used by the senior managers. Therapists created dilemmas for the higher levels by invoking similar strategies, but with a different set of beliefs. While higher levels proposed future trends as inevitable, lower levels held on to the past by valuing old ways of doing things. With statements such as "We have always done it this way ... why change now?", therapists introduced the reverse set of beliefs being promoted by higher levels.

Therapists also felt that it was only "natural" for them to mistrust managers and information, and they used their past history as justification for this. A sense of suspiciousness

and careful regard for anything new was part of the belief system of therapists, and this was partly due to senior management's discounting their past skills and experience. Veterans also relayed this belief to newcomers to convey the message that they should always read between the lines of what managers in general say. In essence, the way the belief was communicated was through a message that historically, information and judgments from above could not possibly be relevant to lower level staffs.

An examination of upward relationships provided several examples of the legitimation strategy, principally by questioning the ethics of senior managers. Claims by therapists that the best interests of the clients were at stake under the new management, and that senior managers were more concerned by budgets than by true client needs, were frequently emphasized. Invoking superior professional values and ethics was a key element that helped legitimize their resistance and push upper level staffs out of their comfort zones.

Contrary to the therapists group, the clerical staffs avoided pushing the buttons of their bosses and were unwilling to engage in such actions. Their loyalty to the goals of the organization was emphasized. This does not imply that they always agreed with upper management's decisions, but that they would not call upon their potential sources of power to delay or block them.

The neutralization strategy was the most frequently discussed deep level strategy. Expertise and information as sources of power were often used to make viewpoints appear more widely accepted or universal than they actually were. This certainly made decision making at higher levels more difficult because one of the implications is that it is unwise to counter the opinions of large groups of expert professionals. Client and employee participation in decisions, for example, was a widely held belief that was often invoked by the therapists to gain access to the Community Advisory Committees. When combined with the legitimation strategy, where loyalty, fairness and equity came into play, the zones of uncertainty thus created were undoubtedly difficult to deal with and heightened the intensity of the turbulence.

The neutralization strategy also was called upon to deal with the belief by management that "new is better". The therapists countered by claiming that senior managers were all new and that they could not possibly relate to past events in a meaningful way. Past his-

tory, it seems, was the sole territory of the therapists because none of the senior managers could stake any claim to it. In essence, it was difficult for senior managers to appeal to the rational side of therapists when the latter continually brought forth the issue that senior managers did not value the skills and experiences they had gained at the former organization.

Socialization is the fourth of the deep level strategies. A rare example involving senior managers in an upward relationship revealed their attempts to shape the attitudes of board members through carefully planned education about roles, and responsibilities and boundaries. Veiled through the use of “expert” manuals and training programs chosen by senior managers, the latter would ultimately develop a larger margin of freedom than if board members involved themselves more in the business of the organization.

As for other types of upward relationships, therapists worked actively at educating senior managers to the values behind certain types of intervention programs such as prevention. They sought to show that such programs were not just a combination of techniques but also that they were based on a variety of philosophies and schools of thought. The hidden pressure and implication is that to doubt the value of certain intervention programs would be like questioning “motherhood and apple pie”. In effect, this served to increase the margin of freedom of those employees in special intervention programs.

7.1.4 Lateral relationships (e.g., therapist → therapist)

Lateral power strategies were more difficult to identify than other types because there were few examples provided by the participants. This is partly due to the intensity of relationships *between* upper and lower levels, such as between the therapists and senior managers, as opposed to *within* levels. A few examples did provide a glimpse into the formation of lateral strategies, however. The therapists formed coalitions around job security and financial issues, and exerted pressure as a group on their union representatives to speak up for their issues. In this sense, peers exerted pressure within their own level. On the other hand, senior managers did not discuss coalitions between themselves as a way to counter the strategies of others. This is perhaps because of their small number. Team leaders and clerical staffs did not discuss coalitions in lateral terms.

Bargaining and managing lines of communication were not strategies that were highlighted in lateral relationships. By definition, these occur between levels rather than within them.

While there were few examples of deceit as a strategy at any level, deceit was nonetheless used laterally within the therapists group to force some clarifications of issues with the union. This strategy was not employed against other groups.

Ingratiation was used within the senior managers group, combined with reasoning, to attempt to convince other senior managers of certain points of view. Our data did not provide further examples of ingratiation in the context of lateral dynamics, however.

There were no indications of altruism or assertiveness as strategies in lateral dynamics at any level. While therapists were not always pleased with the activities of their union, for example, they gave no indication of using this strategy within their own group. Also, reasoning strategies were noticeably absent. It is reasonable to assume that members discussed different alternatives with other members of their group before discussing them with other levels, and trying to appeal to the sense of reason, but we found no examples of this. This is partly due to the fact that participants in the research were more inclined to discuss dynamics between levels than within them. Appeals to higher authorities and working to rule, for their part as strategies, were absent. By definition, this strategy would not appear in lateral relationships.

Managing psychological distance was not a strategy employed in lateral relationships. Its focus was entirely between levels instead of within them. The data also did not reveal that sanctions were used laterally or within groups. While it is reasonable to assume that some pressure was put on members within groups to maintain some degree of solidarity, especially within the therapists group, there were no indications that negative or positive sanctions had been employed to create or maintain this. There is no doubt pressure to conform within a group was present, however.

Lateral relationships in deep level strategies were more difficult to analyze because there were few examples observed. Naturalization was not a strategy that was noted in lateral dynamics, probably because these strategies were aimed at higher levels. When examined in context with the socialization strategy, however, we noted that therapists sought to show

other therapists that it was only natural to mistrust management, because “managers are not to be trusted.” Likewise, neutralization was not a dynamic noted within groups. This is probably due to members within groups sharing common points of view and having a common enemy at another level. It may be that these strategies tend to be aimed outside one’s own group during turbulent change, at least from the findings of our research.

There also were no clear examples of the socialization strategy in the data for lateral relationships. While there were no direct examples, it is reasonable to assume that staffs, particularly therapists who represented the largest group, continually emphasized between themselves the belief that anything to do with management was not to be trusted. The belief system around the competencies of the senior managers, and their inability to relate to and understand past events, was not verbalized between members but was evident between the lines in the interviews. It is also reasonable to assume that there was some form of hidden peer pressure to stick together against the senior managers, in some ways coalescing around a common enemy.

Finally, legitimation, which invokes higher order explanations such as loyalty, was not a dynamic referred to frequently in lateral relationships, but there were a few examples. Clerical staffs, for example, emphasized the importance within their own group and among other non-management staffs that it was everybody’s responsibility to lower expenses. Clerical staffs also were vocal about their values of ensuring services to clients by “not screwing up intentionally”, even if they did not agree with the decisions of their superiors.

In essence, except for the appearance of some minor coalitions of some therapists against others, there were few examples of lateral strategy formation. This is explained in part by the intense dynamics between levels, not within them.

7.1.5 Comparisons between newcomers and veteran staffs

Comparisons between newcomers and veteran staffs revealed differences in the way strategies were used. While caution is called for due to the small number of participants in this study, we nonetheless observed that overcoming history was a key issue with veteran staffs. Veterans often felt that their past work experiences in the organization were totally ignored in favor of starting fresh. This was one of the elements behind their passivity and

managing psychological involvement in the organization. Another factor was the non-recognition of work experience and skills with the former organization. Compared to the veterans group, newcomers did not have a sense of history about the organization, making it more difficult to invoke this strategy in a meaningful way. There was, however, a contagion effect from veterans to newcomers leading to psychological disengagement.

For the ingratiation strategy, we found some differences between veterans and newcomers. Veterans particularly disqualified ingratiation by ignoring it when it was presented as jokes, and so it is reasonable to assume that it would have had little value in terms of a strategy for them. A few newcomers (a senior manager and a team leader) used this strategy as a personal approach with others, being less business-like, being “kind, open and honest”, and presenting a calm face to situations. This was limited in its effectiveness, however. The turbulent context almost nullified many attempts at ingratiation. Past history, old baggage, and mistrust are factors that negated this strategy, along with the very infrequent use of rewards. Past investment in the history of the organization seemed to lead staffs away from this strategy, as well as the negative connotation that appealing to higher authorities would have in the eyes of colleagues.

The reasoning strategy did not appear to be used differently between newcomers and veterans. Questions of mistrust of information and the low value placed on the accuracy of information seemed to be tied to the low use of the reasoning strategy. What we know is that pushing up the urgency level in the organization did not increase pressure on the veteran staffs enough because information presented to them was disqualified. It was difficult to create a “crisis” using information. Unfortunately, most of the literature focuses on personality characteristics or factors such as types of inspirational appeals rather than on length of employment. Further research along these lines would elucidate the role of length of employment in overcoming past history.

Concerning assertiveness as a strategy, veterans and newcomers both put fairly even emphasis on this strategy. There did not appear to be differences in the way they implemented it (e.g. voicing their concerns loudly, refusing to do something, and avoiding assertiveness).

