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Multi-Party Collaboration – Building Generative Knowledge and Practices in Local Collaborations in Far North Queensland

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Abstract

Since early 2001 a research partnership has developed between James Cook University and the Far North Queensland Region of the Queensland Department of Communities (FNQDoC) (formerly Families). The focus of this research partnership is the transformation and development of the capacity of organisations, teams and individuals to engage in effective multi-party collaborations within the community services system. Currently in the region, problems caused by non-existent, or poorly coordinated approaches to policy, funding and service delivery are well known to departmental and agency staff at all levels. Multi-party collaborations are proposed as partial answers to some of the questions that regularly confront staff.

This paper reports on findings from the third in the series of research projects. The purpose of the research project was to field authenticate and advance emerging theory. In this project, grounded theory (on principles and logics that guide transformational collaboration) developed in the first two projects was applied to a multi-party collaboration involving service delivery units of FNQDOC and funded agencies. A case study methodology was used. The case study was selected in consultation with FNQDOC. Case material was sourced from a workshop and documents.

Understanding a multi-party collaboration involves unravelling some of the 'principles' and 'logics' that guide decision-making about the essences and forms of the collaborative relationship. Principles are the essential qualities of a transformational collaboration. Logics are the design elements of a transformational collaboration. The principles and logics (the basis of the grounded theory) were field authenticated in this mandated collaboration, at this service integration level, and in this pre-collaboration relationship stage. The theory was advanced through recognition of four key concerns identified in this case study: power (nature), ownership (dynamic and context), organising (means) and leadership (drivers).

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Introduction

Since early 2001, a research partnership has developed between James Cook University and the Far North Queensland Region of the Queensland Department of Communities (FNQDOC) (formerly Families). The focus of this research partnership is the transformation and development of the capacity of organisations, teams and individuals to engage in effective multi-party collaborations within the community services system.

Currently in the region, problems caused by non-existent, or poorly coordinated approaches to policy, funding and service delivery are well known to departmental and agency staff at all levels. Multi-party collaborations are proposed as partial answers to some of the questions that regularly confront staff.

This paper reports on findings from the third in the series of research projects (Table1). The purpose of the research project was to field authenticate and advance emerging theory. In this project, grounded theory (on principles and logics that guide multi-party collaboration) developed in the first two projects (Earles and Lynn 2002; Earles and Lynn forthcoming; Earles, Lynn and Knell 2004) was applied to a multi-party collaboration involving service delivery units of FNQDOC and funded agencies.

Table 1. Multi-Party Collaboration Research Program

	Project1. 2001 (completed)	Project 2. 2002 (completed)	Project 3. 2003-4 (completed)
Site	Mareeba Dimbulah Irrigation Area (MDIA)	Cairns	FNQ region
Participants	Community Response Group (CRG)	Human services practitioners	QDoC and funded agencies
Focus	CRG Model	Comparative with Project 1	Theory application
Cases/Theory used as stimulus	Australian and international case studies	Local and non- local case studies and theory papers	Practice case (current)
Data collection	Action learning dialogue	Action learning dialogue	Workshop documents
Data analysis	Thematic analysis	Thematic analysis	Audit using emerging grounded theory from Project 2.
Dissemination	Model	Emerging grounded theory	Case study

Transformational Collaboration: The grounded theory

Within the growing literature on collaboration theory and practice, there has been a strong focus on instrumental collaboration around a single issue (field of service or client outcome) or a single goal (service delivery or professional integration) (Takahashi and Smutny 2002). It is increasingly recognised that ways of organising are embedded in flows and must be able to manage multiple (and diverse) issues with multiple (and sometimes contested and conflicting) goals. While there has been a shift in focus from instrumental collaboration to more complex transformational collaboration (Himmelman 1996) there is still little research that acknowledges that there is nothing fixed and constituted about multi-party collaboration rather it is complex and nebulous in nature.

Understanding a multi-party collaboration involves unravelling some of the 'principles' and 'logics' that guide decision-making about the essences and forms of the collaborative relationship. Principles are the essential qualities of a transformational collaboration. Logics are the design elements of a transformational collaboration. Table 2 provides a summary of the principle and logics that emerged from a project (Project 2, Table 1.) that involved nonprofit and government agency managers in the human services sector.

