

# **An Integral Metatheory for Organisational Transformation**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis proposes a metatheory for the study of organisational transformation. A metatheory is a coherent conceptual system that analyses and accommodates the insights of other theory. In a time of rapidly changing organisational, societal and global environments there is a strong imperative for developing integrative conceptual frameworks that contribute to our understanding and explanation of transformational change. Like other areas of social science, the field of organisational transformation is made up of a multitude of diverse theories that offer useful and valid insights into aspects of transformational phenomena. These theories come from many different theoretical schools and research paradigms and they employ a wide range of explanatory concepts. There are however, no overarching theoretical frameworks specifically developed from metatheory building techniques that might give an overall coherency to the field. Consequently, there is no way of deciding on the relative conceptual merits of particular theories and there is often little justification for adopting one theory over another to explore some aspect of organisational transformation. To fill this gap, this thesis uses conceptual research methods to i) review extant literature, ii) develop a metatheory for organisational transformation and iii) apply this metatheory to the exemplar topic of organisational sustainability. The initial chapters introduce the topics of organisational transformation and metatheory building and provide a rationale for an overarching approach to radical organisational change. Following this, a method for metatheory building is developed and its application in this study is described. A rationale for the sampling procedure and organisational of data is also presented. The metatheory building method involves the use of conceptual theme analysis for identifying the core themes theorists use in describing and explaining organisational transformation. In subsequent chapters, core themes are analysed using the techniques of bridging and bracketing to derive a number of conceptual lenses. These lenses, and the relationships between them, form the central components for the integral metatheory. Having identified and described the basic set of conceptual lenses for transformation, the exemplar topic of organisational sustainability is used to show how the metatheory can be applied to a specific area of research. The final chapter evaluates the integral metatheory with some commonly used criteria for judging the results of conceptual research. A brief evaluation of the chief metatheoretical resource used in the study, i.e., AQAL metatheory, is also carried out. This thesis endeavours to contribute to the field of organisational, transformational and sustainability studies by i) developing a metatheoretical framework for the study of radical organisational change, ii) offering a comprehensive review of paradigms and theories of organisational transformation and their core explanatory concepts, and iii) proposing a more detailed metatheory building method which can make a significant contribution to the conceptual development of many fields within organisational studies.



### **Declaration of Authorship**

I declare that this thesis is an account of my own research and contains work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary institution. Publications that have drawn on the ideas contained in this thesis are listed in Appendix A.

Signature:.....Date:.....



## Acknowledgments

This thesis has had a long gestation period. It started life as a few diagrams hastily sketched out in a diary that soon became full of scribbled notes, arrows and circles. Over the years, these notes turned into numerous essays and then some articles. All through that period and on into the PhD itself, it has been my wonderful wife Barbara who has listened patiently and followed the convoluted trajectory of my ideas with grace and generosity. It is to her that these pages are dedicated with love and deep thanks.

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## **Abbreviations**

AQAL - All Quadrants, All Levels, All Lines, All States, All Types

CEO - Chief Executive Officer

CIT - Communications and Information Technology

IMP – Integral Methodological Pluralism

LL - Lower Left Quadrant

LR - Lower Right Quadrant

OT - Organisational Transformation

OTN – Organisational Transformation Network

OD - Organisational Development

SFOL - Sustainability-Focused Organisational Learning

SME – Small and medium sized enterprises

TD - Transorganisational Development

UR - Upper Right Quadrant

UL - Upper Left Quadrant

## Glossary

**AQAL:** Abbreviation for All Quadrants, All Levels, All Lines, All States, All Types. AQAL is a technical term for Ken Wilber's version of an integral (meta)theory.

**Conceptual lens:** One of the core conceptual characteristic of a theory. A conceptual lens is used by a theorists to explore, interpret, describe and explain some domain of social life. A theory or research paradigm usually employs several conceptual lenses.

**Construct:** A coherent and unified idea that brings together a number of concepts.

**Exemplar topic:** A particular subject area that is used to describe some conceptual system and exemplify how that system can be applied and how its basic elements relate to one another.

**Explanatory theme:** A theme that runs through a particular theory's empirical interpretations and theoretical explanations (in answering "how", "why", "what" and "when" research questions).

**Hierarchy:** The inter-ordinal, inter-level or vertical relationship between holons in a holarchy.

**Heterarchy:** The intra-ordinal, intra-level or horizontal relationship between holons in a holarchy.

**Holon:** A construct that refers to a nodal point in a holarchy and which can be considered simultaneously as a part and/or a whole.

**Holarchy:** A system of holons in hierarchical and heterarchical relationship.

**Integral lens:** An explanatory lens used in AQAL or which has been developed in metatheory building research that uses AQAL as a conceptual resource.

**Integral theory/model:** In general, any integrative approach that attempts to include multiple theoretical perspectives under one conceptual system. Ken Wilber's "integral theory" or "integral model" is his particular version of integral metatheory and is synonymous with the AQAL framework.

**Integral metatheory:** Conceptual research that uses other theories as its "data" and which uses other integrative approaches, e.g. the AQAL framework, as a metatheoretical resource.

**Lens category or grouping:** One of the categories of explanatory lenses, e.g. one based on holarchical, cyclical, bipolar, relational or perspectival patterns.

**Metatheory:** A conceptual system which has been developed through the analysis of other theories and which aims to accommodate their definitive conceptual elements in some systematic way.

**Metatheoretical tool:** Another term for conceptual lens.

**Middle-range theory:** Theory that lies between the large-scale metatheory and theory that is applicable to a limited range of empirical events.

**Multiparadigm review:** The phase of metatheory building that samples multiple paradigms to identify, for example, core concepts, metaphors, explanatory lenses and basic assumptions.

**Organisation:** A complex human system of social arrangements between individuals and groups to pursue shared goals through formal and informal exchanges with its environment.

**Organisational change:** Any ongoing and/or discontinuous variation in an organisation that results in its incremental growth, development, transformation, or the dynamic maintenance of its current state.



**Organisational sustainability:** The long-term and intergenerational capacity for an organisation to maintain its own viability and that of its physical, economic, and social environment.

**Organisational transformation:** Radical, discontinuous change that involves all the core aspects of an organisation and its members.

**Theory:** Any coherent statement that describes or explains an observed or experienced phenomenon.

**Theoretical framework:** A conceptual system that brings together a number of theory elements or constructs to describe or explain some event or class of events.

**Unit theories:** Theories analysed within a multiparadigm review to develop a metatheory and, more generally, middle-range theories that are concerned with explaining empirical phenomena.

*Those who have handled sciences have been either men of experiment or men of dogmas. The men of experiment are like the ant, they only collect and use; the reasoners resemble spiders, who make cobwebs out of their own substance. But the bee takes a middle course: it gathers its material from the flowers of the garden and of the field, but transforms and digests it by a power of its own. ... Therefore, from a closer and purer league between these two faculties, the experimental and the rational (such as has never yet been made), much may be hoped.*

Francis Bacon, Aphorism 95, “*The New Organum*”

## Chapter 1: The Need for Metatheory in Organisational Transformation

I do admit that at any moment we are prisoners caught in the framework of our theories; our expectations; our past experiences; our language. But we are prisoners in a Pickwickian sense; if we try, we can break out of our frameworks at any time. Admittedly, we shall find ourselves again in a framework, but it will be a better and roomier one; and we can at any moment break out of it again. (Popper, 1970, p. 86)

### 1. Introduction

This thesis takes a “big picture” look at the theories and models used for understanding and explaining organisational transformation. It endeavours to develop a more comprehensive and, as Popper puts it, “roomier” framework for explaining transformative change, a framework that is grounded in a multiparadigm appreciation for the many insights and contributions of organisational theorists to the study of transformation. The field of organisational transformation is characterised by the multitude of theories and perspectives that contend for attention from researchers, teachers, consultants and practitioners. This diversity stems from the variety of research paradigms and schools of thought that provide general orientations for exploring organisational phenomena. In the quote that opens this chapter, Karl Popper likens researchers and theorists to “prisoners caught in the framework of our theories”. He points out that these conceptual prisons are self-made and that we need to find ways to “break out” of them. The purpose of this study is to see how we might “break out” of the restrictions associated with particular research paradigms and theoretical orientations and discover “better” forms of explaining and understanding transformational events. In doing this, however, it is also important to recognise the contributions of extant theory and to integrate the store of knowledge that currently exists into whatever new vision or voluntary “prison” (as Popper puts it) we might end up building.

Integral metatheorising is an approach to metatheory building that does both of these things. It constructs new and larger conceptual frameworks that push the boundaries of our current conceptualisations and it does this while also accommodating the plurality of theoretical perspectives which characterise fields of social research such as organisational transformation.

Although it is receiving increasing attention in the scientific study of social phenomena (see, for example, Tsoukas & Knudsen, 2003), metatheory building is still a rather unknown form of conceptual research. Consequently, considerable space will be allocated to introducing the notion of metatheory and the major metatheoretical resource used in this study – the AQAL model of Ken Wilber (1999a, 2000a). The task ahead is to explore the potential of metatheorising for the development of an overarching approach to organisational transformation. The major research focus will be on the identification and description of the core explanatory factors in theories of

transformation and on the development of a metatheory that can accommodate those factors and their inter-relationships. The resulting metatheory will be described and its features discussed with application to a particular sub-topic within transformation studies, namely, organisational sustainability. The study concludes with an evaluative discussion of the proposed metatheory and some thoughts on avenues for further research.

The objectives of this current chapter are to i) specify the purpose and objectives of the study, ii) provide a summary of the content of chapters, iii) establish the need for an integrative approach to organisational transformation, and iv) consider the issue of postmodernism and metatheory building.

## 2. Purpose, Aim and Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to explore the possibility of developing a flexible and integrative framework for organisational transformation through the conceptual research approach of metatheorising (Ritzer, 2001). The intent here is to produce connective knowledge and to build large-scale metatheory rather than to simply review, critique or test extant theory. There is a famous story from the Indian subcontinent that can serve to illustrate the central purpose of this study.

### 2.1 *An illustrative parable*

The story goes that there were six learned, blind men who had heard about, but never encountered, a fabulous creature called an elephant (Saxe, 1963). They wanted to understand first-hand what this amazing beast was and how it might be described. The first learned man approached the elephant, felt its sturdy side and concluded the elephant to be very much like “a wall”, the second felt a tusk and said, “an elephant is like a spear”, the third happened to touch the trunk and decided that elephants were, “like snakes”, the fourth wrapped his arms around one leg and exclaimed, “the elephant is like a tree”, the fifth chanced upon the ear and said, “this marvel of an elephant is very like a fan”, and finally, the sixth seized upon the swinging tail and said, “the elephant is much like a rope”. And the story goes that these six learned men compared their findings and each argued that he had the most insightful understanding of this creature called an elephant.

And so these men of Indostan  
Disputed loud and long,  
Each in his own opinion  
Exceeding stiff and strong,  
Though each was partly in the right,  
And all were in the wrong!

The moral of the story, and its relevance to this study of organisational transformation, lies in the idea that each explanation contains and uncovers some partial truth about the nature of reality, and that together, these partialities have a chance of creating a more integrative and comprehensive picture of that reality. Left to their own devices, however, these partial understandings, while accurate within their own narrow fields, will always be incomplete and even misleading. Metatheorising is a form of conceptual research that recognises the validity of each theoretical perspective, while also discovering their limitations through accommodating them within some larger conceptual context. In this study, the elephant represents the complex and many-faceted worlds of organisational transformation; the conclusions of our “men of Indostan” are the many paradigms and theories of organisational transformation that have been proposed over the last three decades; and the integrative attempt to arrive at a more encompassing vision is the development of an integral metatheory for transformation.

## *2.2 Research Aim and Research Objectives*

The central aim of this study is to draw out the systematic connections and relationships between diverse theoretical approaches towards radical change and to systematise those into a flexible and accommodating integral metatheory for organisational transformation. This aim will be achieved through analysing many theoretical orientations, identifying their core conceptual themes and developing from these elements an integral metatheory for organisational transformation. A major resource for this task will be an approach to overarching theory building called the All Quadrants, All Levels framework (AQAL) (Wilber, 2005) or integral theory (Wilber, 2006).

Extant theories of transformation provide the “data” on which the metatheory building is based, and AQAL will act as a conceptual resource for guiding the analysis of that data when and as required. While metatheory building methods have been developed for finding connections at the “paradigm level” (see Lewis & Grimes, 1999), no detailed method currently exists for analysing conceptual similarities and differences at the finer level of a theory’s core concepts. Consequently, this study also aims to develop a more incisive qualitative research method for identifying the core conceptual elements of theories of transformation. In summary, the specific objectives of the study are to: i) develop a research method for metatheory building in organisational studies; ii) perform a multiparadigm review and analysis of the theoretical literature on organisational transformation to identify the core conceptual elements of the extant theories; iii) develop a metatheoretical framework for understanding and explaining organisational transformation; and iv) evaluate the metatheory and critically assess the AQAL model in the light of this study’s finding.

The intent here is not to replace the plurality of approaches with some super-theory of transformation. The intent is to develop a flexible conceptual metatheory for considering and situating multiple conceptual perspectives to organisational transformation within a more

encompassing and integrative metatheoretical context. This metatheory building endeavour, as the introductory quote from Popper attests, is best seen as part of an ongoing process, one that requires continuous evaluation and refinement. The purpose of such a task is essentially to “stretch the bounds of current thinking” (Jawahar & McLaughlin, 2001, p. 412) so that new understandings and explanations can be first constructed and then explored.

In pursuing these aims and objectives, it needs to be acknowledged that, for several decades now, there have been substantive criticisms mounted against “grand narratives”, “overarching theories” and what have been called “universalist metanarratives” (Deetz, 1996; Lyotard, 1984). Addressing these postmodern critiques is an important task for any metatheoretical research project and a following section in this chapter will offer a brief defence of metatheoretical research.

### 3. Chapter Outlines

Apart from describing the purpose, aim and objectives of the research, this present chapter (Chapter 1) discusses the need for an integrated metatheoretical approach towards organisational transformation. In presenting this rationale for building integrative metatheory, a number of associated issues such as paradigm diversity, metatheorising, theory building and the postmodern stance towards multiparadigm research will be considered. Chapter 2 delineates the domain of the study and discusses assumptions that underlie the study of change and transformation. Chapter 2 also looks at definitions which will help to set the domain boundaries of the study. There are many terms relating to change in organisations and this chapter provides clarifications for dealing with some of the semantic confusions that characterise discussions of organisational change and transformation.

Chapter 3 presents a review of relevant literature. One useful way of considering the development of theory in a particular field of research is to follow its historical development. Chapter 3 presents some historical background to the field of organisational transformation as a distinct field of research within change theory. Within this historical context, the major attempts at developing large-scale frameworks for the study of organisational transformation will be reviewed. Chapter 3 will also introduce the major theoretical resource for the metatheory building goals of the study - Wilber's AQAL framework. AQAL has been utilised in a wide range of scientific fields including organisational studies (see, for example, Landrum & Paul, 2005) and an overview of this research is presented. One element of AQAL that has particular importance for this study is the holon construct (Edwards, 2005). The holon construct provides a way of describing complex systems that captures both its analytical detail and its holistic qualities. Consequently, this chapter includes a detailed description of the holon and discusses its relevance to transformation in organisations.

The research method for this study is presented in Chapter 4. Metatheory building is one of the number of research methods that come under the umbrella of conceptual research methods (Young, 1995). Several approaches to building metatheory have emerged in the last three decades. For example, the multiparadigm approach of Burrell and Morgan (1979) has been an important contributor to metatheory building for organisational studies. The multiparadigm approach has been further developed by Gioia (1999; Gioia & Pitre, 1990) and by Lewis and her colleagues (Lewis & Grimes, 1999; Lewis & Kelemen, 2002). The sociologist George Ritzer (2001) has also developed his metatheorising categories which distinguish between types of metatheoretical activity. These methods, rather than attempting to synthesise other approaches into a single theory, instead seek to construct integrative frameworks for accommodating different orientations to some subject area within a metatheoretical framework. In Chapter 4, several such methods are compared and a more detailed procedure for constructing metatheory is proposed and applied to the current study of organisational transformation. This new metatheory building method offers a more detailed level of analysis than has previously been the case. This new method identifies the core conceptual themes of different theories and uses these, rather than the courser level of paradigm lenses, to construct the metatheory.

Chapter 5 reviews and analyses extant literature on organisational transformation. It is important in metatheory building that the domain of interest contain a conceptually rich and very diverse pool of research paradigms. This diversity is much in evidence for the study of organisational transformation. The theories included in the analysis were identified through a maximum variation sampling procedure. The selected theories were found by searching scientific literature databases and from previous multiparadigm reviews of organisational theories (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Lewis & Kelemen, 2002; Paulson, 2003). Theories were selected from many different paradigms including systems approaches, developmental models, postmodern approaches, process models, structural approaches, cultural theories, evolutionary models, the chaos and complexity theories, organisational learning, contingency theory and approaches that focus on organisational spirituality. The core themes from each theory within these paradigms are analysed and their chief characteristics described (a complete list of these themes and the theories and paradigms from which they were extracted is included in Appendix B). This material forms the basic conceptual “data” for deriving the core explanatory elements of the theories.

Using AQAL as a metatheoretical comparison, these elements are further refined into integral lenses which form the basis of the metatheory for organisational transformation. For example, theories within the learning paradigm link various approaches towards organisational learning with the transformational process. The shared conceptual elements of these perspectives on learning are brought together, thematically aligned and contrasted to develop a learning lens for transformation. Other conceptual lenses identified in this analysis are the stage-based development lens, transitional

process lens, agency-structure, interior-exterior, social mediation, perspectival approaches, micro-meso-macro lens, and the lens of transformation-translation.

Having developed a parsimonious set of conceptual lenses, Chapter 6 describes the basic relationships that exist within and between lenses. These relationships are identified with reference to the findings of the multiparadigm review as well as the relationships between the different elements of the AQAL framework. If a theory is to be parsimonious, its explanatory elements must be kept to a minimum and conceptual redundancy between those elements reduced as far as possible. However, a complex topic such as organisational transformation also requires comprehensiveness in its constituent factors. For example, if it is argued that change is not reducible to the actions of individuals or to the structural impact of collectives, then both must be included in the metatheoretical system. It is not only the relationships between lenses but also the internal relationship within lenses that is of interest here. These internal relationships refer to such things as the makeup of multilevel lenses, that is, how many levels does a particular lens possess, how do those levels relate to each other, what criteria are used in building up those levels. Identifying the essential relationship between and within the elements of a theory is one of the most important steps in the theory building and Chapter 6 investigates these issues in considerable detail.

With the core explanatory factors and their internal and external relationships analysed, an integrative metatheory is proposed in Chapter 7 that assembles these lenses and their relationships into a metatheoretical system. This is done by describing the metatheory with reference to an exemplar topic; a specific topic within organisational transformation that can demonstrate and exemplify the metatheory's attributes. The exemplar topic chosen here is organisational sustainability – a field of organisational transformation that has particular relevance to the transformational imperatives found within contemporary organisational environments.

Chapter 8 evaluates the strengths and limitations of the integral metatheory for organisational transformation according to several theory building criteria. This chapter also assesses whether the objectives of the study have been met. One of these objectives is to reconsider the attributes of the AQAL framework and this final chapter makes several recommendations for its subsequent revision. The chapter summarises the contributions of the study to metatheory building and describes some of the implications of the approach for theory development in the organisational change field. Some of the unique features of the metatheory are also discussed with regard to its theoretical and applied use. It will be argued throughout this study that bringing together diverse perspectives on a complex topic is not only useful for achieving a conceptual overview but also opens up the possibility for generating new theory and new knowledge at the applied level. Consequently, some directions for future research on organisational transformation are indicated.



## 4. The Need for an Integral Metatheory for Organisational Transformation

### 4.1 *The diversity of theories of transformation*

A considerable amount of theoretical and empirical research has been devoted to the topic of organisational transformation since it first became an identifiable field of research and theory development in the early 1980's. Since then there have been a large number of theories and models of transformation and yet little attention has been paid to the need for the integrative study of these diverse theories and their constituent constructs. As Farazmand points out (2003, p. 366): "The lack of systematic study and analysis of ... transformation theories in organisation theory and public management is striking".

Other transformation theorists have noted the diversity in definitions, constructs and theoretical frameworks and the lack of a coherent overview that might enable some fruitful dialogue among theorists working in this field. A recent study points out that (Lemak, Henderson & Wenger, 2004, p. 407)

... for all the attention, the field is not coherent; disagreements about basic definitions, fundamental frameworks and general values abound ... agreement occurs primarily around very general and often vague prescriptions. In fact most, areas of agreement ... while laudable, offer the consultant or the practitioner little guidance.

Although they point to the fragmentation and diversity of theoretical views on transformation, the authors contend that, "the concept of organisational transformation still has utility for those studying both organisation theory and strategy" (2004, p. 407). However, they propose that the idea of organisational transformation only has utility "if it is viewed through an appropriate theoretical lens, which we contend is systems theory" (2004, p. 407). This view, that there is only one appropriate theoretical lens for viewing organisational transformation, is at odds with the diversity of perspectives taken by theorists working in this complex field. On the contrary, transformation has been observed and analysed through a great many explanatory "lenses". As Poole has noted (1998, p. 47):

Perhaps the lack of definitive or widely accepted theoretical constructs dealing with the process of organisational transformation is a direct result of the variety of perspectives applied to the process.

However, the presence of diversity at one level does not mean that some sort of integration cannot be developed at a metatheoretical level - a level that can accommodate several theoretical lenses.

This diversity points to the need for metatheory building and to overarching models which focus on the development of the convergent connections between theories as well as their divergent differences.