There were some distinctions between newcomers and veteran staffs on the sanctions strategy, although the examples we found were entirely perceived sanctions, not sanctions that members had imposed. Veterans had more history and more examples to provide than newcomers did. Because there was only one example from the newcomers group, further comparisons are difficult. It is noteworthy, however, that more veterans discussed sanctions than newcomers did.

Newer staffs seemed to relate differently to the bargaining strategy than veteran staffs. The sense of urgency of changes was higher for newer staffs, but this occurred more in the senior managers than other groups. It is therefore difficult to determine if newness or organizational position, or both combined, were important factors. Veteran staffs seemed less willing to give up what they had gained when compared to newer staffs. Holding on to the past was one way of stifling management's bargaining efforts.

Related to the bargaining strategy are coalitions, and some differences were noted between newcomers and veterans. Staffs who had been with the organization longer tended to be more "battle hardened" and felt the need to present a unified force against higher levels. They also were more ready to initiate coalitions because they had worked together for a longer time. While newcomers also felt coalitions were important, their sense of urgency around this dynamic was not quite as strong, as shown by their lesser involvement in issues related to past history. The physical separation of the organization into clinics across the community also was a factor that prevented newer staffs from forming coalitions because they did not know other staffs across the organization well enough.

Still in the coalition strategy, veterans clearly had a strong sense of the past and did not want to repeat the cultural disputes that had occurred at their former place of employment. In essence, coalitions were influenced somewhat by cultural identity as a source of power. Veterans were more willing to co-opt members external to the organization because of their extensive knowledge of external actors and the ways to tie them into the existing system.

Working to rule seemed to highlight a few differences between veterans and newcomers. While the number of references to this strategy was low, it nonetheless was apparent that newer staffs were more prepared to take risks than veterans were. Veteran staffs often

related their non-use of this strategy to perceived threats of sanctions from higher levels. Overall, however, this was not a strategy the participants discussed at any great length.

There did not appear to be any differences between veterans and newcomers in appeals to higher authorities. This was due to the focus on following prescribed lines of communication, and the negative connotation that talking about organizational issues with higher-ups would have. There also were no differences between the groups for the altruism strategy. It is reasonable to assume that the absence of altruistic acts was related to the psychological distance strategy, where there was a contagion effect on the newer staffs.

Veterans and newcomers did not appear to use deceit as a clandestine strategy differently, although the perception and accusations that deceit had been used were much more frequent and intense in the veterans group. It would be reasonable to expect veteran staffs to take on more risk-taking behavior due to their higher job security in the organization, but we found no evidence of this. It is likely that clandestine strategies between levels would have only made a bad situation worse and that staffs resorted to strategies exerting different types of social pressure, such as psychological distance. Use of threats and deceit were not common in any of the groups.

Concerning managing lines of communication, newcomers were more vocal than veterans about this strategy. This probably reflects the fact that it is the senior managers, all newcomers, who spoke with the most emphasis about this, compared to all other groups.

In essence, veterans were more active in managing psychological distance than newcomers, and this is explained in large part by their high investment of time and energy over the years in the organization. There was no evidence of “new camp versus old camp” dynamics.

The data in the present research for all surface level strategies confirm findings in the industrial literature that different groups of people use strategies differently (e.g., Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980; Mintzberg, 1989). This is partly because they wield different sources of power, but also to factors such as past history and low levels of trust. We found that higher level members of the organization focused on making events more predictable (or less unpredictable) by focusing on proper lines of communication and structure elements. They also focused heavily on burying the past by rationalizing the benefits of new

ways of functioning, and by introducing new policies and procedures, and material things such as furniture. The more that lower level staffs resisted, the more that reasoning occurred without the intended success. This is concurrent with studies in the industrial literature that show that reasoning tends to be used consistently throughout turbulence, even when resistance is high, because of perceptions that is more acceptable as an action by others. (Yukl, Kim, and Falbe, 1996) Information as a potential source of power was made less relevant because of strong mistrust of data submitted by senior levels.

Team leaders (middle managers) were characterized by their non-involvement in the dynamics of the organization. Their central position in the structure of the organization did not translate into being central in its dynamics. Their alignments were more external to the immediate organization than they were internal, such as with their Community Advisory Committees. Access to external influencers and cultural elements were relevant in protecting them from the crossfire between senior managers and therapists. Past history and trust were not factors that strongly influenced the strategies of middle managers because they avoided becoming triangulated or dragged into dynamics between other levels.

Dynamics in the therapists group, on the other hand, showed they consistently countered strategies of the senior managers. Initial hopes for positive change and collaboration were quickly replaced by a focus on the past, past ways of doing business, and strong mistrust of information. Instead of dealing with structural issues, the therapists focused on ignoring higher levels through managing psychological distance and coalitions through external co-optation. This in many ways paralyzed senior managers' attempts to rationalize their points of view through the sharing of information. It seems their strategies were opposites to those of senior managers. Therapists countered reasoning and ingratiation on the part of senior managers by non-interest and managing psychological involvement.

Clerical staffs, for their part, were noticeably absent in all the dynamics, probably because of their peripheral role. They did not make use of sources of power potentially available to them (e.g., flow of information), and this was due to the strength of negative dynamics between the therapists and the senior managers and their non-alignment with other groups.

Strategies in all levels seemed intimately tied to the level of mistrust of information, which in turn was tied to non-recognition of past history. Mistrust directly affected sources of power such as information. Also, therapists countered the sense of urgency created by senior managers by recalling the past. The sense of crisis that higher levels tried to create to move things along did not succeed in creating strong zones of uncertainty for other levels.

In our view, the strategies employed by the staffs in the present research parallel those described in the industrial literature in terms of power. Their application specifically to the mental health setting showed that factors such as past history and levels of trust are tightly woven in the strategies. Our analysis adds managing psychological distance as an important strategy because of its strong presence and the frequent references to it by the participants. Its effects to counter the power and strategies of higher levels in the organization were noteworthy.

All veterans and newcomers were affected and involved in deep level power strategies, sometimes in similar ways, sometimes in different ways. Comparisons between the groups must be made carefully, however, because the groups were not all matched in terms of years of experience with the organization. Higher level staffs were all new, whereas about half of the therapists were veteran staffs. The two groups were each heterogeneous.

Newcomers did not invoke the naturalization strategy in terms of past trends or ways of doing business. This is explained by their lack of connection with the past organization, when compared to veterans and as shown by the difficulties senior managers had in connecting with veterans. Questions of mistrust also were not as important as for the veterans. Belief systems seemed influenced by the fact that higher levels (all newcomers) did not value past experience and skills. In essence, this gave the message that success in the new organization depended on throwing out everything to do with the past and starting afresh. Newcomers at all levels did invoke cultural arguments, however, when emphasizing the inevitable recognition of culturally appropriate services.

We did not find any significant differences between newcomers and veterans for the legitimation strategy. Legitimation was not necessarily tied to past history and thus was available as a strategy to all employees, regardless of the level or years of experience in the or-

ganization. Thus, the values and beliefs around issues of loyalty, equity and fairness were not necessarily used differently because of years of experience with the organization.

The neutralization strategy, on the other hand, did highlight differences between veteran staffs and newcomers. As discussed earlier, all senior managers, most of the team leaders, and all members of the Board of Directors were new to the organization. A strongly held value of this group was that they had to part with things of the past and start off on a new foot. Veterans, on the other hand, did not want their past experiences and knowledge to be ignored. Newer senior staffs equated new structures, policies and procedures, models of intervention, and even new furniture, with “better”. Veterans on the other hand, principally in the therapists group, reasoned that managers did not have to discard the past to make the new organization an effective one. Thus, there was a clash of the old with the new. This was not generalized across all veterans and newcomers, however. Some members in the therapists group, for example, were often neutral because of their lack of connection with the past. Further analysis of the dynamics between veterans and newcomers in this strategy must be interpreted cautiously due to the heterogeneous nature and small size of each group.

Socialization is the final deep level strategy that we examined. Veteran staffs were clearly aware that newcomers were confused by a long history of tense dynamics and were looking for clear directions as to the future of the organization. Persons employed by the psychiatric hospital before the divestment always felt it was necessary to read between the lines, and they ensured this message was transmitted to new employees. There were unspoken rules that managers and information they used were not to be trusted, and this was evident when senior managers were in their presence. There was thus some form of transmission of beliefs through socialization, which in some ways resulted in a shared vision between therapists. We did note that the intensity of beliefs around the past was stronger for the veterans group, whose belief system was directly tied to their experiences with the former organization. Newcomers, who did not share the same sense of history, seemed less focused on holding on to the past although they sometimes piggybacked their opinions on those of veteran staffs. This was noticed particularly in the therapists group. Again, we emphasize that it is difficult to compare veterans and newcomers as groups because each included a variety

of positions within the organization. Further research with a larger number of participants could shed more light on this.