Table 2. Summary of Grounded Theory: Transformational collaboration

<p>Members of a multi-party collaboration</p> <p>seek to be in a state of equanimity;</p> <p>recognise their abstract fractal oneness;</p> <p>create and honour relational synergy and groundedness;</p> <p>are consciously sustainable;</p> <p>enter a state of liminality so that new possibilities can emerge;</p> <p>are dependent on transformational capabilities and the use of authentic power;</p> <p>use edge space to manifest the form/action of synergistic goals.</p>
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Principles

A *state of equanimity* is the balance between engagement, negotiation, planning, action and reflection processes required for beneficial outcomes. It assumes the use of emotional, intellectual, worldly and spiritual intelligences – the ability to work with head, hands, heart and spirit. Collaboration seeks to be in a state of equanimity.

Relational synergy is the epiphanic connection that is generated through the 'stock' of trust, identity and resources that exists between individuals, groups and organisations and the energy that draws people together. These combine to form connectedness with

others to work together on a project of interest. Collaboration creates and honours relational synergy.

Groundedness is created by the development of strategies and activities well-rooted in the communal and cultural soils of local groups and by recognising the importance and validity of local context, local ownership/power and control, and local leadership. Collaboration creates and honours groundedness.

Fractality is an abstract oneness that exists conceptually and intellectually in the mind. Fractals do not exist in our shared, external reality, which are defined by time and space. Fractals inspire independent and interdependent temporal and spatial actions that each operate as if it were the ‘whole’, a ‘oneness’ in connection and aspiration that allows collaborations to manifest and self-organise according to the individualistic dynamics of time and space. Fractals have a unity of purpose with diversity in action at different scales of focus according to the specific temporal and spatial circumstances. Collaboration recognises its abstract fractal oneness.

Conscious sustainability is a conscious ability and process of continually reading the dynamics of a complex world and frequently reframing and reorganising the organisational components according to the changes in those dynamics in order to form, grow, evolve, reproduce, flourish or die according to their life cycles. Collaboration is consciously sustainable.

Logics

Liminal space is open, unfinished, decentred – a mental, emotional, spiritual, physical space of possibility and transition where the participants are in transition from one place of meaning and action to another. It is a space of fructile chaos, a fertile nothingness, a storehouse of possibilities, a space of movement and difference, striving after new forms and structure, a gestation process where the established order of service delivery can be turned upside down so that new possibilities can emerge. Collaboration enters a state of liminality so that new possibilities can emerge.

Transformational capabilities are the energy, and wider capabilities and infrastructure that can activate and sustain groups and organisations and their collaborative endeavours. Collaboration is dependent on transformational capabilities.

Authentic power is a multi-directional and multi-level flow of power that is diffused/expressed through multiple sites to enable shared power with rather than power over. It is local decision-making that is non-pyramidal and people driven – the power coming from, the doing together. Collaboration is dependent on the use of authentic power.

Edge space is the living space between various entities and bodies. These spaces are the interfaces. The edges are not lines of separation but ‘zones of interaction, transformation, transgression and possibility’ between the overlapping organisational systems. They are sites of greater diversity, productivity, interaction and exchange than either of the overlapping systems alone. It is the site where form/action is manifested and the edges themselves change. Collaboration uses edge space to manifest the form/action of synergistic goals.

Synergistic goals are manifested by an open and honest combining of individualised goals to affect greater than the sum of the parts. Synergistic goals are implementable ideas that may be different from individualised goals but must not be in conflict. Collaboration uses edge space to manifest the form/action of synergistic goals.

Methodology

The purpose of the research was to field authenticate and advance the emerging theory. A case study methodology was used. The case study was selected in consultation with FNQ DoC. Case material was sourced from workshop documents.

The workshop participants comprised three discrete workgroups who collaborate around the placement and support of children under child protection orders and/or in the care of the Department, the support of their families and the recruitment, registration, training and support of carers. All participants had expressed a need and a desire to strengthen collaborative relationships to maximise their collective responsibilities within the Alternative Care system.