#### 4.2 The need for (meta)theory building

Twenty years ago one of the first major publications on organisational transformation stated that the capacity for an organisation to survive in the future would be directly related to its ability to “pass through dramatic changes in its purpose, culture, function, and worldview” (Levy and Merry, 1986, p. 305). The same might be said for theories of organisations transformation. They will only remain relevant to the extent that they can offer explanations and sense-making frameworks that are flexible and adaptive. The forces of globalisation, digitalisation, strategic development, sustainability and changing stakeholder relationships have stimulated the development of numerous and diverse theories of transformational change. Clegg, Clarke and Ibarra (2001) point out that the plethora of theoretical views has implications for more connective forms of management practice in that there is a need to move to a perspective that can cope with “multiple management paradigms” (2001, p.32). Transforming environments call for theories and metatheoretical orientations that can help to understand and explain in an integrative way the diversity of answers to the “how”, “why”, “what” and “who” questions of radical change.

The multiplicity of theories of transformational change also points to the lack of a guiding philosophy that can affirm values, provide meaningful direction, raise consciousness and engender a deeper sense of humanity in pursuing transformational strategies within organisations. Transformation is not only about radically improving organisational effectiveness, it is also connected with understandings of deep purpose and profound meaning. These spiritual dimensions have been a notable feature of transformational studies since the mid-eighties (Adams, 1998) and they continue to have a role in many theories of radical change in organisations.

However, while a few key themes are still evident, there is growing fragmentation in organisational theory and this is exacerbating the lack of integrative research in transformation studies. In a recent review of the state of organisation theory, Watson came to the conclusion that (2006, p. 381):

There is little sign of a willingness to seek common ground among different groupings or camps within organization theory. ... This tendency, if anything, is worsening.

The lack of integrative theory building in organisational studies has been pointed out in such fields as strategic management (Camerer, 1985; Thomas & Pruett, 1993), organisational change (Dansereau, Yammarino & Kohles, 1999), operations management (Hughes, Price & Marrs, 1986; Meredith, 1993), human resource development (Swanson, 2000) and organisational transformation

(Chapman, 2002). At the same time, several authors have argued that when the theoretical basis of a particular field of organisational studies is fragmented there is a tendency to rely on empirical research methods and statistical analysis and to neglect the conceptual adequacy of theory. For example, Thomas and Pruett (1993, p. 3) suggest that research into strategic management, “has suffered from an inadequate theory base and sometimes mindless data mining and number crunching”. Bagozzi and Yi (1991) have also drawn attention to problems that occur when little consensus exists in a particular field of organisational studies. They argue that the development of theory in highly differentiated research contexts places great emphasis on “methodology”, “experimental design and statistical techniques” but gives little attention to the “theoretical underpinnings” of those methods and techniques. The fragmented state of theory development leads to, “disconnected research that does not contribute to overall understanding about human beings operate in an organisational setting” (Hartman, Yrle, White & Friedman, 1998, p. 727). As long ago as 1988, Dunphy and Stace commented that (1988, pp. 317-318):

A more encompassing descriptive model is needed, and also a normative model that offers broadly based assistance to organisations operating in the much more turbulent environment of post-industrial economies.

More recently, Newman (1999, p. 9) has pointed out that, although there are theories that can account for both incremental and radical change, there is “not much theory to explain why one occurs rather than the other”. Of course, this issue of the lack of integrative theories is not uncommon in the social sciences. Organisational studies, in particular, is a discipline that consists of many diverse perspective, theoretical frameworks and schools of thought (McKinley, Mone and Moon, 1999). In a discussion and review of the development of schools of organisation theory, McKinley, Mone and Moon note that (1999, p. 634) there is “a large body of literature” which:

calls attention to multiple, conflicting perspectives in organization studies, emphasizing the lack of an agreed-upon reference framework by which logical or normative inconsistencies between the perspectives could be reconciled.

This situation is particularly relevant to the study of organisational transformation. The lack of a “reference framework” is problematic for several reasons. First, there is the pedagogic issue of how teachers and students of organisational studies are to deal with the plethora of approaches to organisational change, development and transformation. Organisational change is complex and, to appreciate fully that complexity, students need exposure to a wide range of models and theories. However, some understanding of how these theories are connected is also essential and the pedagogical task should aim to include the diversity as well as the connectedness of theories through such aspects as shared assumptions, metaphors and explanatory concepts. Second, at the level of applied use of theories of transformational change, organisational practitioners and

consultants choose among many models for guiding their workplace interventions with often very little rationale for selecting one approach above another (Mingers, 2003a). Familiarity and training in a particular approach influences the choice of theoretical framework rather than the actual organisational transformation issue that needs to be addressed. Third, academics and researchers of transformation often specialise in one particular approach to change with limited communication occurring across paradigms (Schultz & Hatch, 1996). Theoretical and methodological knowledge becomes partmentalised and the capacity for the generation of multidisciplinary knowledge is reduced.

In the absence of connective frameworks, researchers develop their own theoretical systems. In the field of organisational change this has resulted in some theories possessing many conceptual overlaps and redundancies. Referring to the literature on the management of change, Forster (2005, p. 302) estimates that there are, “at least 40 models/frameworks of change management in this literature, although many of these echo each other and/or overlap to a large extent”. Grandori (2001) has spoken of the current state of conceptual fragmentation as a “balkanisation” where the plethora of theories cannot communicate with one another. She makes the point that, while some see this situation as evidence of the essential diversity of organisational reality, others see it as resulting from the lack of integrative knowledge. Grandori (2001, p.37) offers a middle way out of this debate:

On an intermediate ground, we may say that, even if we acknowledge that variety enhances creativity and learning, we should add that this holds true if differentiation is accompanied by some form of integration.

She argues for efforts at stimulating organisational research in theory development which “contributes to the growth of an integrated organisation science” (2001, p. 37). These comments are particularly relevant to literature on organisational change and transformation. There are few other topics within organisational studies that are characterised by such diversity in theoretical orientations and where there is such an urgent need for the integration of knowledge.

There can be, of course, different approaches even to this metatheory building activity. Some aim to synthesise vying theories into a common “integrated” framework that provides a single scientific language and concept base (Pfeffer & Fong, 2005). This type of “theoretical monism” (McLennan, 2002) was once the conventional ideal in the social and human sciences but has, in recent decades, come under sustained criticism. In contrast to this monistic approach to integration, the orientation taken here is to offer a metatheoretical approach that allows for diversity and which comes in the tradition of researchers such as Burrell and Morgan (1979). This perspective towards integration recognises the contributions of diverse theories and accommodates their core conceptual elements within a coherent metatheoretical framework.

Such an approach is both analytical and holistic but not monistic. It is analytical in that it tries to identify numerous explanatory factors that can provide insights into the details of how, why, and when change occurs. It is holistic in that it locates those factors within an integrative conceptual system where the focus is on building connections between extant theories. It is not monistic in that integral metatheorising is appreciative of the diversity of viewpoints that pluralism generates (Edwards, 2007). This type of metatheory building offers a complementary role to the burgeoning diversity of theories and the theory testing research that produces that diversity.

#### *4.3 The need for a specifically integral approach*

The metatheory construction process used in this study does not start from a conceptual blank slate. The major metatheoretical resource will be an innovative approach to social change known as integral theory or, more technically, as the AQAL (All Quadrants, All Levels) framework. Although there are many large-scale frameworks which might be described as coming under the broad rubric of the term “integral” (Cacioppe & Edwards, 2005a), AQAL has been the most broadly applied in the social sciences. AQAL has been developed by the metatheorist Ken Wilber (1999, 2000). A more detailed rationale for the adoption of AQAL will be presented in Chapter 4. However, it is timely at this early stage to point out that this particular metatheoretical approach has several qualities that warrant its specific application to the field of organisational transformation. The AQAL framework:

- has been represented in organisational transformation literature since the beginning of research in this field (Adams, 1984; Bartunek, 1988; Ford & Backoff, 1988; Levy & Merry, 1986);
- has been shown to have powerful integrative capacities in organisational contexts (Landrum & Gardner, 2005, Volckmann, 2005);
- can be used to assess the valid aspects as well as limits of other models (Wilber, 2003b);
- incorporates a multi-paradigm multi-level basis (Edwards, 2005; Paulson, 2003);
- recognises cultural factors as genuine sources of transformation in organisations (Cacioppe, 2000a, 2000b).

An AQAL-informed approach to change also brings with it a number of features that, integral theorists would argue, are foundational to any social occasion (Esbjörn-Hargens & Wilber, 2006). These features include a capacity to recognise the developmental nature of social life, the inclusion of subjective interiors as well as objective exteriors in theory building, the use of individual as well as collective scales of focus, and an appreciation for the multimodal nature of social reality. These aspects of social metatheorising will also be encountered in the theorising of other researchers and thinkers who have developed explanatory approaches to organisational transformation. The specific need that this study addresses is how to assemble such divergent theoretical elements into a

metatheoretical framework that can accommodate the core insights of the extant range of theories within an overarching pluralist system.

The purpose of identifying and drawing on metatheoretical resources in multiparadigm research is to provide a position from which to “explain how different theoretical approaches [and their explanatory themes] might be related” (Weaver & Gioia, 1994, p. 566). AQAL possesses qualities that make it eminently suited to this task. It has been used as a metatheory to assess the contributions of many different theoretical viewpoints from a position that acknowledges the multiplicity of truths that different perspectives reveal. The framework also displays the capacity to critically assess the limitations and inherent biases that all theoretical positions entail. The insights of one tradition of organisational study are often not easily translated into those of another. In situating theories within a broader framework, however, new insights and understandings become apparent and new points of association can be discovered that were formerly hidden (Gioia & Pitre, 1990). The desire to uncover connecting concepts and explanatory principles has been part of the general aim of organisational transformation since its inception (McKnight, 1984) and Wilber’s ideas have been applied within this field from the early 1980’s. AQAL’s metatheory building qualities make it eminently suited for the resourcing role that it plays in this study. Metatheoretical frameworks have, however, been heavily criticised on a number of fronts in recent decades. In particular, the rise of postmodernism has seen a heightened concern over the basic goal of metatheoretical studies and these concerns are also present within organisation studies.

## **5. Postmodernism and Metatheorising**

A definitive feature of postmodernism is its highly critical stance towards integrative and metatheoretical approaches to scholarship. In fact, Lyotard (1984) famously defines postmodernism as “incredulity towards metanarratives”. While a full treatment of the postmodern view on overarching models and metanarratives is beyond the scope of this study, it is important that key aspects of this critique be acknowledged and that a position regarding them is stated from the outset.

The debate between metatheoretical and postmodern approaches is well represented in the critical response of communication theorist Stanley Deetz to the multiparadigm work of Burrell and Morgan (1979). Deetz (1996) outlines a number of arguments from the postmodern position that raise important questions regarding the development of metatheories. These arguments are representative of many criticisms raised by postmodern writers against metatheoretical enterprises. Deetz says that metatheories: i) build totalising accounts that do not appreciate the plurality of scientific and cultural perspectives; ii) exclude marginalised theoretical voices; iii) neglect local explanations and theories in favour of universal ones, iv) lack a critical approach to power and the

dominance of some research perspectives over others, and v) undervalue the situational and contextualised nature of knowledge.

### 5.1 Metatheory as totalising

Metatheory can be characterized as an attempt to totalise the diversity of explanatory accounts into a synoptic model and that this ignores differences rather than integrates them. This synthesizing response to the fragmentation of organizational sciences is evidenced in the work some modernist theorists (Pfeffer & Fong, 2005) who attempt to find a single theory that can unify a field of research. For these theorists, integration is regarded as a process of developing one unified account that explains all or most of the empirical events within a certain domain. However, this is not what metatheory building is about and the idea of integration has a very different intent within a metatheorising context (Ritzer, 2001). Like postmodernists, metatheorists recognize the validity of the plurality of voices that exist within any domain of scientific inquiry. It does not attempt to synthesis that diversity into a homogenised, single theory, but to build accommodating frameworks that find connections and points of location for situating the plurality of theories. Integration in the metatheory building context does not mean to create one super-theory but rather to bring many different viewpoints together so that their strengths and limitations can be recognized. It is true that this is a constructive process of developing overarching views, and might therefore be regarded as totalising in some form, but as Weinstein and Weinstein rhetorically ask in response to Skocpol's (1987) attack on metatheory:

What grounds could there be for claiming that there is something wrong with stepping back from the fray with a reflective gaze and mapping the field of play? (1991, p. 142)

The intent of metatheorising is to honour the contributions of different researchers and research schools through “mapping” the unique contributions of theories rather than supplanting them with a single super-theory.

Ritzer (2001) adds a further distinction between, what he sees as, valid and scientific forms of overarching metatheory and other, more speculative, varieties. He differentiates between those forms of overarching metatheory ( $M_O$ ) that are built on the conceptual elements that constitute scientific theory and unscientific forms of speculative big pictures ( $O_M$ ) that are based on *ad hoc* grand speculations. Ritzer points out that  $O_M$  is not really a metatheory since it is not built on extant theory and it is unscientific in that there is “no way of ascertaining the validity of the process through which the overarching perspective came into existence” (1991a, p. 6). Ritzer recognises that both forms of grand theorising might be challenged on the grounds of totalisation but the charge has much more relevance to the imaginative speculation that characterizes  $O_M$  than the conceptual analyses performed in  $M_O$  studies.

### 5.2 Metatheory as marginalising

A postmodern epistemology seeks out a decentered and marginalised position from which to make its contributions to knowledge. It claims that metatheory attempts to do the opposite by proposing a dominant unified central position that marginalises lesser voices and theories that have been neglected by the functionalist mainstream. Weinstein and Weinstein (1991) argue that this is a mischaracterisation of metatheory. In contrast to the postmodern depiction of metatheory as further marginalising certain theoretical views, Weinstein and Weinstein argue that (1991, p.143-4):

... metatheory, by taking up a reflexive position toward theory, tends to level the playing field by treating less popular or less successful theoretical alternatives as elements in the field, granting them legitimacy by analysing their structure and presuppositions.

By definition, metatheory considers the broad range of extant theory that a particular domain of research comprises. In so doing, it brings the views from the periphery into consideration, and does so consciously. For example, one of the main findings of the metatheoretical work of Burrell and Morgan was the dominance of functionalist theories in organisational studies. This, in part, led to a greater interest in interpretive theories of organisation. The overarching intent of metatheory might actually support a more democratic hearing of the diversity of theoretical voices.

Simply by its totalising practice it lends legitimacy to the socially (though not necessarily intellectually) weak in their struggle against the strong. ... Its admission of multiplicity and its commitment to study it enhance theoretical pluralism and favour, though do not insure or presuppose, theoretical egalitarianism (Weinstein & Weinstein, 1991, p.144)

In short, the criticism of metatheory as marginalizing certain theories is misdirected because any systematic process of reflection ultimately raises awareness about the range of theories and their distinctive insights.

### 5.3 Metatheory as universalising and neglecting the local

Deetz (1996) has been particularly critical of metatheory as focussing on universalist aims and neglecting local realities. The criticism here is that the lived realities of people experiencing organisational life become lost in the attempt to find universal patterns and regularities. While it is true that metatheory operates at a deep level of abstraction, it does not follow that such work results in the depersonalisation of organisational life. Abstraction can also uncover the lived realities that people share. Again, Weinstein & Weinstein make a salient point here (1991, p. 144):



Abstraction always is effected at the sacrifice of complexity, but that sacrifice can lead as well to clarity of insight as to distortion. The question here is not one of whether metatheory should be undertaken at all, but one of distinguishing between good and bad examples of metatheory.

Any scientific process of that involves description, analysis, or inquiry into complexity will always entail some degree of abstraction. It is not abstraction in itself that is problematic for metatheory building, it is the degree to which metatheory is solidly based on theory.

#### *5.4 Metatheory as uncritical*

Given that metatheory is subject to the dominant theories and research paradigms of the day, postmodernism argues that overarching models simply reproduce the hegemonic relationships that exist in any contemporary social structure. In contrast to this, however, Colomy (1991) argues that one of the most important capacities of metatheory is its “adjudicative capacity”. That is, the ability of metatheorists to critically analyse other theory and metatheory whatever their social standing. In particular, this adjudicative capacity will often be aimed at the dominant paradigms within a particular field of research because of their unawareness of more peripheral perspectives. Weinstein and Weinstein point out that (1991, p. 144):

Metatheory ... critiques a dominant ideology of disciplinary positivism by naming it and giving it a place within the field of metatheoretical objects. In doing so it deprives disciplinary positivism of the social vantage that it gained by remaining implicit.

Gioia and Pitre (1990) support this argument by pointing out that is only by developing a “meta-paradigmatic position” that one can bring to consciousness the relationship between dominant and marginal views. Rather than simply reproducing dominant theoretical ideologies, metatheory undermines them through this reflexive raising of consciousness about the relationships between theories. And this is, in fact, why several metatheorists have argued that postmodernism is itself a metatheoretical enterprise (Zhao, 2001). It is interesting to note that Deetz’s criticism of the Burrell and Morgan metatheory itself proposes a competing metatheory based on alternative generalising dimensions for distinguishing between theories (see Deetz, 1996). Integrative metatheory building shares with post-modernism a critical position towards mainstream theory. Where that position differs is in its constructive rather than deconstructive emphasis.

#### *5.5 Metatheory as generalising*

Postmodernism argues that metatheory undervalues the situational and contextualised nature of knowledge and ignores the variety and diversity of real events (Wikipedia, 2007). The proposition

goes that, in attempting to generalise beyond the particularities of time and place, metatheory loses sight of the relational, the relative and the situational. There is no question that metatheory attempts to find general patterns and connections that go beyond the local conditions of phenomena. However, this does not necessarily mean that it is not concerned with particulars or that it is foundationalist in the narrow sense of trying to establish some ultimate truth. On the contrary, Weinstein and Weinstein argue that, because metatheory is founded on the analysis of extant theory, which is in a constant state of flux, metatheory cannot be thought of as foundationalist. Their view is that metatheory does not attempt to close off prematurely the scientific “conversation” in pursuit of some final understanding. They propose that (1991, p. 140):

An alternative to closure is a hyper-reflexivity, whereby metatheory claims that no extant foundationalism has achieved general assent from sociologists or has successfully established its truth, and that unless one does either or both the way is open to pursue a wide range of inquiries into the structure(s) of extant theories.

Organisational metatheory does not investigate the particulars of empirical realities as they occur in organizational contexts. What it does do is situate and contextualize theories themselves within the conceptual landscape of explanatory frameworks, core assumptions and paradigm debates. Weinstein and Weinstein argue that metatheory helps to contextualise fields of research through its capacity to (1991, p. 142-3)

... relativise the pretension of any of the players on that field – that is, to make each of the players aware that there is a context in which they play that outruns adequate description in terms of their own particular theoretical categories.

Far from not recognising the influence of social factors, metatheory helps social researchers to contextualize their own work and to relate it to the broad developments that characterize their own research disciplines and theoretical orientations.

Critics of the integrative approaches to social theory have argued that such endeavours result in bland and generalised overviews (Skocpol, 1991). The attempt to develop grand narratives and over-arching models has been seen as a type of rationalism that is far removed from empirical reality and from the pragmatic concerns of organisational life. While big picture viewpoints can suffer from a lack of grounded theorising, the benefits and contributions of integrative models have also been underestimated. Burrell and Morgan, in their seminal book on the multi-paradigm approach to organisational analysis, state that it is only through the process of taking multiple perspectives that the theorist can fully appreciate and understand the assumptions inherent in his/her own viewpoints (1979, p. ix).

In order to understand different points of view it is important that a theorist be fully aware of the assumptions upon which his own perspective is based. Such an appreciation involves an intellectual journey which takes him outside the realm of his own familiar domain. It requires that he become aware of the boundaries which define his perspective. It requires that he journey into the unexplored. It requires that he becomes familiar with paradigms which are not his own. Only then can he look back and appreciate in full measure the precise nature of his starting point.

The real value of metatheory building lies in its capacity to link what were previously considered as unconnected concepts and to situate them will in a more integrative conceptual space. Such a process is inherently generalising because it connects local theorising with a more encompassing network of ideas. This is what Burrell and Morgan did when they looked at the “cross linkages” between rival intellectual traditions. In so doing, they developed not only their well-known grid for classifying paradigms of organisational research, but also an analytical tool that could point to new areas of investigation.

#### *5.6 Metatheory as a form of postmodern research*

This discussion has argued that metatheory has been poorly characterised by the postmodern critique of overarching approaches to social research. Ritzer (1991a) has suggested that these characterisations are often based on a lack of knowledge about what metatheorising involves. Metatheorists themselves have not articulated their methods and intents clearly and hence, “[c]ritics will continue to be unclear about precisely what they are attacking with the result that their criticisms will often miss the mark.” (Ritzer, 1991a, p.314). The criticisms of postmodernism are particularly misleading because, as this above discussion suggest, metatheory itself can be regarded as part of the postmodern concern for reflexivity, consciousness raising, contextualisation and social criticism in doing social research. As Weinstein and Weinstein put it, metatheory is “a work ... of a post-modern mind” (1991, p. 148). Consequently, this study’s aim of developing a metatheory for organisational transformation can be seen as part of a contemporary, and perhaps even postmodern, approach to 21<sup>st</sup> century organisational theory (Küpers & Edwards, 2007). The approach taken here is one that acknowledges and supports pluralism and diversity in theory development while also seeking integrative forms of knowledge.

### **6. Summary**

This chapter has introduced the thesis topic, described its purpose, aim, objectives and provided a rationale for the study. Detailed summaries of chapter summaries have also been presented. Particular attention has been paid to the issue of the relationship between postmodernism and metatheorising. Rather than seeing metatheory as antithetical to postmodern concerns, the position

taken here is that pluralistic metatheory can be regarded as a form of postmodernism, one that actually complements the localising and decentering concerns of many postmodernist positions. Metatheorising recognises the plurality of theoretical voices but takes a convergent approach to dealing with that diversity rather than a divergent one.