In summary, there were differences between veterans and newcomers in the use of strategies with newcomers focusing more on strategies evoking positive emotions while veterans seemed to avoid or not use them. A principal factor seemed to be the past and perceptions of lack of recognition of years of work experience and skills of the therapists. Our conclusions are tempered because the newcomers formed the entire administration group, however. Senior management's (all newcomers) emphasis on structural elements leads us to postulate they were attempting to decrease uncertainty through a combination of deep and surface level strategies relating to structure, rationalization and cloaking their beliefs in facts, whether conscious of it or not at the time. This is in contrast to the veterans, who continually recalled their past roots as a means of decreasing uncertainty and of stifling change. We found that veterans tend to see events as much more turbulent because of their longer involvement with the history of the organization.

7.2 THE FINDINGS IN LIGHT OF EXISTING THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF STRATEGY FORMATION

In Chapter 2, which focused on the theoretical underpinnings of strategy formation, we reviewed many perspectives for analyzing strategies and power. In keeping with its interdisciplinary nature, this dissertation avoided focusing on a single perspective, and it put the focus on themes emerging from the data.

Chapter 5 examined the sources of power emanating from the research interviews. Chapter 6 detailed each of the power strategies at both the surface and deep levels. Recalling the different theoretical perspectives in Chapter 2, several different approaches to the study of power were presented. We will revisit these briefly and examine how the data relate to the existing literature.

7.2.1 *The Classical Perspective*

The Classical approach emphasizes the rational and analytical point of view. As such, strategies are described as predictable, planned, and rational actions (Meyerson & Banfield, 1955; Ansoff, 1965; Andrews, 1971; Hofer & Schendel, 1978; Channon, 1978; Porter, 1980 among others). The empirical data reviewed in this study only weakly support this in that the transition from psychiatric hospital to the new community organization was a deliberate event planned around certain actions that were irrevocable. The classical perspective fails on several fronts, however. First, the empirical evidence presented here shows that strategies are not always planned, but sometimes emergent and sometimes spontaneous. Senior managers' willingness to bring in new computer desks, for example, was thwarted by a belief by therapists that this would lead to job changes in the future. Senior managers consequently had to shift to deep level strategies (e.g., naturalization) to show these changes were inevitable. One could say senior managers from the beginning did not plan this outcome despite much prior analysis. Another example was the union's strong resistance to modified hiring practices for Natives and Francophones. This resistance built up over time and consequently senior managers adopted a different set of strategies to deal with it. Thus, the present research does not support the concept that all strategies can be or are scientifically planned from the outset. The classical perspective of strategy formation is inadequate for explaining such dynamics because it assumes actors have full knowledge of all facts and have completed a thorough analysis of all possible alternatives and obstacles before a strategy is implemented.

The classical perspective does not account for power dynamics that are relational rather than mechanical. Some strategies, particularly the deep level ones, were deeply rooted in the organization's functioning and belief systems of its members. Senior managers held the belief that history could be overcome by avoiding it altogether and by valuing newness and new skills and programs. Quite the opposite was true for the lower level staffs. Thus, aspects of cultural identity are ignored. The classical perspective does not account for the threat to union solidarity and splitting of the union along cultural lines.

In addition, one might assume that under the classical approach the more knowledge one has about a situation, the more successful one's strategies might be. Following this logic, we would assume that the senior managers had the largest view of the organization, pos-

sessed more information than everyone else, and consequently had more sources of power to pull from and a larger pool of strategies. Unfortunately, this logic is weak when we examine the amount of pressure exerted by the lower groups, and the high amount of resistance that emerged. According to the classical perspective, resistance would have been easier to deal with, or in the extreme, non-existent because senior managers would have foreseen the events and planned accordingly.

As noted in Chapter 2, the organization studied in this research is a professional organization that is not suited for the “one best way” of planning for change. According to Mintzberg (1994b) much of the literature still relies on

“conventional assumptions of planning, namely strategies that should emanate from the top of the organization full-blown, that goals can be clearly stated, that the central formulation of strategies must be followed by their pervasive implementation, that the workers (in this case professors, teachers, and doctors, etc.) will (or must) respond to these centrally composed strategies, and so on.” (pp. 404-405)

The evidence reported in this research supports Mintzberg’s assumptions that such concepts are outdated and cannot be applied readily to professional organizations. Others put this more bluntly. “I see planning as an expanding bureaucracy, of very little assistance to me but capable of creating several structures of bullshit that I have to cope with.” (in Mintzberg, 1994b, p. 405)

The professional organization studied here showed disparate units, each with its own needs, problems, and issues. The Francophone therapists, for example, were sometimes at odds with the other groups in terms of wanting and “exerting” a separate cultural identity. The same held true for the Native group, which sought different hiring practices suited to its needs.

In essence, the data in this study support the positions by several others (Pettigrew, 1985; Dufour, 1991; Mintzberg, 1994b, among others) that the classical approach falls short of bringing a full understanding of strategy formation processes, particularly in unpredictable or turbulent environments. Basing one’s decisions entirely on formalized planning or strategy-making makes little sense in an environment that is uncertain and turbulent. This would require information processing abilities that individuals cannot possibly achieve themselves.

7.2.2 *The Behavioral Perspective*

The tenets of the behavioral approaches hold that strategy formation is less rational and planned than the classical approach. Strategies are limited or bounded because the actors cannot possibly possess, process and understand all information and facts (Simon, 1955; March & Simon, 1958). They tend to base their strategies on the best assessment they can make with what is available. Dealing with resistance to change is a key facet based on attitudes and personal psychological change. Personality traits strongly influence the actions of persons.

The data in this study revealed much resistance to change from the therapists group as addressed in the behavioral literature. Examination of personality traits, individual motivation, and commitment offer some insights into why the groups behaved as they did. Job security, initially high expectations for better working conditions, perceptions of non-interest by the psychiatric hospital to protect the workers during the transition and the desire for recognition of cultural identity are all examples of this.

As with the classical approach above, professional, cultural and political overtones that colored strategies at all levels of the organization are not fully accounted for, however. Rather than being fully predictable, the strategies seemed sometimes disparate or fragmented. They formed a whole made up of different individual and collective actions. Thus, recalling theories presented in Chapter 2, perspectives such as the “garbage can” model of strategy formation (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972) do not hold up. The garbage can model, for example, assumes that decisions are often non-purposeful and random. The data do not support this notion because the four groups of staffs studied were often planned and purposeful in their actions, even if at times this was in an “emergent” way. Each of the twelve surface and four deep level strategies showed purpose in trying to facilitate or conversely to block change from different perspectives. Senior managers, for example, broke their own communications guidelines in a purposeful attempt to approach staffs under the name of collaboration and seeking input. Such actions, while not necessarily planned in a formalized way, show premeditated actions on their part rather than random non-purposeful events. Creating a sense of urgency using financial data, and the subsequent increase in resistance by

therapists, show spill-over of one strategy onto another that some behavioral theories cannot explain. Inflicting damage to union solidarity by bypassing the union around possible layoffs is another example of non-random actions in a stream of actions and events.

The Organizational Development approach, for its part, holds that attitudes, interpersonal relations and organizational climate are keys to successful strategies. The evidence presented here contrasts with the findings of this approach in that many attempts using organizational development had been made by senior managers to improve and open up channels of communication, and to increase staff participation. They were without success. The turbulent context of the organization prevented many of the actions of senior managers from having the desired effect. In addition, the behavioral camp of theories generally ignores any issues of a political context such as team leaders aligning politically with their community advisory committees, which was to the possible detriment of aligning with senior managers.

The data in this research provide little support for Hedberg and Jonsson's (1978) discontinuous perspective. The concept that strategies are discontinuous during turbulence and that a shared cognitive and emotional framework does not exist until the turbulence ceases, is an interesting concept that has some merits in the short run. As an example, senior managers assumed that therapists would willingly accept new furniture designed to accommodate computers in each office. They did not take into consideration that therapist resistance was motivated by fears about job security, however. When senior managers sought input from therapists around office paint and the color of carpets they wanted installed, there existed high amounts of resistance despite assumptions this would lower resistance. This can be explained in part by a lack of shared cognitive framework and would explain stressors between levels and attempts to increase predictability/decrease uncertainty.

In an organization that endures protracted or long-term turbulence, however, it is difficult to understand how an organization can fill its mandate and continue functioning, despite turbulence, without some kind of shared cognitive and emotional framework. In the present research, members at all levels of the organization shared a common goal of helping children and families in distress and ensured the services were provided to those in need. Even if the emotional framework was negative at many times, staffs nonetheless related in their strategies around a shared emotional and cognitive framework.

In addition, the behavioral perspective clearly shows a bias towards management's role in reducing resistance and creating conditions that inhibit turbulence. The present research shows evidence that this concept is self-limiting, as are theories that focus only on personality traits. Examining elements that drive organizational members into and out of their comfort zones is helpful, but the data presented here show there are more factors involved. Power is everywhere in organizations, not only at the top. The behavioral theories are not entirely without merit, however. Dealing with resistance is an activity in which organizations spend a great deal of time. An enhanced perspective including politics and culture would increase the applicability of this perspective since it already deals with group dynamics.