The Cairns Area Office of the Department of Communities has statutory responsibility for the care and protection of children and the support of their families. The office was undergoing significant change following the release of the “Blueprint for implementing the recommendations of the January 2004 Crime and Misconduct Commission Report *“Protecting Children: An Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Foster Care”* (The Blueprint). Approximately 20 staff attended the workshop comprising of Managers, Team Leaders and Family Services Officers.

The Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Child & Family Support (ATSICAFS) team is a workgroup that is primarily responsible for recruiting, registering, training and supporting indigenous foster carers. While this workgroup was working within the Department of Communities, it was in transition to a non-government service provider in line with recommendations from The Blueprint. Approximately 6 staff attended the workshop comprising of the Coordinator and other key staff.

The Shared Family Care workgroup is a departmentally funded not-for-profit agency primarily responsible for recruiting, registering, training and supporting foster carers. Approximately 10 staff attended the workshop including the Coordinator and other key staff.

Prior to the workshop, individual and workgroup discussions were held with each of the three multi-party collaborators. Subsequently, hypothetical scenarios were developed in consultation with and for each of the three workshop stakeholder groups. Each scenario was indicative of some of the issues that a particular stakeholder group dealt with, within the multiparty collaboration.

The Department of Communities scenario was:

"Carol (an FSO) is seeking an urgent placement for two children. She contacts an alternate care agency only to be informed that no placements are available. In discussion with Annica (another FSO) Carol learns that Annica was offered a

placement by the agency for 2 children the previous week that ended up not being required. Annica suggests that Carol contact the agency about the possibility of using the previously available carer.

In the meantime the agency has rang back & left a message to say that Carer Oates would be able to take the 2 children. When Carol checks with Annica to see whether Carer Oates is the carer that was available the previous week Annica informs her that Carer Oates is only registered as a Limited Carer for a specific child that Annica is working with and that there had been a number of problems with this carer not contacting her over case work issues.”

The Shared Family Care scenario was:

“Carer Fossey is a newly registered carer with an alternate care agency. She has had a five year old child, Chris, in her care for 9 weeks. Chris is happy & settled. Chris’s mum has been having weekly supervised access with Chris and Carer Fossey feels she been developing a good rapport with Chris’s mum.

Carer Fossey rings the agency, very upset, saying that Chris’s mum had turned up to take Chris to the Show and had become very hostile when Carer Fossey had told her that she was not allowed to take Chris unsupervised. Chris’s mum has told her that she was allowed to take Chris to the Show. Chris had become hysterical at not being allowed to go to the Show with her mum. Carer Fossey had tried to contact the FSO who was unavailable.

The agency contacts the FSO who confirms that the family contact arrangements had been changed and that she had left a phone message for the agency expecting that they would let the carer know.”

The ATSICAFS scenario was:

“Carer Simons is a registered carer with an indigenous alternate care agency. She has been caring for 2 children with very high needs for a number of years in addition to her own 3 children. Over the last six months her husband has lost his job and begun drinking heavily and there had been a lot of stress & tension at home. Her husband recently moved out.

The Department, following concerns raised by a neighbour that the children were smacked, has removed the foster children from Carer Simons’s home without contacting the agency. Carer Simon’s cousin, who is also a registered carer with the agency tells the agency that she is very upset that the Department removed Carer Simon’s foster children and that they haven’t offered any support to Carer Simons who still has no idea when or if the children will return.

Her cousin states that she is aware of another family, registered with another agency in the local community, who have charges pending for the sexual abuse of foster children but who are still caring for the children.”

At the workshop, participants were provided with an overview of the grounded theory “Unpacking collaboration – principles and logics of collaboration”. A conversation

café style process was then used to help participants analyse each scenario against the principles and logics framework. The conversation café process involved the establishment of three case study tables with a facilitator that guided mixed groups of participants through the analysis framework. Each participant rotated through each table, giving them an opportunity to work through each separate scenario and to also review the findings of other participants. Participants ended back at the table they first started from allowing them to summarise and share the learnings of all participants against each specific scenario. Participants then moved into their workgroup configurations to develop pragmatic strategies to reflect, commit to, and rebuild their existing multiparty collaboration.