The next chapter outlines the research domain in more detail and presents some definitions of core terms to assist in that task. The chapter sets the scope of the study and describes the criteria used for deciding which theories should be included in the multiparadigm review.

## Chapter 2: Research Domain and Definitions

In the literature to date, a surprising tolerance has been shown towards the diversity of guises that ‘transformation’ can assume. Given the prominence of the term ‘organisational transformation’ in consulting practice and in both practitioner and academic literature, we might expect to find greater curiosity about its usage. (Tosey & Robinson, 2002, p. 108)

### 1. Objectives

The objectives for this chapter are to define basic terms and to outline the study’s domain of inquiry. The theoretical diversity found within the field of organisational transformation brings with it a number of definitional and domain-setting problems. On the definitional side, there are problems which are due to the large number of idiosyncratic and overlapping terms, their vagueness and the consequent difficulties with definitions (French, Bell, & Zawacki, 2005). These definitional vagaries lead to problems in domain specification. As several researchers have pointed out, defining key terms also helps to set the domain boundaries for the theory building process (Torraco, 2002; Van de Ven, 2005). It is through defining organisational transformation that the domain boundaries for including or excluding theories will be identified (Paterson, Thorne, Canam & Jillings, 2001).

Defining broad concepts within a theory building context highlights the need to retain a degree of tolerance for their level abstractness and generalisability (Abrams & Hogg, 2004). Hence, this type of research requires a balance between demarcation efforts aimed at clearly defining a term and integrative intents that preserve that term’s inclusiveness and capacity to encompass other concepts. Kaplan (1964) refers to this as a balance between “semantic openness”, the inclusiveness of a concept, and “operational vagueness”, the inherent ambiguity of a concept. In discussing this issue of balancing definitional precision and semantic openness, Van de Ven points out that the demand for exactness can prematurely close off the development of ideas. He advises that, “[t]olerance of ambiguity is important for scientific inquiry” (2007, p. 117). The strength of using broad-ranging and highly abstract concepts lies in their capacity to provide an inclusive perspective on what would otherwise be mutually excluding positions. These inclusive perspectives are called “orienting generalisations” (Wilber, 1996, p. viii) and they are developed through “orienting strategies” (Wagner & Berger, 1985) which allow the researcher to investigate the “construction and evaluation” of the metatheory building outcome.

Providing orientation is a particularly useful quality of metatheorising. The following chapter attempts to provide orienting definitions that do not sacrifice the important properties of inclusion and scope. Terms are dealt with under three headings, i) organisational transformation, ii)

metatheorising, and iii) other specific terms. In the course of providing these definitions, the domain and scope of the study are identified.

## **2. Organisational Transformation**

In this section, a formal definition of organisational transformation is presented. Transformation is distinguished from other forms of organisational change and this helps to set the boundary conditions for the metatheory building goals of the study.

### *2.1. Organisational change and transformation*

Organisational change is an important concept that lies at the heart of much organisation theory. Organisational change theorists Van de Ven and Poole point out that organisational change has often been defined as “an empirical observation of differences in time of a social system [or organisation]” (1988, p.36). This empirical approach to defining change has three essential aspects, i) change is observable, ii) change is not merely an array of differences but an alteration in the same entity over time, and iii) change affects key organisational members, systems, activities, values and beliefs. While change itself may be observable, understanding and explaining change is also a matter of making inferences and of presuming relationships between organisational characteristics that may not be directly observable. To this point Van de Ven and Poole say (1988, p. 36):

While organisational change can be directly observed empirically, it is important to emphasise that the process of change is a latent inference, that is, it is a theoretical explanation for the pattern of changes observed.

This inferential aspect of explaining change means that theories of change need to include explanations, not only of observables, but also of capacities that are deduced from those observations. This leads to the definitions of change as something that is experienced and subjectively undergone as well as objectively observable (Badham & Garrety, 2003).

Another point of divergence for definitions of change has to do with the issue of substantive versus process views of change (Chia, 1999). A substantive view sees change as something that occurs to structures. According to this approach change is a “transitory phase which is necessary for bridging the various stages of an evolutionary process” (Chia, 1999, p. 215). The process view sees structure itself as a dynamic process where change is normative and there is no fixed substance. Here, “transition is the ultimate fact” (Chia, 1999, p. 218). The dualism of process and structure is a recurring theme through the change literature (Chia, 2002). The approach taken here is that theories of change need to accommodate both objective and subjective, substantive structural views as well as dynamic processual views. Structure and process are not necessarily exclusive of each

other and both the “metaphysics of substance/presence” and of “change/process” must be included to develop an integrative account for change and transformation (Chia, 1999, 217).

Organisational transformation can be defined as a subset of the broader field of change theories in the same way that any transformative event can be regarded as a particular instance of a more general class of change. Transformation is “a very special type of change ... All change does not constitute ‘transformation’” (Flamholtz & Randle, 1998, p. 8). Although there are many different definitions of organisational transformation (see, for example, Beach, 2006; Fletcher, 1990; French, Bell & Zawacki, 2005; McNulty & Ferlie, 2004; Torbert, 1989a), a number of shared components can be identified and, together, these form a strong definitional base. These definitive components are discontinuity, adaptability, whole-system change, multidimensionality and multilevel quality. These can be briefly described as follows. Organisational transformation is discontinuous in that it involves a qualitative shift towards a more adaptive form of organising which includes all levels (micro, meso, and macro) and all major operational domains (dimensions) of the organisation. It is a systemic process involving both the visible, objective aspects and the invisible, subjective aspects of individuals and groups; a process that empowers people. These elements are succinctly captured by McNulty and Ferlie (2004, p. 1392) in their listing of the indicators of organisational transformation:

The [organisational transformation] model consists of the following indicators of transformation: multiple and interrelated changes across the system as a whole; the creation of new organisational forms at a collective level; the development of multilayered changes which impact upon the whole system, at unit and individual level; the creation of changes in the services provided and in the mode of delivery; the reconfiguration of power relationships (especially the formation of new leadership groups); the development of new culture, ideology and organisational meaning. Only when all six criteria have been fulfilled is it possible to talk of a complete organisational transformation.

The idea of the transformation to a new organisational form or level is pivotal in conceptualising this type of change. It is not only that there are significant improvements in organising but that radically new systems of identity and function are attained. There is a movement from one distinctive form of organising to another. The previously dominant form of organisational identity and structure is supplanted by the whole-system adoption of a new one. And this movement occurs repeatedly through an organisation’s life span. In her review of practitioners’ understandings of organisational transformation Beverley Fletcher notes that (1990, p. 7) “the process does not end with the emergence of a new form, but that it involves a continual flow from one form to another”.

Another important characteristic of transformational change approaches is the inclusion of both microlevel, personal and macrolevel organisational transformation. The personal level is seen in the fundamental realignment of management and employee attitudes (Tischler, Biberman & Alkhafaji, 1998), consciousness (Druhl, Langstaff & Monson, 2001), motivation and beliefs (Green & Butkus, 1999) and spirituality (Neal & Biberman, 2004). The collective pole of this organisational spectrum requires all levels - the individual, the group and the whole organisation - to “reframe”, to alter to a significant extent their way of thinking, experiencing and behaving (Chapman, 2002, p. 18):

In transformational change, every person affected by the change is a change agent to the extent that his or her personal involvement in reframing contributes to a successful outcome, supplemented by involvement in structural and other changes.

A final characteristic of transformation relates to the inherent mystery that some theorists see as pervading all transformational events. Several authors have pointed out that one of the most definitive aspects of deep change is, paradoxically, its inexplicable nature (Egri & Frost, 1991; Lichtenstein, 1997; Weitzel & Had, 2001). The transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly is an apt analogy for the essential mystery that lies at the heart of authentic forms of radical organisational change. The biological metamorphosis from chrysalis (pupa) to adult butterfly (imago) is still full of mystery to biologists and it parallels the often inexplicable nature of organisational transformation. There will always be a dimension of this type of change that challenges our understandings. In an article entitled, “Grace, magic and miracles: A ‘chaotic logic’ of organizational transformation”, Lichtenstein (1997) reports on interviews with three major theorists of organisational transformation (Peter Senge, Bill Torbert and Ellen Wingard) and they all refer to the ultimate ineffability of the transformative event. Some theorists introduce the language of spirituality and mystical experience to convey this aspect of transformation (see, for example, Benefiel, 2003; Cacioppe, 2000a, 2000b; Neal & Biberman, 2003; Pava, 2004) and this theme of mystery and spirituality is an important one for many approaches to defining transformation.

In summary, organisational transformation is defined here as discontinuous change that involves subjective and objective aspects of the whole, multilevel organisational system and which results in a radical multidimensional reconfiguration of culture, systems and structures. Consequently, theories that come within the domain of interest of this study define organisational transformation as: i) a discontinuous process that results in some type of qualitative change that, ii) occurs across multiple levels of the organisation and which, iii) involves all of the core domains of organisational life.



## 2.2 Transformation and translation

Many other change-related terms are used synonymously with transformation. McHugh, for example, uses the term “radical change” interchangeably with transformation. She makes the point that transformation is radical, discontinuous change (2001, p.25):

Radical change is revolutionary – it is discontinuous, showing a decisive break with the past. Radical change is reflected in changes of strategy, organisational size, organisational systems and organisational behaviour. In other words, organisational transformation is the product or outcome of radical change.

We see here that the definitive elements of discontinuity and whole-system change are present in radical as in transformative change. Apart from radical change, other terms commonly used synonymously with transformation are deep change, revolutionary change, qualitative change, gamma change, second-order change and paradigmatic change. While there are nuances between these varying terms, the common element between them the idea of a qualitative shift, leap or dramatic emergence into a new stage of organising.

These terms and their antonyms are frequently used to describe the contrast between transformation and other, non-transformative, types of change. For example, transformation is contrasted with translational change. Where transformation is about radical shifts, translation is about the ongoing transactions that maintain an organisation’s stable functioning and coherent identity. Wilber (1983) calls this type of incremental change “translational change”. This distinction has been applied to organisation theory by Ford and Backoff (1988, p. 105). They describe transformation as occurring between “vertical dimensions” of organising while “[m]ovements within hierarchical levels are horizontal movements and are termed *translations*”. Figure 2.1 shows this distinction between transformation and translation. The figure gives a stylised representation of these movements. Transformation is never a simple, progressive movement from one level to another, but always involves complex transitional tracks that are idiosyncratic to each organisation (Greenwood & Hinings, 1988).

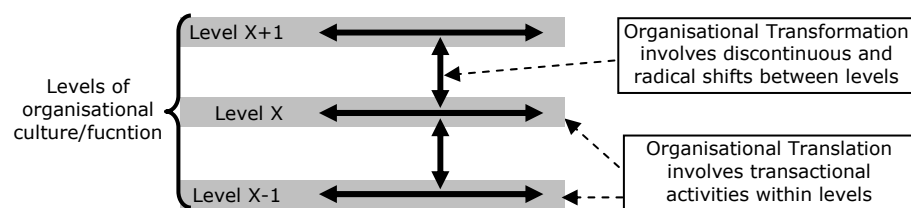


Figure 2.1: Transformational and translational change

Ford and Backoff see “horizontal or translative” change as alterations that occur within the structures and systems that pertain to a particular form of organising. Translative growth is focused

on the integration, stabilisation and balancing processes and structures within one level of organisational identity and operation. “Translations, therefore, are concerned with morphostasis” (Ford & Backoff, 1988, p. 106). Table 2.1 lists some terms used synonymously with transformational and translational change by numerous theorists over almost five decades of research. It is important to recognise that, because translational change is ongoing and supports the stability and coherence of organisational forms, it plays an important role in the transformational process. Consequently, any integrative approach to transformation will need to accommodate some account of translational change.

Table 2.1: Theories of transformational and translational change

Translational Change	Transformational Change	Theorist
step-by-step and by small degrees	comprehensive change in fundamentals	Lindbloom (1959)
maintain norms and standards	create new values system	Vickers (1965)
modest adjustments	revolutionary organisational practices	Greiner (1972)
linear quantitative	non-linear qualitative	Putney (1972)
rational change within current values	radical change to new values	Grabow & Heskin (1973)
additive improvements	revolutionary goals	Gerlack & Hines (1973)
homeostasis	radical transformational	Skibbens (1974)
change for functional fit	paradigm change for new worldview	Sheldon (1980)
continuous quantitative growth	qualitative emergence of new forms	Carneiro (1981)
a shift in content	a shift in context	Davis (1982)
evolution, incremental change	revolutionary change, quantum change	Miller (1982)
incremental, piecemeal change	multifaceted, concerted change	Miller & Friesen (1980)
constant learning	periodic learning	Fiol & Lyles (1985)
first-order change	second-order change	Levy & Merry (1986)
evolution (low degree of change activity)	revolution (high degree of change activity)	Pettigrew (1987)
incremental change, evolutionary change	transformative, revolutionary change	Dunphy & Stace (1988)
micro-evolutionary	macro-evolutionary	Kanter, Stein & Jick (1992)
convergent change	divergent change	Romanelli & Tushman (1994)
Continuous	episodic	Weick & Quinn (1999)
effective change	essential transformation	Cacioppe, 2000a&b
Linear	non-linear	Owen, 2000
first-order	second-order	Chapman, 2002
incremental change - small alterations	fundamental change – risky shifts	Waage & Torok (2003)

### 2.3 Transformation and Development

The transformation-translation distinction is also relevant to the differences that many theorists draw between organisational transformation and organisational development. Where transformation is discontinuous and involves the whole system, organisational development is about translational improvements that can be targeted to specific areas, aspects and functions within an organisation. Adams, also invoking the distinction made by Wilber, argues that both types of change are necessary for the adaptive development of an organisation (1984, p. xi).

We should avoid getting into OT [organisational transformation] versus OD [organisational development] debates, since they do not represent an either/or polarity. ... Organisations need both. While OD develops or enhances what is, there is a sense of discontinuity and irreversibility about OT. Ken Wilber, in *A Sociable God*, provides a useful

metaphor. He likens translation (development) to moving the furniture around on the floor and transformation to moving the furniture to a new floor.

The relationship between organisational transformation and organisational development will be further discussed in the following chapter. For the moment, it is enough to point out that development is more concerned with the improvement of translational capacities, that is, with those changes that maintain the current values, mission, structures and systems of the organisation, and which may result in localised development but not in whole-system transformation.

#### *2.4 Transformation and growth*

Sometimes the growth associated with dramatic increase in some major organisational characteristic, such as productivity, market share or net profits is deemed to be a type of organisational transformation. That is not the position taken in this study and a strong distinction is made here between expansive growth in economic variables and transformative change. Although it is part of the transformation story, economic growth is not specifically the goal of such change. Transformation refers to a process where a qualitatively different level of collective identity and functioning is achieved at the organisational level. This may include economic growth but, in itself, a dramatic increase in profits, market share, productivity, or any other economic indicator of growth does not indicate transformational change. Radical changes in organisational culture, mission, governance, and structure will also need to be present for transformation to occur. As Fisher and Torbert (1991, p. 141) point out:

Transformation involves developing commitment to a new vision along with increased trust and capacity for learning. It is a process so comprehensive - affecting values, role modelling, reward systems, selection criteria, structure and spatial arrangements - that it should be understood as culture change.

Transformation is about qualitative or radical development and can be seen as a vertical movement from one level of identity, behaviour, awareness, or organising, to another. In contrast, growth, especially as seen within an economic context, has more to do with metric increase or linear expansion. Transformation can often take place alongside economic growth, as shown in the dramatic development of transitional economies in Eastern Europe (Newman, 2000). However, significant growth can also occur without transformative change taking place. The same values, organisational ethos and systems can remain in place even with significant changes in economic outcomes for the organisation. In fact, as we will see in a later chapter, some theorists hold that dramatic growth in the economic aspects of an organisation can actually reinforce the predominant worldviews and stultify whole-system transformation. As a certain way of organising and producing becomes more successful and entrenched within an organisations behaviour and

culture, it correspondingly grows more resistant to change and inattentive to the environmental cues that signal that change is required (Kets De Vries & Balazs, 1999).

### 2.5 Transformation and mergers, acquisitions and takeovers

Transformation has also been associated with the corporate activities of mergers, acquisitions and takeovers (Daniel, David & Gregory, 1997). These forms of corporate activity often result in dramatic changes in the size of organisations, the form of organisational structures, restructured labour forces and significant economic impacts on markets. However, these activities are more concerned with indicators of economic expansion than with values, worldviews or fundamental changes in organisational cultures. In fact, some have argued that the “mergers and acquisitions” phenomena can be, in many cases, a regressive form of organisational change rather than a progressive and transformational one (Hoffman, Frederick & Petry, 1989). The following view from Jean Bartunek, one of the first to carry out empirical research on organisational transformation, is representative of this view.

Some [transformations] are partly the result of mergers and acquisitions ... These types of changes end up being by definition transformations, changing organizations' understanding of themselves. ... I think the political, economic, and social situation in the country right now is extremely conducive to that kind of situation and absolutely not at all to my ideal of a desirable transformation ... I'm talking about a mass negative transformation happening in most organizations, with a few people getting rich from it and lots of people losing. (Bartunek cited in Fletcher, 1990, p.105)

Mergers and acquisitions are transformations concerned with economic expansion rather than with any holistic renewal or paradigm shift in values, forms of governance, organisational identity or personal consciousness. While theorists working in the fields of organisational transformation, organisational development and organisational expansion (economic growth) may use the term transformation, they do so with very different points of view in mind.

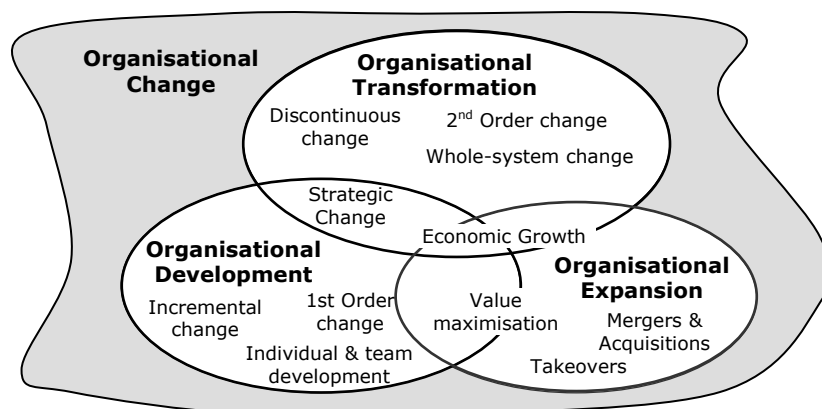


Figure 2.2: The relationship between different types of organisational change

Figure 2.2 depicts the relationship between organisational change, transformation, development and expansion. While there are some areas of overlap, “transformation” that results from corporate activities such as mergers, acquisitions and takeovers are considered here as forms of translational economic expansion and, as such, do not meet the definitive criteria adopted in this study.

### 2.6 Transformation and transition

Transition refers to the dynamic, processual aspect of changing from one state to another. Both transformation and translation can be regarded as forms of transition. Transformation refers to the process of transitioning from one level to a qualitatively different level. Translation refers to the process of transition that occurs within the same level. Figure 2.3 shows the differences between transformation, translation and transition and these are succinctly stated in the following quote from Ford and Backoff (1988, p.105):

Regardless of whether growth is translative/morphostatic (movement within horizontal level) or transformative/morphogenetic (movement between vertical levels), the movement itself is referred to as a *transition*.

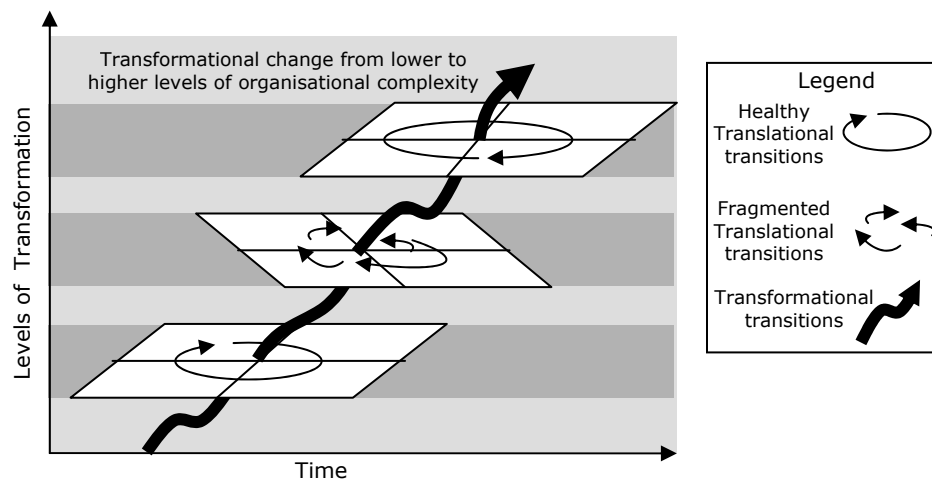


Figure 2.3: Translations and transformations (based on Ford & Backoff, 1988)

The form of transition that is of particular interest in this study deals with the transformational “movement between vertical levels”. Consequently, reference to the transition process will mean the transformational form of transitioning unless otherwise stated.

## 3. Theory Building and Metatheorising

Several terms are important for describing theory building and metatheoretical research and this section focuses on defining these and other method-related terms used in this study.