7.2.3 The Contingency Perspective

This approach holds that power is the joint result of the extent to which actors can cope with uncertainties that are critical to the organization, and the degree to which such coping capacity is unique or non-substitutable. The routinization of processes reduces the amount of uncertainty present in the task or process, and thus the opportunity for coping with uncertainty. The reduction of uncertainty, and therefore the reduction in the complexity of the tasks and the skills required to do the tasks, for example, makes performing a job more replaceable. The combination of these two factors suggests that those performing more routine tasks have less power.

The present research does not dispute these facts but we found no evidence that more replaceable jobs automatically had "less" power. While clerical functions in the organization were more routine than those of the therapists, for example, the clerical staffs nonetheless were gatekeepers of information. The fact they did not manipulate this power against others did not mean they had no access to it or that they were powerless. Rather, it means the clerical staffs made conscious choices about which strategies they invoked or didn't invoke. Thus, while the contingency approach stresses environmental variables and how members fit in terms of scarcity and criticality, it tends to minimize the importance of internal dynamics.

Additionally, the contingency perspective emphasizes the environment as having a strong impact on the organization's structure and functioning. While the Community Advisory Committees in the present research could be seen as shaping the strategies of members as filters of community pressure, we find little explanation for other dynamics. The contingency view comes short in explaining why the union did not engage in labor union slowdowns or work stoppages as strategies nor held the threat of strikes over the head of management. The evidence uncovered shows quite the contrary by the relative absence of these actions, despite their potential for severely disrupting the organization. Contingency does not explicate well enough the relative quietness of all groups around the work stoppages issue, among others.

In essence, attempts to explain organizational processes through their environment are not enough to explain strategy formation. It is difficult to find explanations for all micro-level strategies and actions by looking only at contingencies or limits outside the organization. These factors are too impersonal. What determines how an organization acts or reacts to change is not the external environment, but the willingness of individuals to change their ways of working or ways of thinking about the organization. (Mills & Murgatroyd, 1991) Applicability of such concepts to professional organizations such as the one here is thus problematic, as others have found (Séguin & Chanlat, 1983).

7.2.4 The Cultural Influence Perspective

In the cultural influence perspective, there is a different focus for explaining strategy formation. As defined by Schein (1996) for industrial organizations, culture is a shared, taken-for-granted implicit assumption that a group holds and that determines how it perceives, thinks about and reacts to its various environments. There was considerable evidence of shared history between veteran staffs through sharing events, interactions, and experiences. Their shared history helped them coalesce against management's emphasis on newness. Senior managers, for their part, contrasted this with a shared set of understandings around the importance of newness, a fresh start, and parting with older, "less desirable" ways of doing business. Confirming Schein's (1990) findings, the present study found that higher levels tended to articulate new sets of beliefs for the new organization to launch their change

efforts. This is consistent with the industrial literature on organizational change. (Kotter, 1996)

Some of the recent literature on organizational culture helps highlight power dynamics in the present organization. Kotter (1996), for example, explains that changes to habits take time and usually come at the end of a transformation process. In addition, new approaches usually sink into a culture only after it is clear that they work and that they are better than the old approaches. Applying this to the present research helps put some of the pieces in perspective. The empirical data presented show that senior managers had the highest emphasis on reasoning and facts, along with neutralization at the deep level. Taken in the organizational culture context, it is clear managers made continual efforts at surface and deep levels to convey how the new organization and its functioning would be superior to the old.

Comparing with Schein's (1990) descriptions of organizational change, we found evidence of only some of the strategies that he has identified in other research in the industrial field. Highlighting threats to the organization through making financial difficulties public was one way the senior managers attempted to make change desirable. Appointing new persons to each senior manager and team leader positions was another way to make a statement about starting afresh.

We found little evidence of seduction, coercion or creating visible scandals as means of discrediting sacred cows or old ways of doing business. The context of the organization and Schein's tendency to focus on the industrial rather than the public sector organizations may explain some of these differences.

Lesser emphasis for other groups on deep level strategies is explained, at least in part, by the more important role and mandate of senior managers to bring about change. It would appear those trying to bring about changes (senior managers) had to exert influence in more dimensions, including at the cultural level.

In terms of how culture is embedded in strategies, it would appear that one can get good indications of this by observing how staffs reacted to critical events. As an example, a more emotionally charged atmosphere emerged as therapists found out their past skills and experience were not openly valued by senior managers or even by the team leaders. The message to lower level staffs, particularly the therapists, was clear: "out with the old, in with

the new”. The shift to the neutralization strategy by embedding facts into one’s point of view was highlighted in the data presented earlier. This may explain why senior managers emphasized neutralization more than the other groups.

The use of socialization by senior managers provides further evidence in support of Schein’s (1990; Jones, 1986; Feldman, 1988) notions of organizational culture. In trying to create a new culture and identity for the new community mental health centre, the government Steering Committee seemed to have purposefully hired new senior managers who did not know the old ropes, thus making it easier to steer new members to the “correct” set of beliefs using socialization.

The cultural influence perspective also helps understand reasons why resistance to change was so high. First, by devaluing past experience and making no commitment to the stability of current intervention programs, senior managers unwittingly created resistance from the start. Not having the active support of the team leaders, they were left to try to instill new practices for a new organization, but in a context where there was much past baggage. This was emphasized from the outset when the government Steering Committee hired a completely new management team (to the exclusion of former managers and team leaders), placed them at a separate location, and encouraged little contact between the management and staffs before the transition. The message was clear: “let’s start from scratch”. As Kotter (1996) suggests, perhaps they should have recognized and dealt with (rather than try to eliminate completely) the old practices: “The challenge is to graft the new practices onto the old roots while killing off the inconsistent pieces.” (p. 151) The cultural influence perspective helps understand that the senior managers unfortunately tried to kill off all the old roots and start from a completely new base.

The second dimension of the cultural influence perspective examines cultural identity rather than organizational culture. We have provided several examples of how the Native and Francophone groups in the present study manipulated cultural identity into a source of power and into their strategies. We found no evidence that the process for invoking the power was different between the groups, however. Both used their respective Community Advisory Committees as allies or in coalitions, and both invoked some degree of moral autonomy by staking their position in the source of expertise that cultural identity provides.

We noted no significant differences between the Anglophone, Francophone, and Native cultural groups in terms of top-down versus bottom-up approaches, possibly because they all worked for the same organization, under a single mandate, in the same community. Some degree of assimilation between the groups could be expected. This contrasts with Faucheux (1978) who finds style differences in the way strategies are used. The differences are probably due to the different context of the present study. We did not find that the different cultural groups handled conflict differently, although a larger sample in further research may shed more light on the subject.

Other more recent research examined similar issues and has provided some understanding of the importance of culture. Frese *et al.* (1996), for example, found that East German workers had lower personal motivation in organizations than West Germans because of traditionally lower complexity and control in their own jobs. Application of these findings to the present study is problematic, however, due to the different sampling, organizational research contexts, and political and national contexts. We also did not study motivation per se in the present study. Research of this type merits a full study of its own.

Contributions such as Schein's (1990, 1996) from the cultural influence perspective are notable because they support the concept of deep level strategies. Socialization of new members, for example, aims to steer members to a "right" set of assumptions, thus perpetuating their culture and ideas. The present research shows that clashes of values or beliefs are indications of possible conflict. If the values are shared, organizational functioning is smoother. If there are differences between groups as evidenced in their deep level strategies, there is evidence of problems.

Additionally, we fully support Schein's (1996) call for more interdisciplinary approaches to the study of organizational culture and its impact on organizations.

"I think it is a difficult process, and our theories are weak because we have not practiced it enough. Particularly in relation to culture, when I see my colleagues inventing questionnaires to "measure" culture, I feel that they are simply not seeing what is there, and this is particularly dangerous when one is dealing with a social force that is invisible yet very powerful. ... We could learn from spending more time in with colleagues from related but different disciplines. It is comforting for the social psychologist trained in questionnaire or laboratory methods to spend time with colleagues who have the same training, but it might be more productive for that psychologist to go in

to the field with an ethnographer or become a participant observer in a real organization.” (p. 239)

7.2.5 *The Multidimensional Perspective*

The multidimensional and the power relations and games perspectives are the remaining two categories of approaches to strategy formation that we will examine.

The multidimensional theories encompass several different approaches, each with its own particular focus. Data from the present research support only some of those approaches. The evidence presented, for example, does not fully support Hax’s (1990) assertion that uncovering the major milestones or steps an organization has taken in the past will indicate the organization’s future direction. While examining the history of the organization has certainly been beneficial in providing contextual information, we find that the turbulent and unpredictable dynamics observed prevent tracing the future path of the organization. The only thing we can accurately predict is that turbulence can engender more turbulence. Hax’s concepts also are problematic because they are geared more for the profit sector where uncertainty is low. Application to non-profit organizations is limited.