Analysis of the workshop documents drew from the reflexive collaborative process model used by Urwin and Hayes (1998) for community-university partnerships. This process uses a focus group method for analysis. The focus group included the paper authors and an independent facilitator who was also present at the workshop. Reflection on this existing case of multi-party collaboration (as evidence by the workshop documents plus the workshop experience) was the method used to stimulate dialogue that informed theoretical authentication and advancement.

The Findings: Authentication

The workshop participants did authenticate specific aspects of the theory (Table 3) in their deliberations on the three scenarios at the workshop. Authentication often occurred as a result of recognising the absence rather than the presence of the principle or logic.

Authentication of individual principles

Participants identified the absence of a *state of equanimity* (balance) across workgroups in the scenarios while acknowledging its existence within individual workgroups.

Being too reactive, jumping straight to action without connecting, planning or reflecting, not sharing information or rationale for actions, no case managing or conferencing, not taking the time to look at what we can learn from things that happen, lack of planning, need to get together and work out what's going on without jumping to conclusions or making assumptions without evidence.

They considered that this resulted from actors in the scenarios not necessarily knowing each workgroup's needs and the consequences for a child across workgroups.

Workshop participants also identified a deficit of *relational synergy* (connectedness) across workgroups in the scenarios. Trust existed within workgroups but was less obvious across workgroups - *workers complicate inter-relationships by focussing on intra-relationships*. The need for trust and collective identity were also identified - *not feeling you could rely on other people*. Participants emphasised and focused on the need for communication and a *real* connection within the formal relationship required in the scenarios. Recognition of the 'emotionality' and 'stress' of the work was considered especially important across workgroups rather than just a focus on task -

workers look for recognition of their emotional situation, currently deal in facts not relationships.

The 'No' (as in no placement available) is like a stone in a pond, ripples form and impact decision-making in next 'job'.

Table 3 Findings: Authentication

Grounded Theory	Authentication
Principles	
STATE OF EQUANIMITY balance	Present within collaborators but absent across collaborators.
RELATIONAL SYNERGY connectedness	Present within collaborators but absent across collaborators.
GROUNDENESS localness	Considered essential but no systems in place.
FRACTALITY oneness	Fractals recognised but no sense of oneness.
CONSCIOUS SUSTAINABILITY reframing/reorganising	Considered critical but restricted by policies.
Logics	
LIMINALITY possibility/transition	Lack of collective space but considerable individual liminality.
TRANSFORMATIONAL CAPABILITIES energy/infrastructure	Clear identification and acceptance of dependencies.
AUTHENTIC POWER power with	Considered important but not always possible, hence a sense of powerlessness.
EDGE SPACE zones of interaction	Recognition of absence but desire for actual physical edge space.
SYNERGISTIC GOALS implementable ideas	Agreement on shared goal but different foci.

Groundedness (localness) was considered to be a critical element in the work of the individual participants in the scenarios and there was recognition that systems did not exist to ensure **groundedness** in the overall work of the workgroups.

Need to be aware of (the) dynamics of (the) local community and the informal networks that operate, need to tap into informal networks, need to develop locally appropriate systems and solutions.

It was acknowledged that there did not appear to be a sense of honouring shared strategies and activities based on communal knowledge and power in the scenarios - *sometimes workers don't know much about the indigenous carers' lives.*

Participants were quick to recognise the fragmentation (fractals) associated with **fractality** (oneness) and to identify the lack of a sense of conceptual 'oneness' or 'unity of purpose' in the scenarios.

No recognition or articulation of the commonness of issues, no context of there being a bigger picture, making assumptions in isolation, not pulling all the pieces of the puzzle together or even seeking understanding about other aspects of the situation

They considered that decisions made in the scenarios were made in isolation and this was problematic - *decisions need to be made in such a way that the outcome works for the carer, child and parent.* They identified the need to have insights into changes in workgroups and the status of service availability - *need to share where the agency is at including the possibilities of placements.*

Associated with the principle of **fractality**, participants also recognised that some of the possible 'solutions' to the issues raised by the scenarios were *not at the front-line from (the) three workgroups perspectives.*

The context of the actual cases and the complexity of the case need to be understood as well as the possibility of local solution. How much control do we have to change this?