### *3.1 Concept, construct, model, framework, theory, paradigm*

A concept is a “bundle of meanings or characteristics associated with events, objects or conditions” (Meredith, 1993, p. 5). Concepts are used for representing, communicating, and/or understanding. A construct is a particularly abstract concept which, together with other constructs and concepts, can form conceptual models for representing and describing complex events and situations. Where models are used for descriptive explorations, theories go a step further and are used for understanding and explanation. Theories are “an ordered set of assertions about a generic behaviour or structure assumed to hold throughout a significantly broad range of specific instances” (Sutherland, 1975, p. 9). In other words, theories are systems of conceptual relationships that can be used to make generalised truth claims for the purposes of understanding and explanation. Where theories rely on concepts derived from empirical data to create their explanations, metatheory uses abstract second-order concepts derived from the analysis of other theories to build up its frameworks (Gioia & Pitre, 1990). The terms “framework” and “approach” are used here as general concepts for referring to any large-scale theoretical system.

“Paradigm” is a controversial term which has been extensively debated in many social science fields including organisation theory (Hassard & Kelemen, 2002; Schultz & Hatch, 1996). The term is used here as an heuristic device for grouping theories based on their shared explanatory concepts and research methods. This pragmatic usage of the term is supported by Mingers (2003b, p. 1303) who stresses that the idea was meant to connect, as well as distinguish between groups of theories.

Arguments about paradigm incommensurability have been overstated – there is no agreed way of defining different paradigms. Kuhn’s version is different from and less restrictive than Burrell and Morgan’s; and there are many examples of inter-translation between paradigms. The paradigm concept is useful as a shorthand for a particular constellation of assumptions, theories and methods, but it is purely an heuristic device.

Paradigms are also associated with Lakatos’ notion of “research program” (1978). Paradigms can be regarded as a way of grouping theories according to their associated values, assumptions, theories and methods. Multiparadigm research reviews and connects theories from several different paradigms and regards paradigms as complementary from a metatheoretical perspective (Mingers & Gill, 1997). In this study, theories of organisational transformation will be grouped together and placed into paradigm categories to aid the process of data analysis

### *3.2 Theory building*

Theory building refers to those conceptual research methods that result in the construction of theory. There are two ways to consider the theory building process. One sees theory building as

the complete cycle of theory construction and verification (Lynham, 2002). Lynham (2002), for example, defines theory building as both the generation and the verification of theory through iterative cycles of “producing, confirming, applying, and adapting theory”:

Theory building is the process or recurring cycle by which coherent descriptions, explanations, and representations of observed or experienced phenomena are generated, verified, and refined. (Lynham, 2002, p. 222)

From this perspective, theory building includes not only the construction of new theory but also the evidential testing of a theory’s explanations, hypotheses and factual claims. The second understanding, which is the one utilised in this study, takes a narrower view and sees theory building as complementary to theory testing (Wacker, 1998). From this view point, theory building is focused purely on the conceptual side of the knowledge development process (Meredith, 1993). It seeks to build conceptual frameworks for establishing definitions, models and explanations that help us make sense of our experiences and observations. Conceptual research and empirical research reinforce each other and both contribute to the accumulation of understanding. These two phases in the cycle of knowledge development are shown in Figure 2.4. The diagram shows the complementary nature of theory building (conceptual research) and theory testing (empirical research). Where theory testing involves operationalising, hypothesising, measuring and verifying/falsifying, the theory building task involves the definition of concepts, their domains and relations and the development of a conceptual system that brings those elements together (Wacker, 1998).

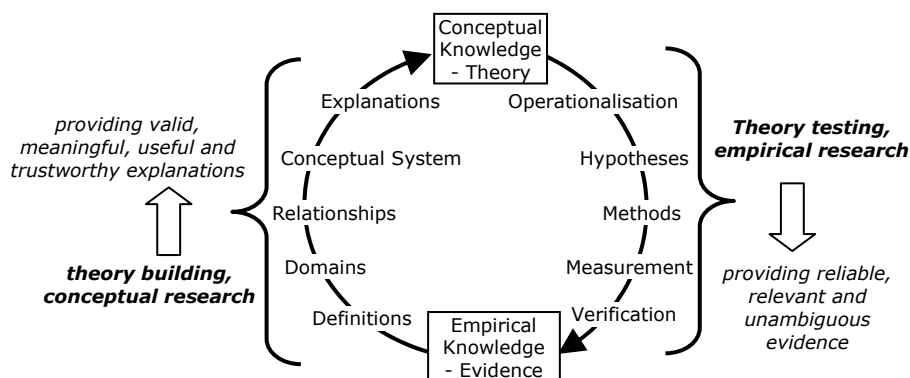


Figure 2.4: The cycle of conceptual and empirical research

As with all knowledge construction, theory building can be pursued within many different research paradigms (Torraco, 2002). For example, some theory building methods are more concerned with grounding theory within the immediate experiences and observations of individuals and communities. Methods such as grounded theory and case study research attempt to develop explanations that are based on politically relevant, culturally localised, and contextualised “data”. Other theory building approaches, such as metatheorising (Ritzer, 2001) or metatriangulation

(Saunders, Carte, Jasperson & Butler, 2003) draw upon more conceptualised and abstract data that, for example, seek to establish significant patterns between concepts from different theories.

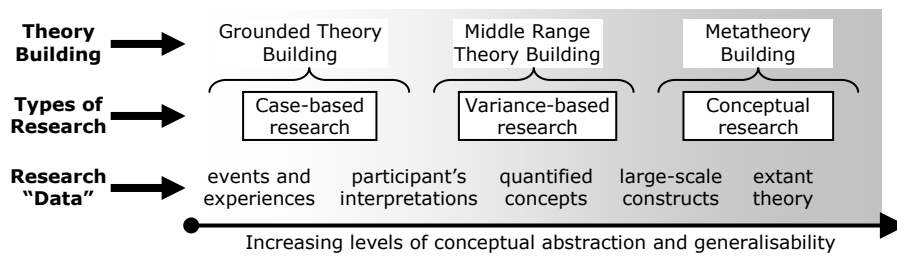


Figure 2.5 : A spectrum of theory building techniques

Figure 2.5 presents a spectrum of theory building approaches based on the idea of increasing abstraction in the source of the research “data”. Theory can be built using data that is methodologically very close to an event or experience or it can be built from more abstract sources which include concepts, models and theories that are far removed from the empirical events they refer to. Theory building approaches that rely on empirical data include grounded theory (Trim & Lee, 2004), case study research (Woodside & Wilson, 2003) and some methods coming from a social constructionist perspective (Turnbull, 2002). Moving further from the immediate event, there are quantitative approaches (Dubin, 1978; Wacker, 1998) that are based on controlled experiments, survey research and meta-analysis (Torraco, 2002). At the more abstract end of the spectrum there are conceptual theory building methods such as whole-systems theory building (Daneke, 2005), multiparadigm approaches (Gioia & Pitre, 1990) and metatheorising (Ritzer, 2001). The spectrum of conceptual research methods range from those with a focus on empirical data to those that use expressed theory as their object of analysis.

### 3.3 Metatheory and metatheorising

Metatheory is concerned with “the study of theories, theorists, communities of theorists, as well as the larger intellectual and social context of theories and theorists” (Ritzer, 1988. p. 188). Scientific metatheory building takes other scientific theory as its subject matter:

Scientific metatheories transcend (i.e., ‘meta’) theories and methods in the sense that they define the context in which theoretical and methodological concepts are constructed. Theories and methods refer directly to the empirical world, while metatheories refer to the theories and methods themselves. (Overton, 2007, p. 154)

Metatheorising is the process of developing metatheory or performing metatheoretical research. Ritzer (1991a) claims that most research begins with some element of metatheorising in that scholars review the theories of other researchers in the development of specific hypotheses or truth claims. Metatheorising is similar to other forms of sense-making in that it attempts to structure and



derive meaning from some body of knowledge, information, data or experience. It is different in that the body of information it draws on, its “data”, is other theories (van Gigch & Le Moigne, 1989) or “unit theories” as Werner and Berger (1985) call the individual theories that are the focus of study for metatheorists. Figure 2.6 shows a multilevel model of sense-making in organisational contexts. The figure applies a meta-model of sense-making to organisational realities (Tsoukas & Knudsen, 2003). The basis of all sense-making is the primary holistic experience of some organisational event. One way of formalising these experiences is by using symbols and concepts to develop organisational artefacts such as communicative texts, reports and plans. That process is carried forward through the development of both personal and scientific theory which uses concepts as the bases for even more abstract means for making sense of organisational experience. Finally, metatheorising develops overarching frameworks that are based on other organisational theories.

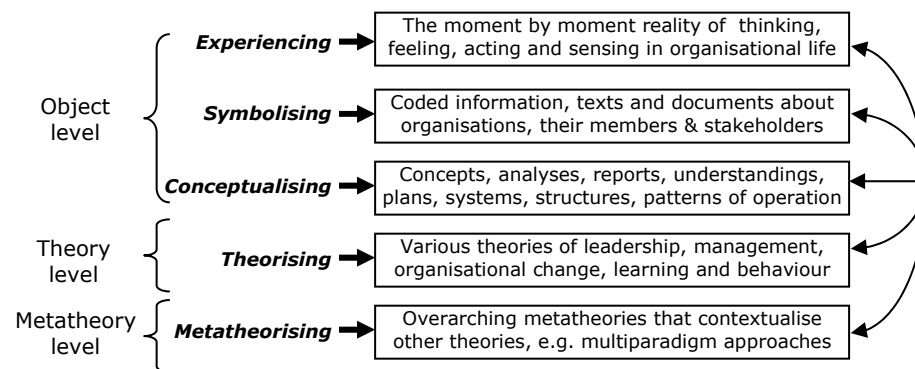


Figure 2.6: Stylised view of levels of sense-making in organisational contexts

Using the terminology of Tsoukas and Knudsen (2003), Experiencing, Symbolising and Conceptualising provide the content for the “Object level” of the study of organisations. Theorising is the “Theoretical level” where theories, models and frameworks of organisational transformation are developed and tested. Metatheorising is the “Meta-theoretical level” where knowledge about theories of organisation are developed, validated and linked with other levels. Metatheoretical methods simply continue the process of sense-making at another order of abstraction and generalisation (Wacker, 1998). This multilevel process is dynamic and interactive in that experiences, symbols, concepts, theories and metatheories mediate and inform one another. There is an ongoing iteration of influences and mediations between experience, concepts, theories and metatheoretical perspectives (Tsoukas & Knudsen, 2003).

Metatheorists treat other theories as the raw material for analysis in that standard theories provide the conceptual “facts and observations” from which metatheory is built. Ritzer states that “metatheory takes theory as its subject matter” (Ritzer, 1990, p. 3). And it does not matter where

these theories come from, “what counts is whether they make sense and whether they help us understand, explain, and make predictions about the social world” (Ritzer, 1990, p. 2).

### 3.4 Conceptual lens

The notion of a conceptual lens is closely associated with the idea that we explain complex events through reducing that complexity to some sense-making system or explanatory framework. Explanations are accounts that convey some degree of understanding from one person to another (Achinstein, 1983). From this view, explanation is a pragmatic endeavour that identifies the core factors needed to make sense of the phenomenon in question. An explanation links these factors together into an intelligible system of thought (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 52). The explanatory factors of a theory are its conceptual building blocks, its “endogenous” factors (Klein, Tosi & Cannella, 1999). These conceptual building blocks are referred to here as “conceptual lenses” and sometimes as “explanatory lenses”. Together with their inter-relationships, conceptual lenses form the “archetechtonic” of the theory, that is, the conceptual structure that underlies the characteristic form of the theory (Ritzer, 2001).

The metaphor of “lens” is frequently used in organisational and management literature as a way of representing the conceptual perspective afforded by a theory or a paradigm. The lens metaphor has been used within a number of organisational contexts including chaos theory (Fitzgerald, 2002), spirituality (Franz & Wong, 2005), organisational sociology (Flood & Fennell, 1995), gender studies (Olsson & Walker, 2003), technology in organisations (Orlikowski, 2000), strategic change (McGee & Thomas, 2007; Rajagopalan & Spreitzer, 1997), systems theory (Walton, 2004) and contract theory (Williamson, 2003). The lens metaphor is used here to emphasise that theory has both an active and a receptive relationship to the development of our understandings and to the actual shape of the realities we investigate. In the receptive sense, theory acts as an interpretive filter that structures and makes sense of the data of its subject matter. In the active sense, theory acts as a guide for actively seeking new insights and understandings and for shaping organisational realities. Giddens (1985) has referred to this dual role of theory in society as the “double hermeneutic”. Theory not only structures meaning but also informs and shapes its subject matter. The metaphors of “voice” and “tool” could just as well be used to represent this more active involvement of theory in social change.

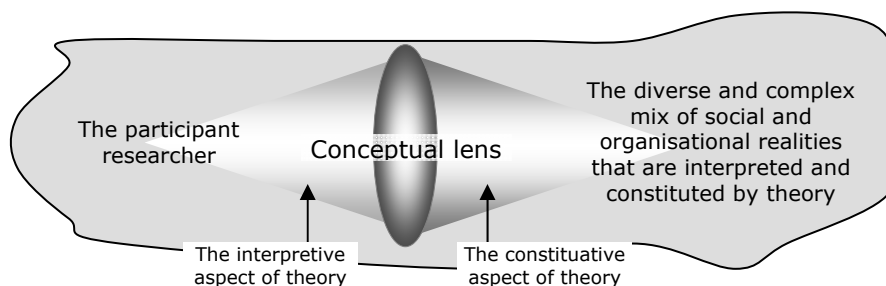


Figure 2.7: Conceptual lens as both interpreting and constituting organisational realities

Figure 2.7 shows the participant researcher (informed by scholarship, culture and scientific techniques) and her conceptual lens(es) as both receptive consumers and active producers of organisational realities. From this understanding, the lenses and voices used to investigate organisational life are constitutive of that life. To paraphrase Deetz (1996, p. 192), a conceptual lens does not merely interpret organisational objects, it is core to the process of constituting objects.

Weick has expressed the active aspect of theory as a process of disciplined imagination. He says that, “When theorists build theory, they design, conduct, and interpret imaginary experiments” (1989, p. 519). For example, in taking a psychological approach, a researcher not only interprets transformational events as something that occurs to individuals but also actively uses research methods that disclose individualist forms of “data”. In this example, the conceptual lens is one of epistemological and methodological individualism and this lens both receptively interprets and actively produces certain types of data and information. That information is then fed back into the organisation and broader community and so plays a role in shaping organisational and social life.

A theory may contain several of these explanatory lenses in relationship (Wacker 2004). Identifying lenses is central to this study because they form the basic elements from which the integral metatheory for organisational transformations is constructed. In the context of an integral metatheory, these lenses are also referred to as “integral lenses” because, i) Wilber’s AQAL framework (which he also calls integral theory or the integral approach) is used here as the chief metatheoretical resource for developing lenses and ii) when brought together into a coherent metatheoretical system, these lenses constitute an integral or comprehensive metatheory for organisational transformation.

### *3.5 Metatheorising*

Ritzer (2001) and Colomy (1991) have identified four types of metatheorising based on their particular aims. Metatheorising can be used to: i) become familiar with theories and paradigms for understanding extant theory (Ritzer’s  $M_U$ ); ii) as a preparatory exercise to develop middle-range theory (Ritzer’s  $M_P$ ); iii) develop an overarching metatheory for the multiparadigm study of some field (Ritzer’s  $M_O$ ); and iv) evaluate and adjudicate on the conceptual adequacy and scope of other theories (Colomy’s  $M_A$ ).

One of the most important roles that metatheorising can perform comes from its evaluative capacity. For example, metatheories can be used to identify those orienting concepts that a particular theories utilises as well as those that it neglects or does not possess. This study is concerned with the pursuit of  $M_U$  (metatheorising for understanding) so that a subsequent  $M_O$

(overarching metatheory) can be developed with the additional aim of performing  $M_A$  (adjudicating metatheory) forms of metatheorising.

#### 4. Summary

This chapter has provided definitions and descriptions of some of the main terms used in this study. In so doing, the boundaries of the study's domain of interest have also been identified. In particular, the definition of organisational transformation enables theories of change which come under the scope of this study to be distinguished from those which do not (this will be particularly important concern in Chapter 4 which outlines the study's sampling procedures). In the foregoing sections, some key definitions of (meta)theory building terminology have also been provided. Metatheorising is not a common form of conceptual research and these definitions are important for understanding both the general purpose of this research as well as the structure of this study (to be described in detail in the chapter on method).

The next chapter reviews the main scientific literature on organisational transformation, metatheory building and the major conceptual resource for this study - the AQAL framework.

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## **Chapter 3: Review of Literature**

This is not to say the old modes of knowing are disappearing, but that in line with the shift towards meta-perspectives and many universes, we are developing multiple ways of knowing that include all of what we have created to date. (Nicoll, 1984, p. 12)

### **1. Objectives**

This chapter presents a review of the scientific literature on organisational transformation, metatheoretical approaches to transformation and the AQAL framework of Ken Wilber. First, an historical review of the development of organisational transformation is provided. This review describes the changing nature of research into this topic and sets a social context for the range of theories and explanatory concepts that are the main subject of analysis. This is followed by an overview of previous attempts at building integrative theory in the field of organisational transformation. Although only the work of Amir Levy and Uri Merry (1986) can claim to be a systematic review of transformation theories from multiple paradigms, there have been other, more recent, attempts at integrating or, at least, connecting theories of transformation. While there have been no metatheoretical studies of organisational transformation that have applied formal theory building techniques, the studies reviewed here do provide useful benchmarks for a more rigorous approach. Finally, a review of literature on Wilber's AQAL framework is presented. Special attention is paid to AQAL metatheory because it is used here as a conceptual resource for developing the metatheory for organisational transformation.

### **2. An Historical Review of Organisational Transformation**

All approaches to the study of society are located in a frame of reference of one kind or another. Different theories tend to reflect different perspectives, issues and problems worthy of study, and are generally based upon a whole set of assumptions which reflect a particular view of the nature of the subject under investigation. (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 10)

In this quote Burrell and Morgan draw attention to that aspect of theory which is dependent on the interpretative influence of a particular "frame of reference". Such frames are historical in that history is, by its nature, a changing set of social "perspectives, issues and problems". The history of organisational transformation, as a concept within organisational studies, is also subject to these social movements. Not surprisingly then, there are discernable threads of connection that run through the scientific study of transformation and the organisational phenomena to which it refers. In this section, a brief historical review of the study of organisational transformation is presented so

that the metatheoretical work that follows can be better situated within the many research streams that characterise the study of transformational change.

### 2.1 Early uses of the term “Organisational Transformation”

The term “organisational transformation” first appeared in the 1950’s when there was a growing interest in sociological research on post-war changes to organisations. Initially, organisational transformation was used to describe the changes that were taking place as organisations moved from having a proprietorial or membership-based structure to a professional management structure. Messinger (1955) used the term in reference to the process by which organisations “adapt to their changed circumstances” through “the transformation of leadership activities”. Under the scientific management theory approach that was dominant at the time, change came about through the intentional planning of management. In line with this view, Messinger proposed that, when circumstances demand it, organisations had to change dramatically their *modus operandi* to survive and that when that adaptive process is completed, “the organizational character will stand transformed”.

In a similar vein, Michels (1959) postulated that many community organisations are transformed through the professionalisation of their management. In these early studies organisational transformation was seen as a sociological phenomenon of change in social relations between significant groups such as members, professional groups and officers (Jenkins, 1977). Transformation referred to the changes in organisational goals that resulted from the growth in professionalism. The stages of “goal transformation” were, in effect, aligned with the movement from membership-based organisational forms to professional and bureaucratic forms of organising (Wood, 1975).

One of the first organisational theorists to refer to large-scale organisational change as transformational was Gerald Skibbins (1974). He described the process as one of radical change. Like many other writers on social change, Skibbins employed ideas from evolutionary theory to develop insights into how human organisations might develop their potential for change. Some of the elements that informed these early uses of the language of transformation can still be seen in the contemporary usage. The role of the organisational environment, the qualitative nature of transformative change and the critical role of the leader are all still focal points for contemporary transformational approaches. Although such ideas were in use from the 1950’s and 60’s, it took several decades before a community of scholars and their distinctive set of theories and methods began to coalesce and be identified as a new field of organisational study (Adams, 1984).

## 2.2 Organisational transformation and organisational development

Many of the formative concepts that later gave rise to the organisational transformation field first emerged during the late 1960's. It was during that decade of great social upheaval that ideas of radical social change were openly discussed within the community of organisational change researchers and practitioners. At that time, many social theorists were looking for bolder models for explaining the changes that were impacting on organisational life throughout the developed world (Fletcher, 1990). The major school of change during those years was the organisational development approach.

Organisational development (OD) included all those approaches that attempted to increase organisation effectiveness and efficiency through planned interventions and engagements with employees and teams. OD came out of a behavioural sciences approach to knowledge in that it was rational, focused on incremental change, and largely drew on organisational and group psychology for its theoretical framework (Beckhard, 1969). There was also a personal development side to the OD approach that saw human resource development as an area of core concern for large organisations. The OD tradition saw change as an opportunity for “consensus, collaboration and participation” albeit within a planned and evolutionary approach to change (Ashburner, Ferlie & FitzGerald, 1996, p. 2). The approach included organisational members as participants in the process of gradually improving the culture, effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation. Chapman (2002) points out that when organisational development emerged in the 1960's it was primarily concerned with “individual and group level interventions to support gradual or incremental organisational change” (2002, p. 16).

Other researchers note the localised impact that such change techniques had within an organisation (Glassman & Cummings, 1991). OD targeted the “unit level of organisation” rather than the organisation as a whole (Ashburner, et al, 1996, p. 2). The focus of OD theory and practice was not at the inter-organisational or industry level and the intent was not to move the strategic position of organisations. It did not contextualise its developmental approach into the broader social environments that organisations responded to, nor did it fully recognise the importance of the senior executive level in the strategic management of change (Dunphy & Stace, 1988).