Support for Pettigrew’s (1978, 1992) and Waema & Walsham’s (1990) notions around strategy formation is much stronger. The concept of identifiable and more discrete elements behind strategies seems to be a precursor for the surface and deep level strategies we uncovered. More importantly, however, the evidence supports Pettigrew’s assertion that through time, organizational members will face dilemmas that require them to make choices. We observed, for example, that when new problems arose or dilemmas were created by therapists (e.g., refusing to sign a performance appraisal), this created a new set of dilemmas and forced choices at other levels of the organization. It also required members to call upon other resources to deal with them (e.g., the team leader having to try a personal approach, then telling the staffs to sign the performance appraisal in an assertive tone). As we have shown, these choices are influenced by a series of factors including culture, internal and external politics and structure, past history, and psychological perceptions, among others.

In terms of turbulent environments, it appears that Pettigrew’s formulation provides a strong basis for analysis of the opposition of past and future that we observed. It ensures that historical and political contexts remain at the forefront, and it is compatible with the

notion of emergent theories. Pettigrew's approach should be expanded somewhat to allow more precise guides for studying how values and cultural identity infiltrate strategies, however.

Having used Pettigrew as a launching point for his research, Dufour's (1991) examination of implementation issues in closing maternity units has some relevance to the findings in the current study. The focus of the present research did not include as large an analysis of the external political context, however, and Dufour's focus was more on the strategies that higher levels of the organization used for implementing unit closures.

The three principal groups of factors affecting implementation that Dufour identifies provide limited tools for analysis in the present study. The nature of the locale (e.g., geography and socioeconomic variables, and the rate and pace of change), and the quality of the change proposals seemed less important in the present research than in Dufour's study. The leadership strategies that Dufour identifies, however, have more application and our findings support them. Our findings parallel Dufour's legitimating strategies (e.g., influencing how others feel about change; strategically reducing service levels before a closure), enforcing strategies (e.g., using legal authority), and bargaining/negotiating strategies (e.g., reducing expectations even if at the expense of the original intentions). We cannot compare the emphasis placed by different hierarchical levels and between newcomers/veterans, however, because this was not Dufour's focus. He does not provide discussion of the different levels of the organization.

We cannot compare the current research with the option lens model either. (Bowman & Hurry, 1993) The evidence supports the proposal that organizational members sometimes use mixes of rationality and "gut feeling" because planned strategies often fail in turbulent environments. It also supports the idea that they keep their options open. The option lens model is weak in explaining dynamics at a deeper level, however, with the absence of any discussion of values, beliefs and culture. The findings of the current study are more complex than what Bowman and Hurry propose.

In essence, several theories in the multidimensional perspective provide little light on the current findings, while others such as Pettigrew's and Dufour's contextualist model appear to offer tools that can be useful for examining surface and deeper level strategies to

some degree. The focus on upper management levels for most of the theories leaves little room for comparison with the present findings, however. Examining the actions and patterns of strategies of lower level staffs would be useful.

7.2.6 The Power Relations and Games Perspective

The final perspective or group of theories reviewed in Chapter 2 is the power games and relations perspective. This approach puts the focus on interactional dynamics in organizations and examining conflict between organizational members, who each work within and/or outside the organization to change it. The strategies examined in the present research clearly show individual and collective attempts to control, or to lessen/prevent control by others.

Although its focus is on interaction between organizational members, the literature comprising this perspective is quite varied, and our examination has benefited by borrowing key elements from each and applying them. As the evidence shows, strategy formation is not something only for managers. We found uncontested proof that other levels in an organization engaged power sources and strategies, thus supporting the literature in the power relations and games approach.

The evidence also clearly shows that the strategies used at all levels lead to a considerably bumpy road for senior managers, particularly when it is their function and mandate to introduce and implement change.

Perhaps because of the small size of the professional organization we studied, we found little evidence that indicates the strategies would revolve around the basic mandate of the organization, nor that the professional staffs had an overarching discretion and power. (Mintzberg, 1989) While the therapists exerted professional discretion when with clients, they did not wield it in any threats against other groups. Instead we noted that it was the non-professional group, the senior managers, who used expertise as a power source to waive usual hiring practices for Native staffs and to hold those positions for persons having a strong Native background. Contrasting with Mintzberg, the present research found that the cloak of professionalism was used against the very staffs who normally would use it.

The data support Crozier & Friedberg's concepts that organizational members are active rather than passive in creating the reality they inhabit. Even if at first glance it appears that the team leaders and clerical staffs were passive through their absence of strategies, for example, we conclude that these were conscious choices to engage or not engage whatever sources of power were accessible to them. The "absence" of the team leaders between senior managers and therapists means they may not have had the power sources to act as a buffer between them, or that they actively chose not to get involved.

The notion of sources of uncertainty also receives much support from the present study. By definition, the presence of turbulence and unpredictability at all levels of the organization, as described in Chapter 4, led members to create dilemmas for others in the organization (e.g., purposefully not collaborate with change efforts that higher ups tried to implement). The crossing of lines of communication is another example, where senior managers attempted to reduce uncertainty by bypassing/removing the union blockages and dealing directly with the therapists. In this light, creating uncertainty represented an opportunity. An implication is that the formal structure of an organization does not necessarily reflect the true nature of its functioning.

We have little data from Crozier's & Friedberg's research that can be compared directly with the present research. While Crozier & Friedberg discuss working to rule, doctoring information, disrupting operations and using the cloak of expertise as actions used to create or prevent change, we found much less emphasis on these strategies. Rather, psychological non-involvement, reasoning and managing lines of communication appeared to be the focus. This may be the result of differences between the research contexts, however. Crozier & Friedberg's French bureaucracies were much larger and presented different historical, structural, cultural and environmental conditions. As the evidence shows, the inclusion of underlying values and beliefs is important for drawing out less visible or hidden dynamics, something the two authors do not account for.

The research on coalitions reviewed in Chapter 2 sees some application to the current study because we observed many dynamics related to coalitions. While we did not study the stages of coalition formation per se, the data weakly support Summers' (1986) findings that coalitions and like groupings form around critical events, particularly when there were

threats to job security and to cultural integrity of the satellite clinics. There was very little evidence of coalitions from senior managers with external sources. Instead, the data showed that team leaders and therapists were actively invoking cultural rights and co-opting persons external to the immediate organization's staffs. Garguilo's (1993) proposals around the types of co-optation are very useful in this regard. Application of those proposals from the industrial sector to the human services sectors is thus possible and was fruitful to the present research.

The present research has found that clashes of values, beliefs, and cultural identity between levels indicate serious organizational problems. This parallels work in the field of family therapy (Selvini-Palazzoli et al., 1984; Imber-Black, 1988; Mills & Murgatroyd, 1991, among others) that identifies visible external behaviors (e.g., conflict between senior managers and therapists) as symptoms of deeper issues in a system (e.g., clashes of values around past history). The model goes to the root of the problem by examining the boundaries that mark the groups, cohesion or disengagement between members, repeated patterns of behavior that reveal how the group functions, and value differences, contrasts, and similarities between its members. While it was beyond the scope of this study to measure the entire applicability of such a model over large samples and multiple contexts, the basic concepts certainly have had value in the present study and provide fuel for further research along these lines in organizations. Empirical data in the present research appear to provide strong support for the concepts although they originate in a different field and focus on different types of systems.

The proposals on which the present research mostly bases its foundation are those brought forward by Frost (1987), who attempts to bring several of the above dimensions together. Assumptions leading Frost's model include viewing organizations as significantly influenced by the exercise of power by their members. The high amounts of energy and time that we observed staffs putting into power issues provides proof that power is an integral part of human service organizations. We also provided evidence that all levels are involved. This is not to say that every human service organization is involved in the same way, but that power comes through the organization in one way or another.

A second assumption is that power exists on surface and deeper levels. As the evidence shows, there were nearly one thousand references to surface and deep level strategies spread across the four hierarchical groups. The uneven distribution of the strategies across the groups is partly a reflection of differing access to sources of power that are irreplaceable (e.g., Native therapists cannot be replaced easily) and the differing opportunities to use them. The sources of power are central to the work of the mental health centre (e.g., the mental health centre cannot function without professional therapists), and are pervasive because they influence every part and every level in the organization. The sources of power we identified also may have an immediate impact on the organization (e.g., if a secretary purposefully delays calling the maintenance man to fix the heating, the impact will be felt quickly across the building). It may be argued that not all sources of power have an immediate impact, however. Particularly for the senior manager's group, the data showed that manipulation of power sources (e.g., cultural identity) into deep level strategies may take time to have an effect (e.g., socialization of new board members is a gradual process).