The capacity for **conscious sustainability** (reframing/reorganising) was considered by participants to be critical to the nature of the tasks in the scenarios.

When a decision is made particularly if it is in isolation there needs to be forward planning around who needs to know to ensure the outcome works for the carer, child and parent. Responses may need to move outside the box. In addition the workers needs to be conscious of unanticipated events and have systems in place that can cope with the unforeseen events.

Participants considered that strict adherence to policies *without compensating for some of the inflexibilities that undermine the potential for local collaboration*, as well as in some cases not following policies impacted **conscious sustainability**.

... because we produce miracles with nothing ... nothing will ever change ... maybe the system needs to collapse before anything is actually done ... as it has at a policy level ... but things need to be allowed to die and come back ...

Authentication of individual logics

Participants lamented the lack of **liminal space** (possibility/transition) in the scenarios - *never any time or space to look for answers, need to work out where to from here.* They recognised that workers made considerable individual use of liminal space but not collective use - *as always find a placement.* They also felt that the climate for

creating a safe liminal space so new possibilities could emerge was not always present - *collaboration there until it hits the fan then adversarial.*

Participants raised **transformational capabilities** (energy/infrastructure) that may be needed to address the issues raised by the scenarios: knowledge; skills; and systems and processes. The *quality* of work practices, *the lack of assumptions about others' roles*, and *clear step-by-step processes that include an opportunity for all players to have input* were considered necessary capabilities and infrastructure. Participants acknowledged that while workers *feel the problem* (a shared lack of options for placements), and *the issue stays with us*, they felt there was *a lack of time* so they *leave it to the agency* (other workgroup). There was clear acceptance that collaboration is dependent on **transformational capabilities** and in their absence workgroups relied on their individual capabilities.

Authentic power (power with) was considered to be important by participants. Decision-making in the scenarios *should be shared between the parties*, the power coming from, the doing together.

However this is not always possible because of the busy work commitments of all parties in the collaboration and the difficulty in getting hold of a person at times – particularly when a decision needs to be quick.

It was not always considered possible to have shared decision-making because *some decisions are those of the department* but decisions in these cases need to be communicated.

Where the decision is that of the department (because they carry the can) it needs to be based on information gathered from all parties. How the rationale for the decision and the information it is based on is communicated ... is important and can be significant in the various parties sense of power in the decision-making.

In both cases it was deemed to be important that workers did not *feel powerless in acquiring a placement, feel like the bad guy.*

The discussions around the scenarios identified the need to build **edge space** (zones of interaction).

Confusion about roles and who should interact with whom, when and where, need to make time to start building new relationships, structures and processes.

This was most strongly expressed as the need for a *partnership* to jointly solve issues, plan and take action. The lack of shared physical space (two locations) for the three workgroups (across two different organisations and eventually three) and the need to use phone and email communications were considered to work against the creation of **edge space** - *it's harder to maintain relationships when we're not sharing the same office.*

The participants suggested that the scenarios highlighted different foci but *synergistic goals* (implementable ideas) - *need clear knowledge of statutory requirements as different levels of 'appropriateness' (of placements) between agencies can create more stress*. They mooted the need for a *better combining of goals*.

People working in isolation, lots of separate discussion but no tying it together, if it's everyone's responsibility – who initiates a meeting/contact?

The openness to *take on board each issue (placement)*, and the willingness to problem-solve was deemed to be present within workgroups but what was lacking was the shared understanding that *others (other workgroups) need to know that problem still being worked on*.

Findings: Advancement of theory

The workshop participants and the members of the analysis group did advance the theory (Table 4). Advancement occurred as a result of the participants identifying 'aha' moments for them at the reflection stage of the workshop and the analysis group reflecting on unique points that emerged for them during the analysis dialogue.

Table 4. Advancement of Theory

Aspect	Advancement	Implication
Power	Acknowledged as mandated collaboration.	Openly acknowledge imbalance.
Ownership	Identified as individual acting not organisational acting at the level of service delivery.	Recognise level as critical context.
Organising	Reframed as 'relationships' as part of pre-collaboration stage.	Recognise stage as critical context.
Leadership	Identified as self and shared responsibility/leadership.	Identify and support leaders/drivers.