In focusing on the human side of change and on the importance of quality of work life and team development, OD did not fit well with the more dramatic industry-wide upheavals that characterised forms of large-scale organisational change in the late 1980's. Consequently, for many of those working in the area of organisational change, the OD framework lacked the conceptual and practical capacity to cope with the dramatic nature of change or with the “transformational imperative” (Vollman, 1996) that organisations encounter when facing radically changing environments. While organisational development models went on to “encompass large-scale

interventions including strategic change”, their theoretical frameworks continued to “largely reflect traditional assumptions and approaches” (Chapman, 2002, p. 16). However, the organisational development approach has continued to be an important contributor to organisational change theory up to the present time (Golembiewski, 2004).

In the late 1970’s and early 1980’s ongoing cultural changes and the increasingly hectic pace of growth in national and international economies stimulated a need for theories that took a more radical stance towards organisational studies. For many organisational theorists of that time the incrementalist orientation of organisational development was not sufficient, in either its theoretical scope or practical application, to respond to the changes that were sweeping through society:

While incrementalism has been well suited to environments producing stability in growth, increasingly since the mid to late 1970’s and into the 1980’s these conditions have disappeared in whole sectors of western industrial economies. The age of discontinuity, as Drucker (1969) called it, created conditions in the 1970’s and 1980’s which were often antithetical to an incrementalist approach.. (Dunphy & Stace, 1988, p. 318)

The stable conditions that saw the rise of OD interventions were overtaken by more fundamental changes in the global economy. Eventually, these changes in financial, economic and trade environments lead to a “growing literature on large-scale organisational transitions” which involved “total structures, management processes and corporate cultures” (Dunphy & Stace, 1988, p. 319). Senior executive and leadership levels of organisations were under pressure to respond to the rapidly changing trade and regulatory environments, technological innovations and market-driven demands. The rise of strategic management and the radical overhaul of organisations’ operations through restructuring, downsizing and financial rationalisation also fed into this period of dramatic change in organisations. Referring to the debate within the organisational change literature of the early 1980’s, Asburner, Ferlie and Fitzgerald (1996, p. 2), note that:

The discussion often centred on distinctions between incremental and strategic change, highlighting the fact that strategic change involved changes to the purpose of the organisation and/or several major systems, such as the technology, or core skills of employees. This clarification underlined the cosmetic nature of changes to the structure of earlier public-sector organisations, since such changes had rarely involved any alteration to the core nature or even the form of delivery of services. Extending the analysis further, writers began exploring the concept of transformatory change.

These factors, the search for more encompassing theoretical models, the accelerating social and cultural turmoil of the times and the rise of strategic management, provided the conditions for the emergence of a new approach to large-scale organisational change.



### 2.3 *The birth of organisational transformation*

The search for a more comprehensive approach continued through the 1970's and resulted in what came to be called "organisational transformation". Organisational transformation emerged from the organisational development field both as a response to its perceived limitations as well as the need for a more creative approach to the applied investigation of change in organisational settings. The first documenter of the organisational transformation field, Beverly Fletcher, notes (1990, p. 2):

It appears that [Organisational Transformation] evolved out of the practice of Organization Development (OD) to fill unmet needs and address situations and conditions that were not being satisfactorily attended to by existing organizational theory and practice.

Organisational transformation signalled its formal beginnings in the early 1980's in two ways. One was the publication of several books and articles overtly concerned with theories and descriptions of transformational change in organisations (Adams, 1984; Levy & Merry, 1986; Owen, 1983a; 1983b). The second was the establishment of a community of practitioners through the founding of the Organisational Transformation Network (OTN) for researchers, theorists and practitioners who were working in this emerging area (Fletcher, 1990). The OTN organised the first symposium on organisational transformation which took place in New Hampshire in 1984. One of the founding figures behind the organisational transformation movement was John Adams. He describes the beginning of the professional network of organisational researchers, consultants and practitioners as follows (Adams, 1988):

Sometime during the very early years of this decade, probably in 1981 or 1982, a large number of people began to use the term organisation transformation to describe their work. During the spring of 1982, a few of these people recognized each other at a conference outside of Boston, and began to discuss their common interest in concepts like vision, purpose, spirit in the workplace and global perspective. ... Within a few months, dozens of people who had not previously known each other were suddenly operating in a very close, high energy way.

From the very beginning of its formal study, organisational transformation was seen to be different to other types of organisational change in that it was about a radical and comprehensive change in an organisation's identity and behaviour. In the first review of theories of transformation, Levy and Merry defined organisational transformation as (1986, p. ix):

A radical, basic, total change in an organisation, in contrast with improving the organisation and developing it or some of its parts. Transformation often deals with a condition in which an organisation cannot continue functioning as before. In order to

continue to exist, it needs a drastic reshuffling in every dimension of its existence: its mission, goals, structure, and culture

This definition indicates the radical nature of transformative change. During the 1980's publications on organisational transformation covered a great diversity of topics and used many different methodologies to research those topics (Levy & Merry, 1986). Another defining feature in the early phase of the organisational transformation movement was the emphasis placed on the practical side of implementing change. Many of the first contributors to publications on the topic were practitioners and consultants who were searching for a more comprehensive understanding of how organisations could meet the challenges of societal change (Adams, 1984). While both theory and practice were seen as essential and complementary elements, this new field of organisational transformation was far from being a uniform discipline with well-established theoretical principles (Adams, 1984). The multiplicity of ideas and theoretical streams that fed into the newly emerging study of organisational transformation meant that it would always be a diverse discipline which embraced a great many concepts and methods. There were, however, a number of themes that characterised this new field of research and theory development.

#### *2.4 Major themes in the growth of organisational transformation*

Apart from its origins of the organisational development movement, a common feature between transformational theorists and practitioners was the emphasis on spirituality and human potential as the driving force for radical change. As Banner notes (1987, p. 44),

The emerging field of organisational transformation is a product of two separate yet related phenomena. The continuing intensity of the social movement toward human potential (now called spirituality) combined with an increasing disillusionment with the classical organisational development model (OD) has provided the impetus for OT. Also, OT has emerged as a logical outgrowth of the paradigm shift we are now undergoing; old ways of behaving don't work any more and this provides the context from which transformation springs.

One common element that was distinctive of organisational transformation from the very beginning was its inclusion of spirituality issues. Adams is credited with being the first to use the term "organisational transformation" in its current sense and he emphasised the place of spirituality in transformation from the early 1980's. In an interview with Adams, Fletcher quotes him as seeing the emergence of organisational transformation as a result of "moving into [a] new spiritual consciousness" (Fletcher, 1990). Dehler and Welsh note that (1994, p. 18): "[Organisational transformation] transcends the rationality associated with the traditions of scientific management" and that it includes the intangibles of change such as "energy and flow". The social interest in new

forms of spirituality that appeared during the 1960's, and which has increased in subsequent decades, was reflected in the inclusion by transformation theorists of previously excluded aspects of human experience. Transformational change frameworks see issues of meaning, emotion, values and spirituality as central to the workplace and as complementary to objective change factors such as behaviours, systems, technologies, structures and goals, which are more frequently associated with organisational life. Some of the earliest transformation theorists and practitioners, e.g. Bill Torbet, John Adams, Harrison Owen and Jean Bartunek, came to the field through their interest in spirituality. In her analysis of the motivations of prominent leaders in transformational studies, Fletcher remarks that (1990, pp. 65-66),

The idea that spirituality can figure to make an organization better seemed important for several participants. Many of them came from some sort of spiritual or highly conscious background which led them to an interest in Organizational Transformation.

The interest in organisational spirituality was closely associated with the search for a more holistic and integrative conceptualisation of organisational life (Adams, 1984). The application of systems concepts and terminologies were prominent in this search (Buckley & Perkins, 1984). Systems theory not only provided a model for developing large-scale conceptualisations of organisational change but, more importantly, it supported the idea of dramatic shifts in a complex entity's total functioning. This notion of a systemic "paradigm shift" in organisational structure and personal identity became a core characteristic of the new approach. Another commonly held assumption among the new transformational theorists was that of the evolutionary nature of change. Ideas from the biological sciences mixed with systems theory concepts to produce models of "dissipative structures", "episodic evolution", "energy exchange systems" and "punctuated development". Instances of biological transformation, as in the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly or a tadpole into a frog, were frequently used as metaphoric descriptors for organisational transformations (Sammut-Bonnici & Wensley, 2002)

Levy and Merry (1986) refer to three sets of elements that characterised the emergence of organisational transformation as a separate approach to change. These were an emphasis on "spirituality and energy", a concern for "organisational purpose, mission, and vision", and thirdly, a focus on the cultural aspects of organisations such as values and belief systems, communication mythology and worldviews. All these three emphases were set within an idea of paradigmatic, discontinuous or qualitative change. As Levy and Merry point out, these shared elements of interest were all centred on the "intangible" aspects of organisational life and, consequently, were not readily accessible to observation and objective research. The emphasis in organisational transformation theory and research on the subjective, cultural aspects of organisations was to change in later years.

The development of a transformational vision of organisational change brought with it a newly developed vocabulary that described this idea of a systemic, discontinuous shift in organisational form. Terms such as “whole-system” change, “gamma change”, “paradigmatic change”, “contextual change”, “quantum versus piecemeal change” began to appear in the literature (Gemmill & Smith, 1985, p. 752). The connection between these different ideas was that “change is most often induced by system jolts, turbulent environmental conditions, or internal conflicts, all of which act as catalysts for the profound transformations that take place” (Gemmill & Smith, 1985, p. 753). With this new descriptive language of change came new metaphors to imagine creatively ways of thinking about and perceiving transformative change in organisations and their activities. Earlier, Skibbins (1974) had used the idea of biological transformation to communicate the radical nature of the change involved, however, where ontogenetic transformation in nature was often a sporadic affair, organisational transformation was ongoing. “The organization must move from state A to state B to states C, D, E, and so on in an infinite metamorphosing” (Fletcher, 1990, p. 6). Theorists more focused on environmental stimulants of change used the analogy of environmental pressures to understand the emergence of new organisational forms. Traditional forms of organisation were likened to biological species that are subjected to new environmental selection pressures. Transformation (evolution) is the only recourse for forms of organisation that must the selection demands of a completely new set of environmental conditions; and to do that it must reproduce itself at a new level of identity (Skibbins, 1974).

During the 1970's and early 1980's parallels were being drawn between particular forms of organisational evolution and those of human ontogenetic development. In making these connections, organisational theorists regarded stage-based models of human development as something much more than simple metaphors for organisational growth. These parallels were seen as isomorphic patterns of evolutionary development that existed across many different psychological and social domains (Kimberly & Miles, 1980). Developmental theorists such as Abraham Maslow, Jane Loevinger and Roberto Assagioli had proposed maps of qualitative stages of growth and organisational theorists began to develop similar stage-based developmental models for organisational collectives (Owen, 1987). On this connection between organisational transformation and human potential Owen remarks (1987, p.6):

Although the results of transformation appear with the emergence of new organizational forms, the essence of transformation lies in the odyssey or passage of the human Spirit as it moves from one formal manifestation to another. The word ‘transformation’ says as much, for the central idea is the movement across or through forms.

Just as there are many different orders and stages of individual development, so there are many different forms of organisational emergence. These various stages correspond to different ways of

perceiving, behaving and defining identity. In transformative change, this is not a singular process but can happen repeatedly as new forms of identity emerge over an organisation's life span.

By the end of the 1980's organisational transformation was beginning to have a significant impact on theory and practice related to organisational change and development. However, some major global events were to change this. Through the 1990's, organisational transformation models, along with all models of change, were influenced by the dramatic events that resulted from the fall of the USSR and the opening of Eastern European nations to the political and economic systems of the West. These transition economies and their constituent organisations had to undergo radical, transformative change to accommodate to the new realities of world markets and free enterprise (Newman, 1998a). There were also dramatic changes in the economic and social environments of developed nations. The excesses of the 1980's and the subsequent economic downturn that occurred in the early 1990's led to a greater appreciation for organisational efficiency and forms of productivity. As well as this, the globalisation of trade, financial markets and technological changes, especially the internet and communications and information technology, were affecting all aspects of commercial and community life. Planning for transformational change was quickly becoming a standard part of the organisational landscape. Writing in 1997, Nutt and Backoff summarised the attitude of the time (1997a, p. 490), "Transformation has become a key survival tool for organizations coping with the turbulence that characterizes today's environment."

### *2.5 The many paths of transformation*

In response to the socio-economic turbulence of the 1990's, transformational change theorists focused more on the behavioural aspects of organisational change in areas such as effectiveness (Mea, Sims & Veres, 2000), IT and communications systems (Allen, 2003; Blom & Melin, 2003), management performance (Newman, 1998b; Tischler et al., 1998), structural re-engineering (Coulson-Thomas, 1993) and strategic leadership (Nutt & Backoff, 1997). In the context of these behavioural and external aspects of change, theorists began to see transformation as the "competitive position of the overall [organisational] system" (Quinn & Cameron, 1988b, p. 11). The emphasis moved towards the objective, behavioural capacity of the organisation to cope with the realities of radically changing commercial and economic environments.

At this point, a divergence appears between two major streams of research and their respective understandings of the term "organisational transformation". One stream continued along with the understanding that organisational transformation was about holistic growth and a radical change in the relationship between organisations, their stakeholders and the community. After the turbulence of the late 1980's and early 1990's, another path was taken by those interested in transformation as a radical approach to organisational effectiveness. This stream focused on the economics of transformation. In their book "Breaking the Code of Change", Beer and Nohria (2000) refer to

these two streams as “Theory O” for organisational transformation, and “Theory E” for economic transformation. These two very different understandings of transformation led to a subsequent increase in the number and diversity of theories of organisational transformation. As well as the original understanding of transformation as a holistic process of personal, organisational and social renewal, there were also now theories of transformation that focused solely on organisational effectiveness, corporate wealth and the strategic management of organisations to meet the challenges of globalisation (Newman, 1998b). In other words, the notion of organisational transformation diverged to refer not only the qualitative change in the interior, cultural aspects of organisational life, but also the radical change in exterior, behavioural and systems aspects. Consequently, transformational approaches considered sources of transformative change that derived from external, inter-organisational environments and organisational behaviour as well as internal, intra-organisational resources and capacities.

The transformational literature subsequently broadened in scope to cover the objective, functionalist stream of theory and research, and to deal with topics such as information management, organisational behaviour, strategic management and organisational effectiveness. Other theorists and researchers continued with the more traditional focus of transformational studies on the intangible, interior aspects of organisational life, i.e. its culture, values, spirituality and developmental issues. By the late 1990’s, organisational transformation covered topics as disparate as the “spirituality of leadership” (Eggert, 1998), the levels of development of executives and organisational collectives (Rooke & Torbert, 1998), incentives (Cacioppe, 1999b), workforce diversity (Dreachslin, 1999b), motivation theory (Green & Butkus, 1999), “worker upskilling” (Leigh & Gifford, 1999) and organisational learning (Waldersee, 1996).

The increasing scope and diversity of transformational models, assumptions, research foci and theoretical frameworks meant that an identifiable school of organisational transformation was no longer practicable. In recent years, theorists and practitioners have tended to specialise in particular topics under the organisational transformation banner. For example, theories and research on transformation are now associated with particular fields such as leadership, organisational learning, transition economies, organisational spirituality, technological innovation, virtual organisations and so on. While the term “organisational transformation” no longer refers to any single school of organisational change or community of practitioners, it continues to be commonly used as a general descriptor of radical change. Seen within this context of a plurality of approaches and perspectives, organisational transformation continues to grow as a field for theory development and applied research rather than as a community of like-minded researchers and practitioners seeking a new vision of change.

### 2.6 Historical phases in the study of organisational transformation

Alongside the increasing diversification and specialisation of change theories, the 1990's and the first few years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have witnessed a growing interest in multiparadigm research and theory building in the organisational change field (Chapman, 2002; Elrod & Tippet, 2002; Paulson, 2003). As is often the case in social research, the move to develop finer grained models of complex organisational phenomena is often accompanied by complementary attempts to bring together these explanations into a more systematic and integrative approach (Cacioppe & Edwards, 2005a).

Table 3.1: Phases in the Study of Organisational Transformation

Period	Historical Phase in the development of OT	Organisational Transformation Focus	Prevailing socio-economic factors
1960's & 1970's	<b>Pre-formative phase:</b> dissatisfaction with the mainstream approaches to change	Organisational development is the dominant paradigm for investigating change	Wide-spread socio-cultural and economic change
1980-1984	<b>Birthing phase:</b> initial OT publications, founding of the OT network	Naming and defining OT, what is unique about the OT approach, differentiation from OD	Growing interest in organisational response to radical societal change
1984-1990	<b>Growth phase:</b> OT publications and research, focus	Research focus on subjective aspects of organisations, e.g. culture, consciousness, values	Booming economies and entrepreneurial excess
1988-1995	<b>Identity phase:</b> OT is recognised as a particular school that has its own publications, networks & conferences	Research focus becomes more applied and particular methods of transformation are developed, e.g. Open space technology	Recession in western economies, economic turbulence and growing globalisation
1991-present	<b>Diversification phase:</b> OT diversifies into multiple functionalist and interpretivist streams of theory and research	OT responds to economic & political conditions by focussing on objective transformation, e.g. structure, systems & technology	Soviet collapse, transition economies in Eastern Europe, globalisation, recession
2000-present	<b>Integration phase:</b> Developmental and multiparadigm linkages between OT models	Multilevel integration of both objective and subjective aspects of transformation	Globalisation continues, social criticism of corporate behaviour, triple bottom line

Table 3.1 presents a summary of the phases of development that have marked the emergence of organisational transformation as an identifiable field within the organisational change literature. The six phases presented describe: i) a pre-formative period during the 1960's and 70's where change theorists gradually became dissatisfied with mainstream theories of change; ii) a birthing phase in the early 1980's where OT first emerged as an identifiable set of ideas and methods; iii) a growth phase from the mid-1980's to around 1990 where OT became a significant contributor to understandings and explanations of change; iv) an identity phase where an OT network was established and research was published; v) a diversification phase starting in the mid 1990's and continuing up to the present where OT research moved into a variety of applied contexts and appeared under such guises as "strategic management"; and, vi) an integration phase from around 2000 to the present where attempts have been made to bring together multiple paradigms and concepts concerning large-scale, qualitative change.

The present study comes under the integration or metatheory building phase in transformational studies. The diversity of understandings of transformation has led to a fragmentation in organisational change theories and there is a need for a metatheory building that can draw connections between these diverse conceptual elements. It remains to be seen whether this

diversification overtakes the field's capacity to retain its own identity under the organisational transformation label or, alternatively, whether it moves into a phase of decline. It is likely, however, that transformation theories and research will continue to play an important role in the study of organisational change irrespective of the descriptive label. The radical change in natural, social and commercial environments at the local and global levels will continue into the foreseeable future. As a result, the need for organisations to respond to those imperatives will also continue.

### **3. A Review of Multiparadigm Approaches to Organisational Transformation**

#### *3.1 Integrative and eclectic approaches*

Although many have called for the development of a more coherent approach to theories of organisational change, there have been relatively few attempts at integrative conceptual research in this field. The multiparadigm work of Burrell and Morgan (1979) was one of the first attempts to develop an overarching framework for the study of radical change. Their work is also relevant for the present study because of the multiparadigm method they developed in the process of their metatheory building. Perhaps the most extensive and concerted effort at reviewing and integrating multiple paradigms and theories of organisational transformation was undertaken more than two decades ago by Levy and Merry (1986). They reviewed many theoretical perspectives and proposed several integrative frameworks for bringing greater coherence to the field. Other less ambitious approaches have attempted to integrate a smaller number of theoretical perspectives.

There have also been several volumes that have presented an eclectic mix of articles from many different perspectives on transformation (Beer & Nohria, 2000; French et al., 2005; Kilman, Covin & Associates, 1988). Unlike the research of Burrell and Morgan and Levy and Merry, these efforts have not developed metatheoretical frameworks. However, the act of bringing together many diverse theories of radical change has been useful in the setting a multiparadigm context for considering particular theories. The rest of this chapter briefly summarises the key outcomes of these contributions. This summary will consist of an outline of the main explanatory factors and metatheoretical frameworks.

#### *3.2 Explanatory factors for transformation*

As mentioned above, multiparadigm approaches towards organisational transformation can be categorised as eclectic works that simply assemble a number of transformational theories or as metatheoretical works that have a more integrative purpose. Burrell and Morgan (1979) were the first to describe a large-scale theoretical framework for organisational transformation that brought together many ideas from different theoretical persuasions. They identified two fundamental factors or dimensions that could be applied to all organisational change theories. The first relates



to a theory's orientation towards the nature of knowledge. This is the subjective-objective dimension. This dimension discriminates between theories that focus on the subjective, cultural and interpretive aspects of change and those that focus on the objective, behavioural and functionalist aspects. The second dimension relates to a theory's assumptions about organisational change. This is the radical change versus regulatory change dimension. As we have seen in the introductory chapters, radical change can be equated with transformational change and regulatory change has many of the characteristics that other writers have called incremental or translational change. These distinctions have shown up many times in the analyses of other organisational researchers (Beer and Nohria, 2000; Chapman, 2002; Lemak et al., 2004). For example, the distinction between regulatory and radical theories of change has been a common starting point for debates on whether change is an ongoing process or something that happens discontinuously (Nutt & Backoff, 1997b; Weick, 2000). Distinctions between subjective and objective explanatory approaches to transformation can be seen in those theories that take an interpretive and those that take a functionalist orientation towards change. Where interpretive approaches emphasises culture and human experience, functionalist approaches emphasise structure and human behaviour. Under the heading "Formal Structure and Systems or Culture?", Beer and Nohria (2000) include several papers that debate whether formal organisational structures is fundamental to transformation or whether informal cultural processes should be seen as the basis of real change. While the authors point out that both are required for a comprehensive explanation of transformation, no real integration is attempted.