While the present research was qualitative in nature, cautious comparisons with quantitative research around the use of power did not show many matches. Frost's compilation shows, for example, that upper level staffs (downward relationships) tend to use assertiveness and sanctions to a high degree and moderate use of ingratiation, bargaining and appeals to higher authorities. The present findings contrast with those studies in that the strategies exerting high amounts of social pressure received less relative emphasis. This perhaps is due to risk aversion where staffs at all levels preferred not to rock the boat. The upper level also tended to appeal to the rational side of staffs while manipulating structure (lines of communication).

These differences can be attributed at least in part to the turbulent context in which the present study was carried out. Other researchers (Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Guerin, 1995; Gordon, 1996) focused on industrial contexts that did not necessarily involve strong negative relationships. It is plausible that when relational environments are heavily charged, senior managers do not use heavy-handed strategies because this would only create more negativity. Deep level neutralization in par-

ticular is a “smoother” intervention strategy and it is less likely to provoke additional open conflict.

It is quite probable that staffs were aware of the impact of the different types of strategies available to them. The use of authority as a power source, for example, does not incur the costs associated with coercion, deceit, or assertiveness, which are detrimental to relational growth. The costs would possibly include having to back down or to use rewards to gain the other party’s collaboration. Oftentimes, the relationship is beyond “repair”, thus crippling sources of power such as charisma.

Similar inferences can be made for upward relationships. Findings from the literature on organizations and on social psychology (Roloff, 1976; Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980; Wayne, Liden and Graff, 1997) reveal in a mix of laboratory and limited field trials that upward relationships often involve use of reasoning, ingratiation and coalitions. The present data do not support the presence of ingratiation in upward relationships due to the turbulent context. The transparency and the perception of ulterior motives of such attempts would perhaps be a factor in their non-use. The presence of coalitions, however, was clearly noted, particularly around union issues and co-opting external participants.

The literature is less clear around strategies of middle managers, on the other hand. Comparisons with our findings are thus not possible. The relative absence of lateral strategies in our data also makes comparisons difficult.

The evidence shows that the higher a person is on the hierarchy, the more potential sources of power and strategies there are. The analysis shows, however, that this potential does not always transform into actual power strategies. Senior managers had the option to use assertiveness and coerciveness, for example, but they put these strategies aside in favor of less negative strategies.

A weakness in comparing the present results with the industrial literature is that the latter’s sampling often is done under artificial or contrived conditions using self-report questionnaires rather than actual human service organizations. Further research along the lines of the present study would shed more light and a basis for comparisons.

Through the power relations and games perspective, the present research has highlighted that persons with longer years of experience in an organization may tend to describe

events as more turbulent due to the higher investment in the organization. In addition, higher-ups are more susceptible to bear the responsibility for change and thus the blame for turbulence. Lower level staffs seem more engaged in resisting change. While this is due to the roles and responsibilities of each group, it implies that members involved in downward relationships need to resort to more different types of strategies. In addition, implementing change would seem to require more strategies than resisting change. The role of higher ups is to keep the turbulence down, thereby leading to less use of negative strategies. The heavier emphasis of upper levels in deep level strategies, which involve less negative dynamics, is an indication of this.

In summary, the data presented here provide support to the power relations and games approach. It has provided tools to draw attention to the inconsistencies and contradictions in the organization and power issues within the organization. These inconsistencies can be a major source of organizational conflict and tension. (Mills & Murgatroyd, 1991) The model has its limits, however. It is inconceivable that it can be used to study all organizations in all contexts. It also cannot account for all possible actions of organizational members because such research is time consuming and difficult to carry out. The focus seems to be on internal processes more than on environmental relationships. A full analysis of every conceivable external relationship would require huge resources and a wide-ranging knowledge of the organization studied. Having mentioned these limits, however, no model can be everything to every situation, and the power relations and games perspective provides excellent tools for “digging” into observable and more discrete power dynamics as described by the participants. It also keeps “alive” the rich stories of the participants. The power games and relations perspective seems to provide the most complete view of strategy processes of the multiple theoretical perspectives that were reviewed.

7.2.7 Concluding Summary

Through this study, we identified several elements that are involved in power dynamics or strategies, including the availability of resources and information, the ability to deal with uncertainty, and the importance of including deep level analysis. Staffs at all levels used

strategies to influence the outcome of decisions. Strategies are thus vehicles through which we can observe members of an organization exert power.

We recognize that the theoretical approaches discussed above are not necessarily mutually exclusive and that there is some overlap between them. There is at least some truth in many of the perspectives. The argument that one perspective might be “better” than another is less important when one takes on an interdisciplinary view. It would not be difficult to find examples that don’t “fit” in some of the perspectives. Nonetheless, the literature on power has evolved in different schools of thought and is divided accordingly. The key is to find a perspective that examines actions of organizational members from several angles and dimensions. Examining surface and deep levels or organizational strategies is a step in this direction.

Several elements are linked to how power manifests itself. This research has provided evidence that having access to a source of power does not guarantee one can manipulate it into a strategy. Theoretically, upper level staffs in organizations have access to the largest pool of sources of power and opportunities to work on visible problems that are important to the organization’s functioning. Our research showed that this is not always the case, however, especially when cultural identity issues are brought into play. Senior managers often found it difficult to deal with these issues because of the abstract nature of such deep level dynamics.

Another factor we examined was newcomer versus veteran status in the organization. Those who tried to break radically with the past engendered a feeling in veteran members that their skills and experience were not wanted. Feelings of exclusion were a strong dynamic that shaped many attitudes and beliefs of veterans, particularly those around the credibility of change plans drawn up by newcomers. Differences in strategy formation were not as evident when examining length of employment (newcomers versus veterans) as compared with hierarchical level in the organization, however.

In addition, the perception that a strategy was used appeared as powerful as if the strategy actually had been used. The perception that senior managers and team leaders had used sanctions despite no evidence to this effect is a good example.

The long or protracted change period that had begun several years before was another important element. Under such conditions, creating a sense of urgency often is described in the industrial literature as crucial to implementing change. (Kanter, Stein & Jick, 1992; Kotter, 1996). In an attempt to create a sense of urgency to rally people behind the changes, senior managers deliberately shared information with all employees and tried to convince them this was a turning point. The mindset that existed in other staffs, however, gave little credibility to this process, and issues around information and crossing lines of communication came to a head. Deep level strategies from management, designed to put a more constraining influence than surface level strategies alone, were not able to change the crisis into a potential opportunity for change. In essence, deep level strategies aimed at addressing the emotional and value systems of therapists did not have much impact because of insufficient power bases. The turbulent context seems to make it more difficult to use the personal relationship as power (e.g., ingratiation), particularly between hierarchical levels of an organization.

With all the tense power relations between upper and lower levels, one has to wonder about the role of the team leaders or middle managers. With a small number of participants, it is difficult to draw conclusions, but we may hypothesize that their “quiet” position on the sides was a strategy that would help them quietly anchor their power in the Community Advisory Committees. The belief that “make no noise and they’ll ignore us” could be behind this.

The study of strategies in this organization brought to light an important paradox. On one hand, it would seem that veteran staffs, who were from the “inside” of the organization and were familiar and tired with its old issues and problems, would help lead the transition. Ironically, the same staffs who had integrated past orientations and ways of functioning were among the most active in blocking change. Their strategies focused on issues of managers not recognizing the past.

This leads us to question the choice of a completely new management team to lead the divestment of a department of an established institution, to head up the new organization, and to design and implement the transition of staffs. We may speak of a clash of visions, the two views being incompatible with one another. The new managers held a vision

of a completely new organization, one with new roots, one of excitement for the future that would do things differently and that would not repeat past mistakes. This compared to veteran staffs who were going to be transferred to the new organization but who had well-established roots at the psychiatric hospital. In our view, having analyzed the facts at surface and deep levels, it may have been erroneous to design a new organization as if the old one had never existed and to make everything “new”. Veteran staffs simply were not given the opportunity to graft new ideas onto anything. What they had was devalued and new managers made attempts to remove it from play entirely.

The model of analysis that we employed to study power strategies within the organization provided several insights into its functioning. First, the model helped examine the use of power within an organization undergoing protracted turbulent change. It provided structure to the analysis of the complex dynamics that occurred by examining power relationships from several angles. The model attended well to the actions of the organization’s members and shed light on how they dealt with contingencies and uncertainty that they or others had created. We also highlighted the historical evolution of the organizational power games and how the belief systems that built up before and during the turbulence were involved.

The model also provided some insights into how organizational actors manipulate power sources into power in action. Power is complex and not always easy to discern, and the framework of surface and deep level strategies provides at least some understanding of the factors related to strategy formation and keeps the richness of the data at the forefront.

The model also revealed differences between groups in the way they used the twelve surface and four deep level strategies. Those who did not share history with the former organization, for example, could not invoke deep level strategies in the same way as those who had worked there for many years, regardless of hierarchical position. This was particularly evident when comparing the managers and therapists. In essence, the strategic actions of the participants can be related to surface and deep level power structures.