Power

In a service system that has statutory elements there was a sense of limited choice (and unequal power) in the collaborative endeavour and this produced an inherent tension. This was further exacerbated by the funding arrangements and separate organisational identities. One workgroup was from the department (a service unit), one was from the non-profit sector (100% government funded and created by government) and one workgroup was in transition (from government service unit to 100% government funded created nonprofit organisation). The relationship between the workgroups (the 'collaboration') was indeed mandated - a mandated collaboration.

... a mandate recognises the unequal power balance, that there are certain sites of authentic power ... authentic by the mandate not through localness or

groundedness ... lets not move into a realm of language and concepts that setting people up to fail.

Participants had a sense that *good practice would have to be developed around it* (the mandated collaboration).

Ownership

Participants appeared to view their work as tasks for individuals rather than an act of *doing with*. They seldom talked about workgroups they were talking more about my job, my task, my role, or my position. The grounded theory they were working with in the workshop emerged from Project 2 where the participants were managers with responsibilities for organisational collaboration. The transference of such principles and logics to a service delivery level of practice may need greater contextualisation - *is it about sustaining the individual? How do they reframe their work, how do they reorganise what they do?*

The participants commented on their preparedness to change practice and culture rather than seeking another organisational fix. They took individual ownership of issues - *trying to individually make a difference around this ... it was about supporting my peers ... it was thinking about this as a team ... it was very much on the personal level what can I do to support others ...* They also took ownership of their approach to reflecting on collaborative practice - *we already reflect but usually only around things that have gone wrong ... we need to make more time for reflecting on positive things ... we need to start documenting some of our good practice and sharing it.*

Organising

On reflection, participants noted that the principles and logics already guided their working relationships intra-organisationally and indeed could guide their relationships inter-organisationally - *we're already collaborating but there are lots of aspects of collaboration we hadn't thought of before*. They agreed that they had demonstrated variable understandings of the existing 'collaboration' between the three workgroups. Interestingly, participants did not often use the word collaboration to describe the workgroup organising. They used the term relationship.

The workgroups certainly had a need to work together and they recognised that they needed to build relationships - *we want to get to know people better informally and formally*. They referred to the need for more 'organising' elements while recognising that they may not be forthcoming - *new processes to support legislation and policy ... structure needed ... that is the solution ... sometimes we have to be able to live without it.*

Leadership

Two aspects of 'leadership' were identified in the participants' reflections: self-responsibility (and hence self-leadership) and shared responsibility (and hence shared leadership). As part of the individual ownership (identified above) participants took on individual responsibility - *we each need to take responsibility for balance in our own lives as people in the community look to us as role models*. However they also

acknowledged shared responsibility - *we're all sharing the same stress, this work is not just our responsibility, other people really care about the children and families too.*

Alongside the need for organising elements (identified above), leaders were needed.

*... we actually need to develop some new infrastructure, we need some formal processes to make this thing happen that can be initiated **by anyone** in the process and we need somewhere to make that happen ...*

This raised a key question for the collaboration: *who's responsible for initiating and facilitating and maintaining a collaboration, who's job is it?*

Directions: authentication and advancement

The principles and logics (the basis of the grounded theory of transformational collaboration) were **authenticated to various degrees** in this case study of collaboration

Some principles and logics were readily applicable to the collaboration. It was possible to identify transformational capabilities and dependencies were accepted. Other principles and logics were considered to be important but not yet attained. No systems were in place to ensure groundedness, conscious sustainability was restricted by existing policies, and the use of authentic power was not always considered possible. Further principles and logics were recognised in part. While there was not a sense of oneness, fractals were recognised. Similarly, while there was agreement on goals there were different foci, which blocked the achievement of synergistic goals. Some principles and logics were considered to be present within collaborators (as individual workers or as workgroups) but not present in the collaboration: state of equanimity, relational synergy, liminality and edge space.

This case study also provided avenues for **advancement** of this emerging theory on transformational collaboration specifically in relation to questions of **power, ownership, organising and leadership.**

Collaborations exhibit and often maintain dominant **power** relations.