The only specific attempt at integrating a large number of theories of organisational transformation is the extensive review carried out by Levy and Merry in the mid 1980's. In their review of theories of transformational (or "second-order") change in organisations, the authors include several explanatory factors or, as they call them, perspectives in an integrative model for transformation:

- management perspective - change comes from the top-down decision-making;
- innovation perspective - change comes from the creativity of individuals;
- political perspective - change is the result of ideologies, individual and group conflict;
- natural selection perspective - the emphasis is on the impact of environmental selection;
- interaction perspective - organisation and environment interactions are the source of change;
- process perspective - change is a cyclical process of transitioning from one state to another;
- developmental stage perspective - change is the result of growth and can be modelled through such concepts as life-cycle stages or developmental stages;
- learning perspective - organisations adapt and learn new information and forms of behaviour;
- phenomenological perspective - transformational change comes about through the radical change in organisations' "worldview, shared meanings [and] interpretive schemes";
- systems perspective - change as variations in inputs, throughputs and outputs.

Other theorists have proposed integrative models that concentrate on only one of these factors. For example, Cacioppe and Edwards (2005b) compared a number of models of stage-based theories of transformation to develop a general model of organisational change. Elrod and Tippet (2002) looked at a wide range of transition process theories of change to develop their phase-based model. While stage-based models focus on the reorientation of the whole organisational system to a new order of functioning, process theories are concerned with the phases of change that are common to all stages of development, irrespective of their form or function.

Beer and Nohria (2000), in their eclectic approach to transformation theory, identify several of the same dimensions that other transformation theorists propose, such as top-down and bottom-up leadership and structure versus culture. As described previously, they gather several of these factors to propose a model of two ideal theories for transformation - Theory E and Theory O. Theory E refers to all those models which focus on economic, behavioural, structural, and functional aspects of organisations. Theory O is concerned with the psychological, social, interpretive and cultural aspects of change. Beer and Nohria argue that the variations in current approaches to organisational change and transformation can be explained in terms of these two ideal types of change theories.

The inclusion of different stakeholders has also been a prominent factor in explaining transformation. In her “framework for transformation change in organisations” Chapman (2002, p.17) includes stakeholder participation as one of the “core elements of transformational change”. Dunphy (2000) also emphasises broadening participation in decision-making as a key factor for instigating transformation. In their volume on corporate transformation, Kilman and Covin (1988) include several studies which investigate the transformational impact of widening the circle of stakeholders involved in the consultation process (Beres & Musser, 1988; Bice, 1988). Finally, several theories have regarded transformation from the point of view of the individual world of action and personal change and from the collective world of structure and systems-based change. This individual-collective dimension has been noted by Sarason (1995). Her integrative approach has utilised the Giddens’ structuration theory to develop a strategic management theory for organisational transformation. Sarason attempts to connect micro and macro worlds of transformation is not typical of transformation theorists.

Table 3.2 summarises the major factors, or “critical variables” (Levy & Merry, 1986), that theorists have identified as being fundamental in explanations of transformational change in organisational settings. Although the need for a more eclectic approach to explaining organisational change has been pointed out many times (see, for example, Galbraith, 2000; Hirschhorn, 2000; Kilman & Covin, 1988), theorists still tend to assume that change can be understood through concentrating on one or other of these explanatory factors. This tendency for theorists to neglect some explanatory factors in favour of others is a theme that will occur frequently through this study.

Table 3.2: Explanatory factors for organisational transformation

Explanatory Factors ("critical variables")	Theorists
incremental or radical change	Burrell & Morgan (1979), Levy & Merry (1986), Kilman & Covin (1988), Chapman (2002), French, et al., (2005)
subjective and objective realities	Burrell & Morgan (1979), Levy & Merry (1986), Beer & Nohria (2000), French et al., (2005)
organisational structures	Levy & Merry (1986), Beer & Nohria (2000), French et al.,(2005)
transition cycles	Levy & Merry (1986), Elrod & Tippet (2002)
stage-based development	Kilman & Covin (1988), Cacioppe & Edwards (2005b)
changes in consciousness	Levy & Merry (1986), French, et al., (2005)
change through learning	Levy & Merry (1986), Porras & Silvers (1991)
top down and bottom-up leadership	Beer & Nohria (2000), Chapman (2002)
stakeholder participation	Kilman & Covin (1988), Dunphy (2000), Chapman (2002)
a system with inputs, throughputs and outputs	Levy & Merry (1986), Chapman (2002), (Lemak et al., 2004)
cultural versus structural change	Beer & Nohria (2000), French, et al., (2005)
individual versus collective focus	Sarason (1995), Beer & Nohria (2000)

### 3.3 Metatheoretical Frameworks

Metatheory building requires not only the identification of a range of salient explanatory factors, but also the construction of a conceptual system or framework that describes the basic relationships between those factors. The multiparadigm framework of Burrell and Morgan combines the subjective-objective and radical-regulatory change dimensions to form a four-cell matrix that can be used to categorise theories and paradigms of organisational change (see Figure 3.1). Of particular relevance to the present study is the dimension of radical-regulatory change. This dimension distinguishes between theories of change that emphasise "order" and "cohesion" and those that see change as "revolution" and "radical transformations". At the regulatory change pole, we find interpretive and functionalist theories. At the radical change pole, we find radical humanist and structuralist theories. At the radical change pole, we find radical humanist and structuralist theories of change.

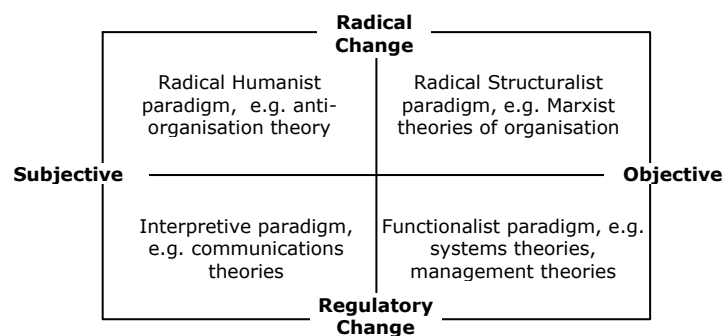


Figure 3.1: The multiparadigm framework of Burrell &amp; Morgan (1979)

Burrell and Morgan's combination of the subjective-objective dimension with the radical-regulatory change dimension shows that both transformation and stability can be explained from experiential and phenomenological perspectives as well as from the more common behavioural and functionalist perspectives. Theories need to account for the realities of subjective consciousness and the intangible nature of culture just as they do for objective behaviour and tangible structures.

These two explanatory factors – radical-regulatory change and objective-subjective orientation – are very common factors among theories of transformation.

The Burrell and Morgan framework opened the possibility of systematically identifying conceptual lenses that could be used to compare different theoretical paradigms and their constituent groups of theories. While this model has subsequently been applied in both conceptual and empirical research, it has never received further metatheoretical development. This is noteworthy given that there have been no arguments offered for introducing new dimensions beyond the two multiparadigm dimensions that make up the Burrell and Morgan framework. As this study hopes to show, and as suggested by the broad range of explanatory factors described in Table 3.2, other dimensions might be included in integrative frameworks for organisational transformation.

In their review of transformation theories, Levy and Merry (1986) propose two metatheoretical frameworks for accommodating the large number of factors that they identified. The first is a typology of four basic perspectives that theorists and researchers have taken in considering what actually undergoes transformation. The second is an open systems model for categorising those perspectives according to their dynamic qualities. The typology consists of four domains of change that can occur in an organisation's: i) underlying paradigm, that is the metarules, underlying assumptions, philosophy and logics of the organisation, ii) structures, that is its functional processes and technologies, iii) mission, including programs for action and goals, and iv) culture, including beliefs, values norms and myths. These four transformational domains closely resemble other metatheoretical frameworks including Wilber's AQAL framework and Burrell and Morgan's multiparadigm framework (see Figure 3.2). The concordances between these quadrant models suggest that similar explanatory lenses are involved in their generation.

<b>Paradigm Theories</b> eg. evolution theory	<b>Theories of Mission &amp; Goals</b> eg. management theory
<b>Cultural Theories</b> eg. planned change	<b>Structural &amp; Functional Theories</b> eg. systems theory

Figure 3.2: The Levy-Merry model of change theories

The four dimensions of change are not exclusive of each other and, in fact, Levy and Merry say that transformational change is best described as “changing all four dimensions: in functional processes, in mission and purpose, in culture, and in the organisation's worldview or paradigm” (1986, p.278). A logical corollary of this framework is that transformation is not possible without qualitative change in all four domains. Consequently, if attempts at transformational change are focused on any one dimension to the exclusion of others, they are likely to be unsuccessful. Some changes may accrue, but these will not be transformational or second-order changes. For example, if only the functional processes of the organisation are changed, then only first-order or incremental change

will result and whole-of-system transformational change is unlikely to occur. Levy and Merry regard the categories of change theories as corresponding to dimensions of organisational life. Each of these dimensions “is embedded in and shaped by higher levels” such that the four dimensions are “organised in a ‘nested framework’” (1986, p. 277). This nested framework amounts to a causal chain where functional processes are driven by organisational culture, which is in turn driven by organisational purpose and goals, which is driven by the characteristics of the organisational paradigm. Levy and Merry propose that change begins with the more unnoticed and abstract dimensions that relate to the underlying paradigm of the organisation. Paradigm changes flow into organisational mission and purpose, then to the cultural dimension until finally resulting in concrete and noticeable changes in the functional processes of the organisation.

Levy and Merry’s second metatheoretical framework employs the open systems theory model of input-throughput-output. This framework has been adopted by several transformation theorists as a means for integrating different perspectives on change. Apart from Levy and Merry (1986), Chapman (2002), Lemak and colleagues (2004) and Porras & Silvers (1991) have used the open systems model as a way of conceptually connecting theories of change. Input theories explain the triggering forces involved in transformation and include organisation-environment interaction and socio-political change theories. Throughput theories deal with the process of transformation and include innovation and creativity models, change process models, learning, and phenomenological theories. Output theories explain the content of transformation and include systems theories, management theories and evolution theories (see Figure 3.3).

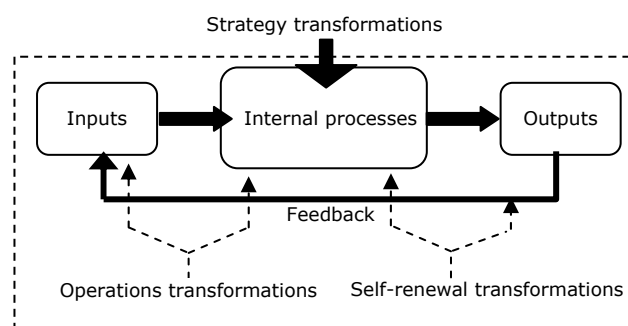


Figure 3.3: Organisational transformation and systems theory (after Lemak et al., 2004)

While the open systems framework allows connections to be made between theories of transformation, the approach does have considerable drawbacks. First, it is unlikely that a particular perspective on transformation can act as the co-ordinating view for integrating other perspectives. While systems theory does have metatheoretical qualities (Skyttner, 2001), other approaches may simply not be compatible with a systems approach. For example, Levy and Merry’s accommodation of many different perspectives within a systems framework results in a number of anomalies. Although evolutionary approaches are placed in the outputs category, they may just as well be seen as providing insights into the input conditions for change. Evolutionary theory offers explanations for the environmental selection of certain entities or processes over

others. Such explanations can be applied to input conditions, such as the triggering conditions for transformation, as much as to outputs or the content of transformation. Similar arguments can be mounted for the categorisation of other paradigms within a systems-based context. Wilber (2006) has also drawn attention to systems theory's lack of recognition of subjective approaches to knowledge. This is a major drawback in a topic such as organisational transformation where concepts such as consciousness, cognitive reframing, emotion and identity are so important.

## 4. Introduction to the AQAL Framework

### 4.1 *AQAL as a metatheoretical resource*

The AQAL framework (Wilber, 1990d; 2000d) is of special importance to the present study because it contributes to providing a “metaview” (Gioia, & Pitre, 1990)<sup>1</sup>. Gioia and Pitre make the point that it is not possible “to understand, to accommodate, and ... to link” multiple views without developing or adopting some “viewpoint beyond that of an individual paradigm” (1990, p. 596). They stress that some “meta-level” position must be taken. It is worth quoting their views on this issue at length (Gioia & Pitre, 1990, p. 595-6):

Given that a uniquely correct perspective cannot exist, and given the multiplicity of organisational realities, a pluralistic, multiple-perspective view becomes a necessity for achieving any sort of comprehensive view. Such a multiple-perspectives view requires that organisational theorists consider the set of theories relevant to a given topic from some viewpoint beyond that of an individual paradigm. Comparing and contrasting diverse paradigms is difficult when confined within one paradigm; looking from a meta-level, however, can allow simultaneous consideration of multiple paradigms in their transition zones. Elevating to a metaperspective is qualitatively different from cross-boundary considerations. From this view, the intent is to understand, to accommodate, and, if possible, to link views generated from different starting assumptions.

In this study, AQAL acts as a metatheoretical resource for adopting that “metaperspective”. The next section provides some background to the development of AQAL as it has been described by its creator Ken Wilber.

### 4.2 *Background to the development of AQAL*

The development of AQAL metatheory is best seen within the context of attempts to develop large-scale conceptual frameworks for understanding complex social phenomena. This theory

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<sup>1</sup> While AQAL contributes to the development of a meta-view, the major resource is, of course, the sample of theories that are considered in the multiparadigm review (see Chapter 4)

building quest is an ancient one. In the modern era of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this quest culminated in large-scale social theory building of the kind seen in Marxist theory, structural functionalism, general systems theory, cybernetics and, more recently, structuration theory and dynamic systems theory. The modern attempt at large-scale theory building has come partly in response to the plethora of psychological and sociological theories that have flourished during the twentieth century. It is within this context of finding connections between diverse theories of social reality that Wilber's work is most usefully discussed.

Ken Wilber (1999d; , 2000d) has been the most important figure in the development of integral theory or, as he also calls it, AQAL. Although Wilber is one theorist among several who have used the term "integral" (Aurobindo, 1993; Gebser, 1985; Laszlo, 2003), he specifically uses the term to refer to his general philosophy of science as well as to his approach to social theory which he calls AQAL (see following section "The AQAL framework and its central elements"). Other theorists have adopted aspects of Wilber's ideas and developed their own version of "integral theory" (see, for example, Pauchant, 2005; Reams, 2005; Volckmann, 2005). While not forgetting the broader context of what has been referred to as "the integral movement", it is with Wilber's writings and theoretical propositions that the following discussion will be concerned.

AQAL is an over-arching metatheory that has been applied across many disciplines including those within the environmental, psychological, social and organisational sciences. AQAL can be used as a metatheoretical system for integrating alternative paradigms, theories and traditions of knowledge. It should be seen as an attempt to develop a unified synthesis of many models into one grand theory. Rather, the approach develop a multiparadigm framework that situates as many alternative paradigms and theories as possible in a coherent conceptual system. The development of the model has progressed greatly over the last three decades and Wilber has described the growth of his ideas as distinct phases of theoretical elaboration.

Phase-I saw the initial attempt by Wilber to propose a comprehensive model of human development. This initial period brought together psychotherapeutic as well as religious models of human growth potentials. Drawn from many scientific theories and cultural sources, the model maps out a comprehensive set of stages of transformations for a human life span. This was his "spectrum of development" model and, though altered in significant ways, the spectrum metaphor has remained as an important guiding image in AQAL metatheory. However, Wilber found that there were significant problems with the spectrum model. Its illustration of human development relied predominantly on Freudian and Jungian concepts. Wilber subsequently became aware of the work of developmental theorists such as Jean Piaget, Jane Loevinger, Lawrence Kohlberg, Michael Commons and Patricia Arlin, and he significantly modified his spectrum model to accommodate these cognitive approaches. Wilber sees this incorporation of more mainstream developmental models as the hallmark of phase-II of his theorising. Where phase-I came from a "romantic"

philosophical stance, phase-II was “more specifically evolutionary or developmental” (Wilber, 1999b, p. 1). However, this developmental model lacked sensitivity to the multidimensional nature of human growth and phase-III is characterised by Wilber’s attempt to account for the individuality of human development, that is, to account for the idiosyncratic nature of individual differences and the variety of developmental pathways that exist for each social entity. It was also at this time that Wilber introduced the holon<sup>2</sup> construct into his writing. The holon enabled the representation of multidimensionality by allowing for a diversity of developmental factors to be considered in relationship to each other. However, at this point Wilber was still considering human development predominantly from a microlevel, psychological perspective and the sociological, organisational and anthropological approaches contributed little to his explanations and analyses. This changed dramatically in 1995 with the publication of Wilber’s book “Sex, Ecology, Spirituality: The Evolution of Spirit” which marked the beginning of phase-IV. This phase marks the explicit identification of Wilber’s work as a metatheory and sees the detailed exposition of the AQAL framework and the holonic tenets. Development was now seen from both individual and collective theoretical orientations as well as from subjective and objective disciplines of inquiry.

The current state of Wilber’s theorising, phase-V, has seen a reconsideration of the core philosophical foundations of the integral model and is sometimes called his post-metaphysical phase (Reynolds, 2006). Wilber is now focusing on the major forms of research methodologies and their various perspectival orientations towards forms of inquiry. He calls his approach “integral methodological pluralism” or “IMP” (Wilber, 2006). IMP is a set of principles that guides the theory building process for all integral approaches. These principles are non-exclusion, enfoldment/unfoldment and enactment. The principle of nonexclusion is the acknowledgment that truth is not the province of any one scientific or cultural approach to knowledge acquisition and that valid insights come from a plurality of research and inquiry perspectives. The second principle of an IMP, enfoldment/unfoldment, refers to the patterns that emerge over time when multiple truths and perspectives are included within one metatheoretical framework. The unfoldment/enfoldment principle refers to the holistic and developmental nature of knowledge and methods. The principle proposes that all types of knowledge are connected and can illuminate each other. Wilber’s third principle, the enactment principle is all about practice and the methods that enable researchers to engage with and disclose the central realities of the subject of interest.

Wilber sees AQAL as only one among several metatheories that could come under the IMP rubric. Along with the AQAL framework, Torbert’s Developmental Action Inquiry (1999, 2000) is another approach that incorporates the main elements of an IMP in organisational studies. Developmental Action Inquiry evidences nonexclusion, developmental en/unfoldment and practical enactment in many facets of its research methodology and (meta)theory building.

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<sup>2</sup> A definition of holon is given in section 4.4 of this chapter.



### 4.3 *The AQAL framework and its central elements*

AQAL is an abbreviated acronym for All Quadrant, All Levels, All Lines, All Types, All States. These five elements map out a metatheoretical system that can accommodate the particular perspectives and conceptual insights of many other theories and models. As Wilber puts it (2005, para. 101):

AQAL is short for ‘all quadrants, all levels’—which itself is short for ‘all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, all types,’ which are simply five of the most basic elements that need to be included in any truly integral or comprehensive approach.

Each of these elements can be regarded as conceptual dimensions or systems, which in turn are made up of a number of other subsystems. The qualifier “all” that prefixes the five basic elements in the AQAL framework refers to the need to include all of these subsystems when attempting a comprehensive view of some psychosocial event or phenomenon. For example, when including developmental levels in an analysis of social transformation it is not adequate to include only some levels while leaving out others. Consequently, “all” levels need to be included for an analysis to be integral. In uncovering what “all” aspects of these five elements might be, AQAL adopts a multiparadigm methodology that attempts to include the definitive aspects of each of these five elements. Wilber refers to this multiparadigm method as “orienting generalisations” (Crittenden, 1997). In other multiparadigm methods, these generalisations are called “lenses” (Jasperson, Carte, Saunders & Butler, 2002) and “second-order concepts” (Gioia & Pitre, 1990). They are statements that summarise “divergent views of themes that span paradigm accounts” (Lewis & Grimes, 1999, p. 683). Together these orienting generalisations build up a metatheoretical framework that aims to include “all” the essential subsystems under each of the five AQAL elements of quadrants, levels, lines, states and types. A brief description of each of these five elements follows.

The quadrants are the central theoretical framework of AQAL. Integral approaches maintain that any psychosocial phenomenon requires at least two fundamental dimensions of existence be taken into consideration – the interior-exterior dimension and the individual-collective dimension. Interior-exterior refers to the relationship between the intangible world of subjective experience and the tangible world of objective behaviour. For example, in the case of personal identity, the interior pole of this dimension is about the private world of subjective thoughts, feelings, intentions and intuitions and the exterior pole covers the public world of objective activity, observable behaviour and tangible structures. The individual-collective dimension concerns the relationship between the personal and the social. This dimension refers to the micro-macro, nature of social reality. The interaction of these two dimensions produces a grid of four cells known as the four quadrants. As Cacioppe and Edwards (2005a, p. 232) describe them:

These dimensions interact to give the four domains or quadrants of consciousness (individual interiority), behaviour (individual exteriority), culture (collective interiority) and social systems (collective exteriority).

The quadrants map out the developmental domains through which all psychosocial entities change and develop. These “four quadrants of intentional, behavioral, social, and cultural unfolding” (Wilber, 1999a, p. 1) provide a “minimum” set of categories for an integral explanation of psychosocial development (see Figure 3.4). The quadrants are often used as a foundation for applying the other elements of the AQAL framework.