Additionally, upon review of the evidence, we would argue against Mintzberg’s (1989) categorization of power strategies as legitimate and illegitimate. The term illegitimate implies a pejorative or devious view of power strategies. Power is not necessarily deviant and it may contribute to positive and successful organizational change, innovation, and allow dif-

ferences of opinion to emerge. In essence, organizations may survive *because* of power strategies, not *despite* them. Unfortunately, the focus on positive strategies seems to be forgotten during turbulent times.

A final note on strategies. We explained in Chapter 2 the difference between strategies and tactics. As Mintzberg (1994b) puts it, strategies refer to important things, tactics to details. The fact that the data provided evidence of emergent strategies means that sometimes actions resemble mere individual tactics, but that in the end they often emerge as strategies. It is thus important not to prematurely categorize actions as simple tactics, and that the deciding factors are their timing and their context.

7.3 EMPIRICAL AND THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND ISSUES ARISING FROM THE RESEARCH

7.3.1 *Qualitative analysis in the mental health sector*

This research has provided a detailed accounting of the power strategies used by staffs in a mental health centre undergoing turbulent change. Most studies have been carried out in the industrial sector. In addition, they have tended to limit themselves to cataloguing strategies in statistical ways that minimize contextual information. (Kipnis, Schmidt and Wilkinson, 1980; Yukl and Falbe, 1992; Gerin, 1995; Gordon, 1996) By adopting a qualitative approach, the present research has gone a step beyond to provide micro-level context for each of the strategies within the larger organizational context.

The present study reviewed the literature from several disciplines and fields of study and grouped them into six different perspectives according to the angles from which they view strategy formation.

This research studied nearly six hundred references to sources of power and one thousand references to power strategies. We grouped the sources of power into nine categories. The power strategies, for their part, were grouped into twelve types of surface level strategies and four deep level strategies. Each strategy was then compared in the way that different levels of the organization had used them. Senior managers, team leaders, therapists and clerical staffs were compared, as well as the dimension of newcomer and veteran status.

Through these data, we found there are no simple rules or single perspective for studying strategy formation.

A contribution of this study was to provide evidence for cultural identity as a source of power because of its strong presence and use by the participants, something not included in prior research on power in the organizational context. The pervasiveness of the evidence suggests that cultural identity should be added to the basic sources identified in the literature.

This study has collected extensive and detailed information about strategy formation at the micro level in a human service organization. Such studies are not common, especially in the context of community mental health centres undergoing turbulent change. While several mental health centres have divested from psychiatric hospitals in Ontario over the past twenty years, few other studies to our knowledge have addressed micro level dynamics in such detail. The present data identifies clashes in values and beliefs as possible indicators of organizational problem spots.

7.3.2 Application of the industrial literature to the non-profit context

Organizations everywhere face difficult change. Financial constraints, organizational restructuring of the social and health services, and new social mandates are creating huge pressures on organizations to change. To paraphrase Kotter (1996), even successful change efforts can be messy and full of surprises. Persons interested in navigating these organizational changes successfully will need to understand the nature of the micro-level processes that accompany change so that they can deal with them.

At the outset of this research, we highlighted the major differences between industrial and non-profit organizations. We reaffirm that there are distinctions between the two. While industrial organizations often must be sensitive to cultural needs, they do so because of market forces, not necessarily because it is their social mandate. Publicly funded human service organizations do not have this luxury, at least in the Canadian context. Elements such as culturally appropriate social services are commonly built into the mandate of human service organizations because of government decree. We feel, however, that the industrial literature is a valid starting point for studying human service organizations in a turbulent context as long as it is adapted contextually. Our comparison of the findings with existing theory

provide evidence of the applicability of some concepts from the industrial sector, such as behavioral elements related to resistance and the impact of culture on strategies.

7.3.3 Focus on multiple levels of the organization

This research took a wide view of organizations, in contrast with the traditional top-down view that permeates the literature. We examined power relationships in downward, upward, up-down, and lateral directions and provided detailed examples of how these take shape. We shifted the emphasis away from management-only to a relational one that includes other levels of the organization. We confirmed that employees at all levels of the organization were involved in strategy making and that this was not the purview of senior managers alone. An obvious implication of this study is that strategy processes matter.

Some members of the organization, particularly senior managers and therapists were more active in strategies than the team leaders and the clerical group, but the latter showed some signs of consciously removing themselves from the line of fire. Some groups were more involved than others, particularly the therapist and veteran staffs, but none were immune from its effects. We also made comparisons between veteran and newcomer staffs that brought to light additional dynamics, especially those relating to past history and recognition of expertise and experience.

The historical investigation we carried out, along with the identification of values and beliefs at all levels of the organization provided information on the conflicts permeating the organization. In essence, it was important to examine cultural issues at all levels of the mental health centre, not only at the top.

We challenge the notion that the study of strategy formation is for top management only. Our data strongly suggest that a complete picture of an organization's functioning requires examining multiple hierarchical levels. In essence, when examined in the context of turbulence and uncertainty, the study of surface and deep power processes provides information and understanding about the relations between individuals at different hierarchical positions and their relation to the history of the organization. This research suggests the usefulness of comparative analyses across layers within an organization.

7.3.4 Adaptation of computer software for analysis of the data

A less obvious but nonetheless important contribution of this research was leading a reprogramming of the AQUAD (Analysis of Qualitative Data) software package with the originator of the software, Dr. Gunter L. Huber. Initially the software produced long printouts of codes and line numbers that had no attached context. This made it difficult to give meaning to them without sifting deeply through the transcripts, a very tedious process. After making several recommendations to the programmer to modify the software, and having tested multiple versions of it with him, we were able to add contextual comments to the codes that we used. These comments were now much longer than the four or five words permitted under the original software. Through the reprogramming of the software, qualitative researchers using AQUAD may now have contextual information appear next to the codes on screen and in their printouts. We are thankful to Dr. Huber for his collaboration on this.

7.3.5 Support for an interdisciplinary approach for the study of power issues

This research affirms the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of power dynamics. Strategy formation is a dynamic process involving many sources of information and angles of study. Rather than a static view, strategy formation takes place within organizations. Individuals do not function as disconnected people. They are members of systems within the organization, systems that have important effects on their strategies.

Starting with a literature review, then contrasting it generally to our findings, this research has confirmed the need to move away from the classical approach to strategy formation that relied heavily on the disciplines of economics, mathematics and statistics. Given the complexity of human service organizations and the high rate of change in them, particularly because of recent government pullbacks, it is imperative that the study of strategy formation takes into account the relevant aspects of many disciplines. To paraphrase Harrison (1981), different interdisciplinary approaches to power strategy formation represent particular segments of the real world at a given time and place, and under varying conditions. The review of these approaches in Chapter 2 reveals that a large number of variables may come into play. Because these have varying degrees of complexity, it is impossible to understand them

all and their scope. Thus, certain variables were chosen to study power in this research to understand the functioning of an organization undergoing turbulent change. The power relations and games perspective epitomizes the interdisciplinary aspects of strategy formation even without the other perspectives. In addition, this perspective reinforces the role of all members of the organization, not only top management, thus giving a systems view of the organization's functioning.

This study has taken into account, with varying emphasis, processes involving *psychological and behavioral processes* (such as the team leaders' tendency for disengagement to avoid getting entangled in uncertainty as a psychological force, and perceptions of therapists of having been the object of sanctions despite evidence to the contrary), *sociological and social-psychological processes* relating to alignments and coalition formation and other group interactions, *personal value systems* as evidenced in deep level strategies impacting reflecting cultural identity in Francophone and Native issues, *environmental issues* reflecting the political context of community pressure groups leading to the organization's divestment from the psychiatric hospital in the first place, and *political forces* that constrained senior managers to move forward with certain hiring practices despite strong resistance from the union, to name only a few examples. The empirical evidence supports the notion that none of these elements alone explains strategy formation, and that a review of all other components is essential before drawing any conclusions.

7.3.6 Considerations and implications for further research in the human services

Although for practical reasons, the present study had to draw the line somewhere in terms of focus, there are several implications for practice and for future research. First, we recognize that knowledge about dysfunctional interactions, obstacles to change, and the process of change itself can be used to intervene in organizations. Knowledge of these elements can help us determine what steps we should take to redress the organization to a proper course. Studying surface and deep level actions of staffs in an organization allows leaders, regular staffs, researchers and consultants to examine power configurations that enable organizations to function more effectively, or conversely, why change efforts fail.

The growth and proliferation of “organizational consultants” and “strategy consultants” over the past years say something significant about the difficulties these organizations have in overcoming historical issues and moving through turbulent times. Organizational change consultants should study not only the structure of organizations, but also carry out in-depth interviews with staffs at all levels to find out “where they are at”. As the evidence in the present research suggests, a debriefing process might be a useful tool for those undergoing turbulent organizational change. Employees need to make sense of what is going on because events are often emotionally charged and carry lots of “baggage”. Applied research in these areas would be useful.