... most coalitions (collaborations) are deeply embedded within and reinforce existing societal power relations ... In relatively rare cases, coalitions actually transform existing power relations, that is empower those viewed as the focus of their decisions.

(Himmelman 2001: 2, *italics added*)

The identification of this case study as a mandated collaboration firmly places the worker's experiences of the collaboration to date within the 'organising level' (Blue vMeme) using the theoretical framework of Spiral Dynamics (Beck and Cowan 1996). At this level workers desire order, certainty and structure, and have a 'right and wrong' orientation. Authority/power comes through policy/law and is absolutist and linear (Cacioppe and Edwards 2004). However, the workers were striving to achieve *good practice* around the mandate so they could emerge and evolve to higher level of

development that involve consensus thinking/doing, egalitarian and humanitarian tolerance and acceptance (Beck and Cowan 1996). An examination of the emerging theory on transformational collaboration presented in this paper across the levels (or basic stages) of worldview development within Spiral Dynamics may provide a richer conceptualisation of the *nature* of principles and logics.

The **ownership** of issues and reflective practice approaches by individuals (or by a workgroup) rather than by the collaboration could have been indicative of the level of the collaboration - service delivery, which is often based on individual agency. It could however be reflective of the level of development of workers, work groups and the collaboration. Wilber has attempted in Integral Theory to develop a model of transformation for the organisational consciousness, behavioural, cultural and systems domains at the individual and collective/communal levels (Cacioppe and Edwards 2004). Integral Theory proposes that,

... as development proceeds, the self is differentiated or 'peeled' off from the previous level. The self dis-identifies with its present structure and begins to identify with the next higher-order emergent structure. ... It integrates the lower level structure and uses the newer higher order tools of the next level. (Cacioppe and Edwards 2004: 9)

In this case study the workers identified with their positions and in some cases the work groups (the lower order structures), but rarely the collaboration (the higher order structure). An examination of the tenets of Integral Theory as a transformational process may provide the *dynamic* and *contextual elements* for the principles and logics of transformational collaboration.

There was a strong focus on **organising** as both structure and process, and as possible dis-organising (relinquishing of the need for logic and certainty in organising) within the case study dialogue. Organising was conceptualised as requiring *real* relationship(s). Emerging work on spiritual capital now sits alongside the considerable work that recognises the importance of social capital. Spiritual Capital is the amount of knowledge and expertise that is available to an individual, organisation or culture where spiritual is taken to mean 'meaning, values and fundamental purpose'. Spiritual capital is reflected in a collaboration in what it exists for, what it aspires to, and what it takes responsibility for (Zohar and Marshall 2004) A collaboration rich in spiritual capital will be characterised by: meaning, values, reframing and recontextualisation; self awareness; vision and value-led; holism and connectivity; compassion; diversity; field independence; fundamental questioning; spontaneity; positive use of adversity; deep humility; and a sense of vocation. An exploration of forms of capital (moving beyond physical, human and financial, to include social and spiritual) and their relationships to the principles and logics of this emerging theory may stimulate conceptualisation and operationalisation of possible reflective *means* for stimulating and progressing transformational collaboration.

Some workers in this case study recognised that collaboration can be *initiated by anyone in the process* and that individuals need to *take responsibility for balance in (their) own lives*. This represents a very different model of **leadership** than the tradition hierarchical models or models of transactional leadership, and introduces elements of self-leadership and shared leadership. A distributive leadership model has

been used to guide practice within the organisational setting of two workgroups within the government department and have permeated the thinking of some workers. Transformational Leadership theories (which can include notions of distributive leadership) are focussed on moral foundations, procedural and distributive justice, trust, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and organisational citizenship (Bass and Steidlmeier 1999; Pillai, Schriesheim and Williams 1999). Such theories could inform ideas about the possible *drivers* of transformational collaboration.

While Spiral Dynamics, Integral Theory, Spiritual Capital and Transformational Leadership may seem a mixed bag of theories, they do provide a diverse and rich theoretical resource for the advancement of the theory and practice of transformational collaboration around the four key concerns identified in this case study: power (nature), ownership (dynamic and context), organising (means) and leadership (drivers).

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