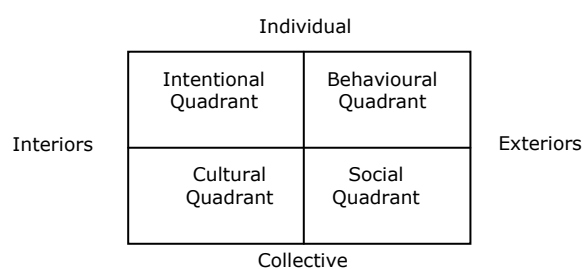


Figure 3.4: Wilber's four quadrants (developmental domains)

Developmental level is the second key conceptual element in AQAL. A distinction is made between developmental and incremental change. AQAL recognises the possibility for qualitative transformations as well as translational changes in all aspects of social life. Development is seen as a ubiquitous process where structures unfold through a spectrum of waves or stages. The spectrum model provides a comprehensive template for considering the stages of personal development and has been applied to many different disciplines including management (Young, 2002), art therapy (Bonde, 2001) and nursing (Malinski, 2002).

Because AQAL includes spectrum models of development for both individuals and collectives, it can be regarded as a multiparadigm and multilevel developmental framework that applies to the micro, meso and macrolevels of social activity. Cacioppe and Edwards (2005a, p. 233) describe the level element in the context of organisational development as follows:

The term “level” in Wilber's AQAL model refers to the spectrum of actual and potential stages of emergent development that social entities have access to in their lifespan. Organisational levels refer to the increasing capacity that all organisations possess for integration, systemic functioning and cultural complexity. The levels of organisational development correspond to the psychological levels of development described by Wade (1996), Wilber (1976) and Loevinger (Loevinger & Blasi, 1976). These levels display increasing qualitative complexity and integrative power in the consciousness, behavioural, cultural life and social functioning of an organisation.

AQAL's stage-based approach to understanding and explaining development is not a linear or sequential model of progress. Wilber's view is that development "is not a linear ladder but a fluid and flowing affair, with spirals, swirls, streams, and waves" (2000b, p. 5). Development is a mixture of idiosyncratic change complemented by deep patterns of structural regularity. This regularity shows up in general stages that unfold for both the individual and the collective in many different spheres of evolution and development. The complexity of psychosocial development is acknowledged in the third explanatory factor in the AQAL framework - developmental lines.

Developmental lines (also called streams) are the various, relatively independent psychological and sociological modalities that researchers have identified as core dimensions of growth in individuals and collectives. These multiple modalities can be regarded as developing semi-independently through the various structural stages of growth (Wilber, 2000e). Wilber has suggested that developmental streams in the field of individual human growth include cognition, morality, affect, motivation, identity and values. Wilber has also speculated on the various modalities of development that might apply to social collectives. Referring to these streams of collective development, Wilber says that they "can tentatively be called the various streams or lines of a societal [entity]" (Wilber, 2003d, para. 482). These might include, for example, the lines of education, politics, religion, art, economics, communication, medicine and technology. All of these areas of social activity are subject to developmental growth in that they can be regarded as moving through regular patterns of systematic change. The concept of developmental streams recognises the uneven and multimodal nature of development in any social entity:

The modular streams in a society (whether paramorphic or isomorphic) can, as with all streams, develop in a relatively uneven manner, so that a society can be highly developed in some capacities, medium in others, and low in still others. (Wilber 2003a, para. 483)

The concept of lines makes it theoretically possible to map a developmental profile for any social entity. Figure 3.5 shows organisational lines of development for individuals - the "integral psychograph" (Wilber, 1999c) and collectives - the "integral sociograph" (Edwards, 2002b). These stylised figures present the concept of developmental lines within a context of stage-based development for individuals and organisations.

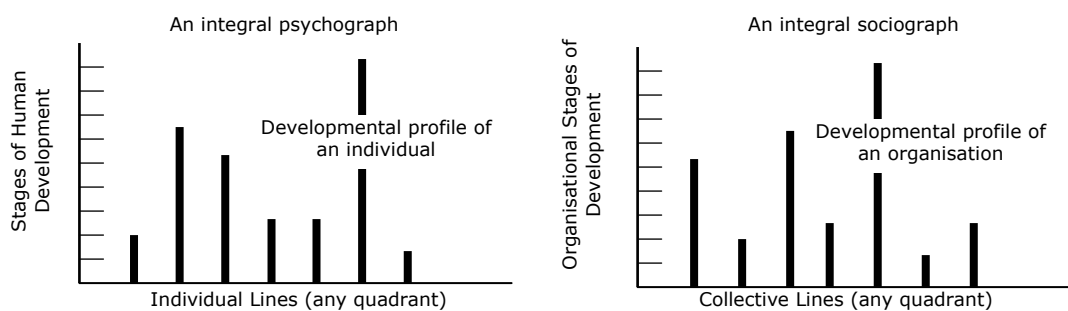


Figure 3.5: Developmental lines and levels for individuals (integral psychograph) and organisations (integral sociograph)

When used together, the quadrants, levels and lines elements of AQAL provide a powerful tool for analysing the multidimensional nature of individual and collective development. Transformative growth is not reduced to a progressive, hard-stage model of linear or sequential growth. The quadrants framework suggests that individual and collective development are closely intertwined and that they mutually support their co-evolution. Wilber stresses that “the evolution of all of these streams of development in all of the quadrants are intimately bound up with each other” (2000c, p. 29). The interior and exterior of the individual and the collective are four perspectives on each and every social event and so a complete understanding of how development proceeds must start with at least these four views for any particular developmental line.

One of the most distinctive characteristics of AQAL is its emphasis on states of consciousness. Rather than regarding the world of subjective experience as peripheral to the main interest of social research, integral approaches place topics such as emotion (Holaday, 2000), consciousness (Anderson, Klein & Stuart, 2000; Wilber, 1997), phenomenology (Küpers, 2005), and spirituality (Acker, 2000; Cacioppe, 2000a&b; Wilber2006) at the centre of it theorising. Because of this special emphasis on the subjective, research topics such as states of consciousness, flow states, peak performance and peak experiences are considered as important topics for integral research. Wilber regards the phenomenon of states as one factor among many others that can be used to understand the nature of individual experience (Wilber, 2005, p. 15):

Everybody experiences various sorts of states of consciousness, and these states often provide profound motivation, meaning, and drives, in both yourself and others. In any particular situation, states of consciousness may not be a very important factor, or they may be the determining factor, but no integral approach can afford to ignore them.

In effect, a state of consciousness can be considered a temporary experience of a particular developmental stage. State-based explanations of subjective experience are closely allied, therefore, to stage-based models of development. Where stages account for the structures of consciousness, states provide the content. AQAL’s inclusion of phenomenal states within its explanatory toolkit provides a framework for interpreting, understanding and explaining phenomena associated with the dynamic and fluid nature of subjective aspects of organisational life.

The fifth element in the AQAL framework is known as types. Types refer to the categorical elements of any typology where those elements “can be present at virtually any stage or state” (Wilber, 2005, p. 9). Many psychological and sociological typologies do not necessarily involve transformative change but are simply frameworks for investigating variations in personality and social structures. A prominent example in organisational psychology is that of Jungian “type theory” and its derivatives in the Myers-Briggs types (Gardner & Martinko, 1996) and the Keirsey temperaments (Keirsey, 1998). In organisational and leadership theory there are many different

types-based models including types of institutions (Acar, Aupperle & Lowy, 2001), types of management practice (Shenhar, 1998), types of management values (Quinn, Faerman, Thompson & McGrath, 2003) and types of teams (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002). There are also many typological models for groups and organisations. Perhaps the best well known theory of organisational types is Mintzberg's taxonomy of organisational forms (Mintzberg, 1979).

Where developmental and evolutionary explanations might be said to take a vertical orientation towards change, type explanations can be represented by horizontal orientations. As Wilber states:

... there are numerous other 'horizontal typologies' that can be very helpful when part of a comprehensive [Integral analysis], and the Integral approach draws on any or all of those typologies as appropriate. 'Types' are as important as quadrants, levels, lines and states. (Wilber, 2005, p. 12)

The types lens can be regarded as a catchall category within AQAL. Any lens that can be crossed with existing AQAL elements will create a typology of some sort. Consequently, the types category provides much space for the further development of the framework.

#### *4.4 Other explanatory elements in AQAL metatheory*

Apart from the five explicitly identified elements of AQAL, several other theoretical components are not formally included within the framework and yet contribute greatly to its explanatory power. The reasons for not formally including these additional elements are not clear. They may have to do with the inherent complexity of the model and the need for theoretical parsimony, which is an important concern in all theory building endeavours. It could also be argued that some of these additional factors are already assumed within the main five elements of quadrants, levels, lines, states and types. In particular, it might be suggested that the types element within AQAL is a catch-all category where various additional factors of explanation can be included as necessary. However, this approach does not help in the essential task of providing a clear and comprehensive description of the theory. In any case, there are several explanatory factors that are not based on types and which are regularly employed by Wilber in his analyses. Each of these additional factors introduces novel orientations to explaining social events that are not reducible to the five AQAL elements. Although not formally included within AQAL, all of these additional elements are described in detail in Wilber's writings and they are frequently used by Wilber and other integral researchers (see for example Brown, 2006; Esbjörn-Hargens, 2005). These factors include:

- Personal perspective: Perspectives are "modes of inquiry" that "disclose, highlight, bring forth, illumine, and express the various types of phenomena enacted by-and-from various perspectives" (Wilber, 2003, para. 28). Perspectives are taken up as either a first, second or

third person orientation when inquiring into some phenomenon. Wilber designates particular pronouns to particular quadrants—“the inside of the individual shows up as ‘I’; the inside of the collective as ‘we’; the outside of the individual as ‘it/him/her’; and the outside of the collective as ‘its/them’”. In short: I, we, it, and its” (Wilber, 2003e, para. 34).

- Agency-communion: AQAL proposes that every social entity is motivated by the drive for agency or self-expression and communion or self-adaptation. Agency is the capacity for expressive identity, whereas communion is the capacity for receptive identity.
- Transcendence-immanence (or growth-integration): The AQAL concept of stage-based development necessarily entails a notion of transcendental growth and integrative immanence.
- Transformation-translation: This is the difference between radical and incremental forms of change. When transformation occurs there is a qualitative shift from one deep structure or pattern of identity to another. In contrast, translational change refers to all those exchanges that are necessary to maintain the status quo and to provide stability to the current order. Wilber describes this distinction as follows: “The movement of surface structures we call *translation*; the movement of deep structures we call *transformation*” (1980, p. 47).
- Relational exchange: This refers to the various systems of mutual exchange that occur between developmental structures and their environments. Wilber describes this principle as follows (1999b, p. 16):

[The] individual and cultural are inextricably bound by patterns of relational exchange. ... Each level of the compound individual is actually a system of mutual exchanges with elements at the same level of development in the exterior world: matter with matter (physical food consumption), body with body (sexual procreation), mind with mind (symbolic communication), and so on. At every level, in other words, the subjective world is embedded in vast networks of intersubjective or cultural relationships, and vice versa.

- Internal-external: This explanatory element considers the boundaries between a social entity and its environment. For example, the internal environment of an organisation is comprised of its constitutive systems, cultures and structures. The external environment is made up of all those systems, cultures and structures that lie outside the organisational boundary.
- Transition process: The transition process describes the phases of movement between levels of development. The basic phases involve the movement from, i) a status quo state, ii) to one of increasing confusion, iii) to the emergence of a new identity structure and finally, iv) to the integration of old capacities within the new identity (Wilber 1980).

#### 4.5 The holon construct

The holon construct occupies a crucial place with AQAL metatheory. Its particular function is to act as a framework through which the relations between the other core integral concepts can be

represented. Arthur Koestler coined the term “holon” and explicated its associated theory, “Open Hierarchical Systems” theory in his book “The Ghost in the Machine” (Koestler, 1967). The word “holon” is a combination of the Greek “holos” meaning whole, with the suffix “on” which, as in proton or neutron, suggests a particle or part. The holon, then, is a part-whole. It is a nodal point in a hierarchy that describes the relationship between entities that can be regarded as *both* self-complete wholes *as well as* other-dependent parts. As one’s point of focus moves up, down, and/or across the nodes of a hierarchical structure so one’s perception of what is a whole and what is a part will also change. These hierarchies can be analysed via the stable intermediate nodes or forms through which their structure is defined. It was to these intermediate forms that Koestler conferred the new label of “holon” and to the hierarchy, or open system, of holons he gave the term “holarchy”.

Koestler developed the holon construct to deal with what he saw as the three central issues facing the social sciences during the post-war period: i) the integration of the reductionist worldview of the behavioural sciences with the holistic worldview of the humanistic psychologies; ii) the importance of developmental processes for the social sciences and iii) the development of a model of human social systems that was equally at home in analysing the microlevel of individuality and the macrolevel of collectivity. Koestler recognised the dehumanising effect of atomistic psychologies as well as the limitations of the holistic schools. His view was that (1967, p. 49)

... in spite of its lasting merits, ‘holism’ as a general attitude to psychology turned out to be as one-sided as atomism was, because both treated ‘whole’ and ‘part’ as absolutes, both failed to take into account the hierarchic scaffolding of intermediate structures of sub-wholes ... the Behaviourist never gets higher than the bottom layer of stones, and the holist never gets down from the apex.

From the beginning, the holon construct was developed as a way of accommodating very different explanatory systems. In this sense, holarchies and their constituent holons are sense-making frames of reference that promote an integrative approach towards constructing social theory.

Holons form series, or holarchies, when they are represented in relationship. Figure 3.6 shows different ways of representing a series of organisational holons in a holarchy. The figure takes the example of an organisational series (holarchy) of five levels: dyad (two people), group/team, organisational unit, department, and whole organisation. This holarchy can be represented in many different ways. Some of them communicate the idea of organisational hierarchy in a linear fashion (methods 1 and 2) and some are more non-linear in their representation (methods 3 and 4). Methods 3 and 4, in particular, enable a distinction to be made between hierarchical relations and heterarchical relations. Hierarchy refers to the relations between holons at different levels. Heterarchy refers to the relations between holons within the same level. Of this distinction Wilber

says: “*within* each level heterarchy; *between* each level hierarchy” (1995, p. 20). Holarchy, then, technically refers to the balance between hierarchy and heterarchy.

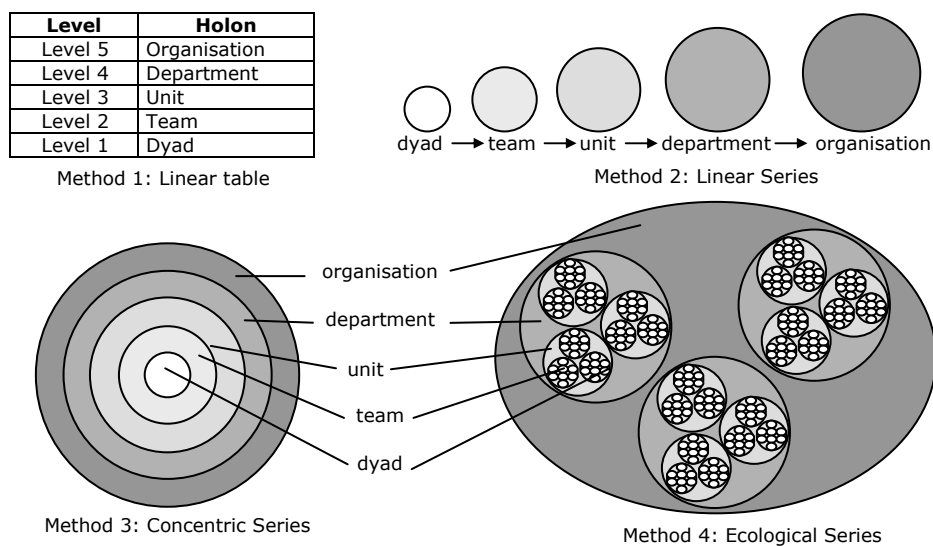


Figure 3.6: Four methods for representing holarchies

Both hierarchy and heterarchy, as well as their dynamics interaction, are essential elements of every developing system (Wilber, 1995). This has been recognised by transformational theorists for several decades.

The world, in other words, is both hierarchical and heterarchical, depending. In this context, two fundamental beliefs about the way our universe and our lives are structured are emerging from the physical and biological sciences. We are beginning to assume that:

1. There are multiple levels of reality.
2. Each of these different levels has its own laws, rules, principles of interaction, and patterns of activity.” (Nichol, 1984, pp. 7-8)

Wilber adopted Koestler's holon construct in the early 1980's when he was using his spectrum model of human development to integrate a large number of developmental models and concepts (see, for example, Wilber, 1983). It is not surprising that Wilber would be drawn to the holon as a construct given his developmental interests and his integrative approach to accommodating diverse theoretical views. An important dynamic in Wilber's initial description of the spectrum of consciousness was that later stages of development include and integrate former stages. He called this the “transcend-and-include” principle (Wilber, 1999b). Wilber describes the relationship between holons and this emergent process in the following way (Wilber, 1995, p. 20):

In any developmental or growth sequence, as a more encompassing stage or holon emerges, it includes the capacities and patterns and functions of the previous stage (i.e., of the previous holons), and then adds its own unique (and more encompassing) capacities



The holon construct serves two core purposes within AQAL metatheory. First, holons can represent the increasing orders of complexity and wholeness that we observe within a developmental process. Second, they can be used to integrate other theoretical systems dealing with change in complex social entities and situations.

## 5. Metatheoretical Applications of AQAL in Organisational Studies

AQAL has been chosen as the metatheoretical resource for this multiparadigm review of organisational transformation because it: i) possesses many of the general characteristics essential for integrative theory building; ii) has been widely used as an integrative framework in the social sciences and has been applied within various fields of organisational studies; and iii) is particularly suited to the study of transformation and change.

### 5.1 Theory building attributes of AQAL

Wacker (1999), Whetten (1989) and Quine and Ullian (1980) have outlined a number of important qualities essential for the task of (meta)theory building. These qualities include “uniqueness, parsimony, conservatism, generalisability, fecundity, internal consistency” and “abstraction” (Wacker, 1998, p. 364). These evaluative criteria will be used to assess the theory building attributes of AQAL and its suitability as the major conceptual resource for this study.

**Uniqueness:** This virtue refers to all those identifying characteristics that distinguish one theory from another. AQAL has a number of qualities which differentiate it from other large-scale theoretical frameworks in the social sciences. These include its great theoretical breadth (Slaughter, 2001; Tomer, 2001), its emphasis on the subjective aspects of individual and group experiences of social reality (Gibbs, Giever & Pober, 2000; Wilpert, 2001), its inclusion of spirituality as a fundamental factor in human affairs (Acker, 2000), and its capacity for integrating very disparate and often conflicting conceptual perspectives (Wilber, 2000e). AQAL metatheory is noteworthy for the scope of its domain and the diversity of theoretical and philosophical perspectives it attempts to accommodate within its conceptual purview.

**Comprehensiveness and Parsimony:** These two attributes complement each other. Comprehensiveness, in the context of metatheory, is the degree to which relevant perspectives can be accommodated (Whetten, 1989). AQAL has a great capacity for including multiple variables that are associated with diverse fields organisational studies (see, for example, Paulson, 2003). Parsimony is the minimisation of explanatory variables to only those that are essential for describing, explaining and understanding the phenomena of interest (Wacker, 1998). The virtue of parsimony is particularly important in theories that aim to include large numbers of concepts. AQAL attempts to be parsimonious in formally including a relatively small number of key

principles in its framework (quadrants, levels, lines, states and types). However, metatheorising is always a balance between including those factors necessary to explain human complexity and reducing those factors to the bare minimum so that adequate description and explanation is achieved.

**Generalisability:** This refers to the scope or coverage of a theory. Wacker says that “the more areas that theory can be applied to makes the theory a better theory” (1998, p. 365). The success of multilevel and multiparadigm theory building depends largely on its theoretical scope and range of application. It is the attribute of generalisability that makes AQAL particularly well suited to metatheory building in organisational studies. For example, AQAL has been applied to micro, meso and macro environments in a wide range of organisational contexts (Foster & Arvay, 2002; Karapetrovic & Willborn, 1999; Kay, Regier, Boyle & Francis, 1999; Lane & Oliva, 1998).

**Fecundity:** Fecundity refers to the capacity for a theory to generate new models, understandings, explanations and hypotheses. AQAL has been used to develop new theoretical perspectives and produce empirical research in many different fields of science. These include nursing care (Newman, 2003), organisational development (Cacioppe, 2000a&b; Cacioppe & Edwards, 2005b), teamwork (Cacioppe, 2004), human development (Wilber, 1990), cultural evolution (Edwards, 2002b; Wilber, 1996), human geography (Eddy & Taylor, 2006), counselling (Ingersoll & Sink, 2007), correctional education (Gehring & Wright, 2003), leadership development (Cacioppe, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 1999a; Cacioppe & Albrecht, 2000; Young, 2002) political theory (Wilpert, 2001), collaborative working (Chesterman, 2001), futures studies (Slaughter, 1996, 1998), business practices (Paulson, 2003), corporate coaching (Kofman, 2002) and financial accounting (Wagner, 2002). Such diversity of use suggests that AQAL can be a fertile source of ideas for studying transformation within organisational settings.

**Abstraction:** The degree of abstraction of a construct is its independence from the particularities of “time and space” (Wacker, 1998). Abstraction is the capacity to “integrate many relationships and variables into a larger theory” (Wacker, 1998, p. 365). A theory’s capacity for abstraction can be classified into three levels: high, middle, and low. High abstraction level theories (general or grand theories) have an “almost unlimited scope” and AQAL appears to come under this high level category. One aspect of AQAL that provides it with the capacity for abstraction is the holon construct. Holons can serve as to integrate many different concepts across a variety of contexts.