In essence, it is unlikely that the study of politics in organizations has reached the saturation point, and it should continue as an area of theoretical study. Complexities of human service organizations, and the economic constraints that they face in light of funding cutbacks, make for a fertile field of theoretical study. Environmental factors, such as changing governmental mandates in the human services, make this type of study purposeful.

The findings suggest several directions for further research. First, there is value in pursuing the study of coalitions at a micro level and focusing on the integration of cultural values. While there has been some research in experimental settings (Summers, 1986) the natural environment provides contexts that other settings do not.

Also, further studies of co-optation as a form of coalitions in the human services would shed light on how outside parties are brought into conflict situations. How these par-

ties avoid or do not avoid being co-opted would be interesting as well. As discovered in the present research, however, such studies are very time consuming, even if observing a small number of participants.

It would be fruitful to study a larger number of mental health organizations to see if any additional patterns emerge in terms of strategy formation at surface and deep levels. A focus across several levels of the organizations would minimize the top-down focus that traditionally exists. Revisiting some of the more recent research on strategy formation that has focused on statistical methods and applying a qualitative examination would bring further contextual information to those studies. The research methods and model used in the present research, although carried out on a smaller scale than the quantitative studies, could act as a starting point. Formulating those studies would probably require conducting case study research to disentangle the many elements tied into strategy formation.

As shown in the present research, understanding the historical context of an organization is essential to understanding its current dynamics, particularly for deep level dynamics. Recalling Schein's (1996) comments, development of analytical techniques that consider these issues is essential.

Although our findings are exploratory, it would be fruitful to draw comparisons with strategy formation in less turbulent human service organizations. Other human service organizations should be examined in terms of the use of both surface and deep level power strategies. We have identified strategy formation in a professional bureaucracy, which Mintzberg (1989) characterizes by a participatory and democratic functioning from professionals. Other less professionally oriented organizations, such as volunteer agencies, may provide further data into strategy formation in the human services. Observations across different levels of the organizations would provide excellent information about strategic behavior.

Further research that identifies and assesses the effectiveness of specific strategies in various kinds of human service settings is needed. Additionally, following on Dufour's work, it would be interesting to compare if some strategies are not successful in the short-term but eventually become productive to those who initiated them. The mix and flow of different types of strategies would provide valuable information on combinations of strategies that are productive under certain conditions but not others.

Organizational dynamics can sometimes become extremely painful and stressful to its member. In extreme cases, it can go out of control, as in cases where organizations are shut down because they can no longer meet their mandate and are rife with conflict. Other examples include firing entire senior management teams, and full boards of directors resigning. Understanding what leads to these conditions and what might be done about them is an interesting area for more research. These situations may produce opportunities for new strategies not yet identified. Studying new games in deep organizational structures, and the way they shift between levels, also is a promising area for future research.

We have noted the relative absence of clerical staffs in the dynamics. Further research could help determine if this is an active or passive strategy. Unfortunately, our sample size was small. The number of power sources and strategies used by this group was small as well, making conclusions difficult. Larger samples in the human services sector would be helpful in this regard.

In terms of practical organizational interventions, researchers should examine debriefing of staffs. The protracted and difficult interactions we observed between staffs provide proof that even mental health workers are not immune from stresses and conflict, and that they may need some form of closure to the turbulence. Research examining issues around types of debriefing for each level of hierarchy, conditions for initiating debriefing processes during and/or after turbulent change, and the short- and long-term effects of such are but some of the questions for further research.

Concerning research methods, difficulties are inherent in studying deep level strategies due to their often discrete nature in organizations. Refined techniques for shedding light on these and putting them in the context of a historical analysis of organizations would be welcome.

7.4 CONCLUSION

As seen through the eyes of the participants in this research, power dynamics are not just a concern for senior managers. Power affects persons at all levels of human service organizations, although in different ways. Thinking systemically, everybody in the organization affects everybody else. Change strategies require that employees exit their comfort zones and

go into unknown directions, regardless of their hierarchical position in the organization. The study of organizational processes at all levels provides a much better picture of power issues and dynamics than studying from a top-down perspective alone as the literature has tended to do.

The complexity of power relationships in organizations stresses the importance of studying the less visible or less tangible aspects of power. This highlights the shortcomings of research that focuses primarily on top-down decision-making. The implications of what goes on must be understood through an analysis of less immediately visible aspects of power, which are studied through surface and deep level strategies.

While the data presented in this research highlighted serious organizational problems, we are nonetheless hopeful for its recovery. To paraphrase Friedberg (1993), if the data presented in this research allow the organization's members to understand their system better, or at least to understand their own actions within the larger context, it perhaps also can allow them to re-examine their points of view about their organization, its constraints and its opportunities. We hope this will provoke positive changes in the organization in the end.

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APPENDIX A

Before each interview, we asked the participants to sign the following consent for tape recording. None of the participants refused to sign the consent form although one person did not want to be tape-recorded. The consent form for that person was modified to read "Consent for use of interview materials".

CONSENT FOR TAPE RECORDING

I, _____, consent to the tape recording of interviews by Daniel Côté, Ph.D. candidate at the University of Montreal, and to the use of such material for research purposes and publications related to this research.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with me will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with my permission. I understand that this research is bound by the research guidelines of the University of Montreal and by the Code of Ethics of the Ontario College of Certified Social Workers.

CONSENTEMENT A L'ENREGISTREMENT

Je, _____, consens à l'enregistrement d'entrevues par Daniel Côté, candidat au Ph.D. à l'Université de Montréal, et à l'utilisation de ce matériel pour des fins de recherche et de publication.

Toute information obtenue dans cette recherche et qui pourrait m'identifier demeurera confidentielle et ne sera divulguée qu'avec mon consentement. Cette recherche est régie par les lois de l'Université de Montréal concernant la recherche, ainsi que par le Code de déontologie du Collège des travailleurs sociaux agréés de l'Ontario.

Participant's signature

Date

Daniel Côté, M.Sc., C.S.W.
Certified Social Worker
Researcher / Chercheur

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The interviews were semi-structured. While the researcher took an active role in the interviews by often prompting and asking questions, there remained room for the interviewees to expand on topics they felt were important to the research. This allowed for greater exploration of the topic as per the perceptions of each participant.

There was a general format for the interviews. This format was drawn up from the researcher's own experiences with organisations, reviews of documentary materials, other doctoral dissertations (e.g., Dufour, 1991), and informal discussions with staff between 1990 and 1992. The interviews lasted on average 1½ hours. The topics covered were broadly grouped into three categories: events leading to the turbulent changes, personal and organisational problems brought about by the organisational changes, relationships concerning actions and strategies to deal with the organisational changes.

Examples of the interview questions are grouped below according to general area. Some themes overlap in several categories. Not all questions were asked of each participant except for the opening question below.

- *Opening/ start-up question for all interviews:*

If you were to describe your organisation in a few words, what three words would you use?

- *Questions related to the history of the organisation:*

What events led to the split of your organisation from the psychiatric hospital?

What events do you see presently as turbulent?

Which events were critical?

What kind of rumours circulated at the time?

What kind of opposition was there to the divestment from the hospital?

- *Questions related to job functions:*

How long have you been working for the present organisation? With the former psychiatric hospital?

What does your work consist of? What are your job title and functions?

What, if any, changes have occurred in your job since you have been with the organisation?

What aspects of your job are the easiest? The most difficult?

- *Questions related to relationships within the organisation:*

Who supervises you? To whom do you report?
 What are your links with the other satellites?
 Through whom do you go when you want to communicate with other workers in the other satellite clinics?
 What is it like to work here?
 Describe the relations between administration, middle managers and front-line staff.
 Who makes decisions in your unit? ...in the organisation?
 What problems do you encounter in your work?

- *Questions related to turbulence:*

What is your definition of turbulence?
 What are some examples of the turbulence that you experienced?
 Who was involved in the turbulent events?
 What did people do / what strategies did they use to counter the turbulence?

- *Questions related to relationships with outside organisations:*

What relationships does your organisation have with the provincial government?
 What government policies / events had an impact on your organisation?
 How did provincial financing play in the turbulence you have experienced?
 Are there any other local organisations involved in these difficulties?
 How are professional associations involved?

- *Questions related to taking action on something:*

What major problems do you encounter in your work?
 What / who triggered the problems? What was the turning point where they could not be ignored anymore?
 How long did the problems last?
 Who was involved?
 How did staff react to the problems?
 How were the events handled? What actions / decisions did you take? What actions or decisions do you perceive others took?
 What did you think about those decisions?
 How did you get involved? What support / opposition did you offer?
 Who agreed / did not agree?
 How did you get support for your actions / decisions? Who did you involve?
 How were the decisions presented to you?
 Was there any consultation about the decisions that were taken?
 Did the decisions resolve the problems? ... make them worse?

What goals do you have in this organisation for the next six months? How would you achieve them?

In your opinion, how could you improve the agency? How would you go about this?

If you had a magic wand that you could use on this organisation, how would you use it?