**Internal consistency:** The virtue of internal consistency refers to the regularity of relationships between the constructs of a theory. Internal consistency means that “the concepts and relationships [that make up a theory] are logically compatible with each other” (Wacker, 1998, p. 365). For example, the regular relationship implied in the statement “all holons have four quadrants” should hold across all types of holons. If it does not, the theory lacks internal

consistency. Its large number of conceptual elements and the complexity of their relationships make internal consistency a particular concern for AQAL-informed theorists. I have suggested several areas for improving its internal consistency (Edwards, 2002a) and these matters will be taken up in a later chapter.

According to these criteria, the AQAL framework has many of the qualities that are required for integrative theory building. It is conceptually comprehensive in that it is able to include many explanatory variables from a broad range of disciplines. It differs in unique ways from other large-scale theories and has been shown to be a rich source for generating new ideas and understandings about human development in a wide variety of contexts. AQAL has a highly developed level of generalisability and abstraction, in that it can integrate many relationships and variables into a larger (meta)theory. Most importantly, it has proven its usefulness as a theory building tool across a very large number of research topics. In the following section, this broad applicability of AQAL is further explored.

### *5.2 Applications of AQAL and the holon construct within organisational research*

One of the most common ways in which AQAL metatheory has been applied within social research is for the mapping of many different theories according to their use of the interior-external and individual-collective lenses. These lenses form the four quadrants and these quadrants or domains can be used to categorise theoretical approaches to many different topics. For example, Cacioppe (2000b) relates the four quadrants to four key areas of organisational functioning - people well-being, vision and culture, effectiveness and efficiency – which enable a discussion of the range of literature dealing with these domains. Landrum and Gardner (2005) use the framework to develop an integral approach to theories of strategic change. They accommodate several theories of strategic management according to how they can be placed within the quadrants. Esbjörn-Hargens (2006) has accommodated theories of education with the quadrants domains. This categorisation of extant theory and paradigms is perhaps the most widely used application of the AQAL framework. However, categorisation of extant theory is not the only way of applying AQAL to the study of theories. The use of the holon construct opens up the possibility for a developmental analysis of theory.

The holon construct has had a long and extremely varied history of use within both applied and theoretical settings in organisational studies. The notion has been applied in transorganisational development (Boje, 2000), human resource planning (Parker & Caine, 1996), institutional modelling (Schillo, Zinnikus & Fischer, 2003), management (Sun & Venuvinod, 2001), organisational change (Mathews, 1996), and organisational sustainability (Kay et al., 1999). The holon construct has also been utilised in a theoretical extension of the business process re-engineering model to develop a “holonic network approach” to the way organisations can be configured to create business

opportunities (McHugh, Merli & Wheeler, 1995). In this context, “each company in the network provides different process capability and is called a holon” (McHugh, Merli & Wheeler, 1995, p. 4). The capacity for the holon construct to emulate complex holarchical systems of information flow and decision-making has seen it being frequently applied in the design of automated and robotic manufacturing systems. The construct has had extensive application in theoretical approaches towards continuous change manufacturing systems (Bongaerts, Jordan, Timmermans, Valckenaers & Wyns, 1997; Bongaerts, Monostori, McFarlane & Kadar, 2000; Cheng, Chang & Wu, 2004), holonic manufacturing systems (Brussel, Bongaerts, Wyns, Valckenaers & Ginderachter, 1999) and models of systems development (Ming, O'Sullivan, Cormican & Dooley, 2003).

The holon has not only been used to represent objective systems of organising but also as a means for investigating subjective experience and for modelling individuals' cognitive representations. According to Lane and Oliva (1998, p. 217), systems theorist Peter Checkland defined the term as:

... an epistemological device, a conceptual abstraction that we use to make sense of the real world. [Checkland] proposed the word ‘holon’ to distinguish the systemic construct from the real world entities commonly labelled as systems. In other words, a holon is a particular type of model, one which organises thinking using systemic ideas.

Checkland understood the holon to be a meta-systemic lens that “organises thinking” about real world systems. Holons organise, act on and order the ways we experience and perceive complex, systemic, “real world entities”. In other words, Checkland used the holon construct to facilitate an integrated, metaparadigm vision of “the real world”. In this, his use of the holon construct is very similar to Koestler original intent that the holon be a means for seeing how theories are connected.

### *5.3 Applications of AQAL in development and transformation*

Understanding and explaining how, why and when transformation occurs for individuals and social collectives has been among the major themes running through the AQAL literature. This diversity of paradigms and theories of change makes this fertile ground for the application of multiparadigm frameworks such as AQAL. Consequently, it is not surprising that Wilber's work has been quoted in the writings of theorists of organisational transformation since the very first dedicated publications in the field in the mid-1980's.

One element of AQAL that provides it with powerful explanatory capabilities for change topics is its spectrum model of social development and transformation. Given the importance of developmental research in its genesis, it is not surprising that stage-based approaches to transformation can be usefully compared and ultimately located within an AQAL scaffold. AQAL has been used to develop detailed accounts of stage-based development in such areas as leadership

consciousness (Young, 2002), organisational sustainability (Brown, 2005b), organisational culture and organisational systems (Cacioppe & Edwards, 2005b). Cacioppe and Edwards compared some stage-based models of organisation development - Wilber's AQAL, the spiral dynamics model of Beck and Cowan (1996), Barrett's (1998) corporate transformation model, and Torbert's action inquiry model (1999) - to develop an "integrated account of the stages of OD". AQAL was used there as a metatheoretical resource for guiding and informing the development of an overarching approach in a specific field of organisational studies.

As previously pointed out, a feature of AQAL is that its core constructs can be combined to form typologies and normative models of development. For example, the spectrum of developmental levels can be crossed with the individual-collective lens to propose a framework for the investigation of transformation at multiple organisation levels. Such an approach is evident in the work of Pauchant (2005). Pauchant takes the spectrum model and combines it with the individual-collective dimension. He refers to this as the "depth dimension" of "the integral model" and he brackets the many stages of development into three broad categories - the pre-conventional, the conventional and the post-conventional and applies them to the area of leadership (2005, p. 214) to propose a transformational model of leadership. This example gives a flavour of how some of the different lenses with AQAL can be combined in a creative way to both study and develop theories of transformation and change

AQAL metatheory and many of its core concepts are used widely in organisational and psychological studies to consider theories of change and transformation. Its uses include theory building applications such as in the development of typologies and multiparadigm reviews, methodological applications as witnessed in Checkland's work with the holon construct and as an interpretive framework for understanding and explaining complex issues such as spirituality in the workplace. These qualities suggest that AQAL offers considerable advantages as a theory-building resource for the topic of organisational transformation.

## 6. Summary

This chapter has reviewed the scientific literature on the central aspects of this study: organisational transformation, metatheoretical approach to organisational change and the AQAL framework and its application to organisational settings. Historical background was presented on the emergence of the field of organisational transformation. Both the formal (quadrants, levels, lines, states and types) and informal factors (perspective, agency-communion, growth-integration, transformation-translation, relational exchange, internal-external, transition process and the holon construct) explanatory elements of AQAL have been described. It has been argued that the holon construct is of crucial importance in the AQAL framework (as well as other metatheoretical approaches) for two reasons: i) it has the capacity to non-reductively represent developmental phenomena and ii) it

can act as a conceptual framework for accommodating diverse explanatory dimensions. A rationale has also been presented for choosing AQAL as a resource for metatheory building. Having presented a literature review of key aspects of the study, the next section will outline the method for developing an integrative metatheory for organisational transformation.

## Chapter 4: A Method for Building Integral Metatheory

Given our multiparadigm perspective, we believe it would be useful for theory building to be viewed not as a search for *the* truth, but as more of a search for comprehensiveness stemming from different worldviews. This stance implies that the provincialism that comes with paradigm confinement might instead be turned toward the production of more complete views of organisational phenomena via multiparadigm consideration. (Gioia & Pitre, 1990, p. 587-588)

### 1. Objectives

This chapter describes a new qualitative method for metatheory building and applies that method to the topic of organisational transformation. The specific objectives of this chapter are to: i) describe and compare metatheory building methods in organisational studies; ii) propose a new qualitative method for metatheory building; and iii) describe how this method was applied in the current study in building a metatheory for organisational transformation.

### 2. Approaches to Metatheory Building in Organisational Studies

Metatheory building is usually carried out as an exercise in traditional scholarship where the metatheorist follows their own predilections in reviewing theories and developing theory and overarching models. Rarely does this type of conceptual research adhere to a formal research method. One of the few metatheorising methods described in the scientific literature is the procedure known as metatriangulation (Lewis & Grimes, 1999). While metatriangulation has been applied in several studies (see below), it does have significant limitations (discussed below). A new method is developed here which is based on metatriangulation and several other general approaches to constructing theory and metatheory in organisational studies. These other approaches include multiparadigm inquiry (Lewis & Kelemen, 1999), metatheorising (Ritzer, 2001) and a general method for conventional theory building (Wacker, 1998).

Metatriangulation is so named because it uses multiple frames of theoretical reference to construct theory. Standard triangulation uses multiple research *methods* in the study of some empirical phenomenon (Cox & Hassard, 2005). Metatriangulation combines several research *paradigms* or *theoretical perspectives* to improve the understanding of some complex social phenomenon. Saunders and her colleagues (2003, p. 2) describe this method as follows:

Metatriangulation is a three-phase, qualitative meta-analysis process that may be used to explore variations in the assumptions of alternative paradigms, gain insights into these multiple paradigms, and address emerging themes and the resulting theories.

The three phases of metatriangulation are groundwork, data analysis and theory building. The groundwork phase involves defining the research question, specifying the domain of inquiry and choosing data sources. Data analysis involves scrutinising data for core insights and coding that data according to certain paradigms lenses. In the theory building phase paradigm insights and lenses are juxtaposed and assembled into a coherent theoretical framework (Lewis & Grimes, 1999). Metatriangulation has been used to develop metatheory in a variety of areas including power in organisations (Jasperson et al., 2002), communication and information technology (Adriaanse, 2005; Saunders et al., 2003) and organisational geography (Del Casino, Grimes, Hanna & Jones Iii, 2000).

The multiparadigm inquiry approach of Lewis and Kelemen (2002) consist of phases of multiparadigm review, multiparadigm research and metaparadigm theory building. Multiparadigm reviews identify the linkages between paradigms and their associated theoretical schools. Rather than simply summarising or thematically reviewing the findings of particular theorists, multiparadigm reviewers describe the underlying themes and the key conceptual factors that theorists use to explain and understand organisational phenomena. According to Lewis and Grimes (1999, p. 673), multiparadigm review involves the “recognition of divides and bridges in existing theory (e.g. characterising paradigms X and Y)”. The metaparadigm theory building phase uses “assumptions, key factors, linkages and differences” to construct explanatory frameworks which “juxtapose and link conflicting paradigm insights (X and Y) within a novel understanding (Z)”. The multiparadigm review treats other theories as its “data” in that theory from various paradigms provides the raw material from which metatheory is built. Most large-scale theory begins with these types of reviews (Ritzer, 1990). Multiparadigm review is a method for observing the conceptual details of other theories and drawing inferences from those observations with theory building objectives in mind.

Metatriangulation and multiparadigm inquiry have similarities with the metatheorising approach of Ritzer (1992; , 2001). The phase of multiparadigm review corresponds closely with Ritzer’s metatheorising for understanding ( $M_U$ ). Both are foundational procedures for becoming familiar with the relevant sample of theories. An example of multiparadigm review and  $M_U$  in organisational theory is Elrod and Tippet’s (2002) review of process theories of organisational transition from a number of different research paradigms. The phase of multiparadigm research corresponds with Ritzer’s metatheorising as a preparatory step for developing, not an overarching model but, another theory ( $M_P$ ). Metaparadigm theory building corresponds with Ritzer’s overarching metatheorising ( $M_O$ ). Finally, there is Colomy’s (1991) fourth form of metatheorising – metatheorising for adjudication or  $M_A$ . Colomy sees  $M_A$  corresponding to the evaluation and critical assessment phases of standard theory building methods.



Metatriangulation, multiparadigm inquiry and metatheorising follow a similar procedure to that of traditional methods of theory building. These traditional approaches (Dubin, 1978; Wacker, 1998; Whetten, 1989) typically include phases of domain specification, conceptual definitions, clarification of relationships between variables, description of model/system and statement of factual claims, metaconjectures and evaluations. This discussion has identified some strong concordances between metatriangulation, multiparadigm methods, metatheorising and standard theory building methods. The point of distinction is that, while standard theory building works with first-order concepts directly derived from empirical events and experiences (Carlile, 2005; Fawcett, 2005), metatheory building relies on second-order concepts derived from other theory (Ritzer 1991).

### **3. A Qualitative Method for Metatheory Building**

This brief review of metatheory building approaches suggests some major shortcomings in current procedures. The major weakness is that conceptual lenses are identified and described at the paradigm level and not at the much finer level of theory or a theory's core explanatory themes (Saunders et al., 2003). Several theorists have pointed out that the paradigm notion is a very general one that is not intended to distinguish between detailed theoretical features or to apply at the level of theoretical concepts (Goles & Hirschheim, 2000; Hassard & Kelemen, 2002). The problem here is that the metatheory building process results in "paradigm lenses" that simply reproduce existing paradigm boundaries. This means that the initial identification of paradigms largely determines the result of the theory building exercise. Such a method severely limits the reflexive capacity of metatheory building to question the strictures of current paradigms. Second, this paradigm-level analysis of lenses does not encourage the metatheorist to delve into the concepts that connect and distinguish individual theories or their constituent explanatory elements. Third, although metatriangulation does describe a procedural method for developing a "metaparadigm perspective" it does not clearly show how that position can be developed from its analysis of "paradigm lenses". In other words, the method does adequately connect the data analysis phase with the (meta)theory building phase.

The general method described below builds on the comparison of existing approaches and proposes a qualitative method for addresses the weaknesses in existing approaches. This improved method analyses theories at the level of core themes, describes techniques for identifying lenses both within and across paradigm boundaries and allows for a reflexive and ongoing critical development of its outcomes. Table 5.1 summarises the connections between metatheory building methods and proposes a qualitative method of conceptual research for metatheory building. The method includes the following phases:

Phase 1: Groundwork: The groundwork phase of metatheory building sets the context and the basic parameters of the study. Groundwork involves defining the topic of interest, providing a

rational for developing metatheory on that topic, setting the boundaries for the study, reviewing relevant academic literature and describing metatheoretical sources used in the study. Lewis and Grimes (1999), talk here of selecting a topic characterised by expansive and contested research domains with “numerous often conflicting theories” (1999, p. 678). The topic should be “multifaceted [and] characterised by expansive and contested research domains” (1999, p. 678).

Phase 2: Procedures and techniques: The procedures and techniques phase outlines the actions taken used to collect and analyse the conceptual “data” for the research. This phase describes how paradigms and theories chosen for the study are sampled. This phase also involves identifying and justifying the use of particular sampling procedures and analytical techniques (for example, theme analysis) involved in identifying themes, lenses or other second-order concepts are the focus of the study. The range of literature included in the multiparadigm sample is a crucial aspect of the study. Wacker (1998, p. 368) points out that,

For all stages of theory-building, the role of the literature search in the research procedure is extremely important ... Therefore, to assure that all theory-building conditions are filled, an extensive literature search of the academic as well as practitioner articles is required.

Phase 3: Multiparadigm Review: The multiparadigm review helps the researcher to become familiar with the points of connection and distinction between theories. In systematically sifting through theories, models and frameworks, the researcher can identify the second-order concepts of interest. Lewis and Kelemen point out that “Multiparadigm reviews first help raise researchers paradigm consciousness to foster greater awareness of insights and blinders enabled by divergent lenses”. Theories can be grouped according to paradigm categories to help the process of identifying core themes. However, this serves the purely heuristic function of organising the identification of themes and it is important that this process “not reify paradigm distinctions” (Lewis & Kelemen, 2002, p. 263). In the current study the method of text scrutinizing was used to identify themes.

Phase 4: Metatheoretical analysis: This phase involves analysing the themes extracted during the multiparadigm review so that conceptual lenses can be formulated. Bracketing and bridging techniques can be used to develop lenses that emerge from within particular paradigm and/or across several paradigms. The analysis may also involve refining lenses according to theory building criteria such as parsimony, level of abstraction, conservation and comprehensiveness.

Phase 5: Metatheory Building: The metatheory building phase develops the conceptual system for the domain or topic that the studying is focussing on. This phase involves identifying the relationship within and between the lenses (or other second-order concepts) identified in the analysis phase. These relationships are then used to assemble lenses and build the metatheoretical system. As in the current study, exemplar topics may be chosen for describing the

new metatheory. Implications of the metatheory are discussed in this phase. These implications can also include “metaconjectures”, truth claims and propositions that might be used as a basis for developing or evaluating other middle-range theory and empirical research.

Phase 6: Evaluation: In the evaluation phase, the metatheory is appraised according to (meta)theory building criteria. These can include formal criteria such as generalisability and parsimony and/or postmodern criteria like trustworthiness, reflexivity, credibility, transferability (Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Jacques, 1992). It is also during this phase that the any metatheoretical resources used in the research can also be evaluated.

#### 4. An Integral Metatheory for Organisational Transformation

##### 4.1 Research Phases

The general method for metatheory building was applied in the current study’s investigation of organisational transformation. What follows is a summary of how those research phases correspond with the chapters of this study (see Table 4.1) including a more detailed description of the Method Phase as it was applied here.

- *Phase 1: Groundwork:* The groundwork phase of identifying the research topic and specifying the scope of the study is dealt with in Chapters 1 and 2. A review of the academic literature on the phenomenon of interest – organisational transformation - and the chief metatheoretical resource for the study – the AQAL framework – is presented in Chapter 3.
- *Phase 2: Method:* In this current chapter – Chapter 4 - the sampling approach for collecting relevant theories and the techniques used in identifying second-order concepts are outlined. These issues are discussed in depth at the end of this summary.
- *Phase 3: Multiparadigm Review and Analysis:* Chapter 5 presents results from the multiparadigm review and identifies and describes the explanatory lenses for organisational transformation. Chapter 6 explores the relationships within and between these explanatory lenses.
- *Phase 4: Metatheory Building:* The metatheory building phase is tackled in Chapters 7 and 8. A systematic exposition of the metatheory is given in Chapter 7. In this chapter, organisational sustainability is used as an exemplary topic for presenting the integral metatheory for organisational transformation. Implications of the metatheory for the study of organisational transformation are also included here.
- *Phase 5: Evaluation of Metatheory:* Chapter 8 also deals with the issue of evaluation and assesses the metatheory against some common criteria for theory building. This final chapter also discusses the contributions and the limitations of the study.

Table 4.1: A general qualitative method for metatheory building (showing comparison of alternative methods)

General Method for Metatheory Building	Metatheory Building for OT (current study)		Metatriangulation (Lewis & Grimes, 1999)	Multiparadigm Inquiry (Lewis & Kelemen, 2002)	Metatheorising (Ritzer, 2001; Colomy, 1991)	Traditional Theory Building (Wacker, 1998)
	Phase 1: Groundwork	Chapters 1 & 2 Outline the domain of OT to be studied, including definitions and domain/scope of study  Chapter 3 Background and rationale for study of OT (standard review of OT literature  Describe metatheoretical resources for OT (AQUAL)				
<b>Phase 2: Procedures and techniques</b> <u>Sampling</u> : procedures for sampling theories and paradigms <u>Analytical techniques</u> : techniques for identifying lenses			<b>Groundwork 1</b> Define phenomenon of interest Focus paradigm lenses Collect metatheoretical sample	<b>Multiparadigm Review</b> Conceptual research which identifies connections and differences between various theoretical viewpoints and "alternative lenses"	<b>M<sub>U</sub> - Metatheorising for Understanding</b> Reviewing the plurality of paradigms, theories and conceptual frameworks	<b>Domain boundaries</b> Specify domain, identify research topic, carry out literature review  <b>Term definitions</b> Define key terms and concepts
<b>Phase 3: Multiparadigm Review</b> <u>Review</u> : Review multiparadigm literature & identify core themes	<b>Chapter 5</b> Multiparadigm review of OT literature to identify explanatory themes		<b>Data Analysis 1</b> Plan paradigm itinerary Conduct multiparadigm coding Tabulate and exhibit analyses			<b>Variable definitions</b> Identify and define core components of the theory, i.e. variables and concepts
<b>Phase 4: Multiparadigm Analysis</b> <u>Lens definitions</u> : Define and refine conceptual lenses <u>Lens relationships</u> : Specify relations between lenses	<b>Chapter 6</b> Develop themes into lenses using bridging and bracketing  Specify relations between OT lenses		Write paradigm accounts Record and compare paradigm insights	<b>Multiparadigm Research</b> Empirical research carried out from a number of different "paradigm cultures"	<b>M<sub>P</sub> - Metatheorising for Preparing New Theory</b> Developing new theory based on M <sub>U</sub>	<b>Variable relationships</b> Specify relationships between variables
<b>Phase 5: Metatheory Building</b> <u>Build metatheory</u> : Develop metatheoretical system <u>Discuss implications</u> : Develop metaconjectures & propositions	<b>Chapter 7</b> Describe integral metatheory for OT as applied to the exemplar topic of organisational sustainability		<b>Theory Building 1</b> Juxtapose divergent insights Explore metaconjectures Develop metaparadigm perspective	<b>Metaparadigm Theory Building</b> Conceptual research that specifies relations between paradigm lenses	<b>M<sub>O</sub> - Metatheorising to Build Overarching Theory</b> Developing new metatheory based on M <sub>U</sub>	<b>Statement of theory</b> Formal description of theory
<b>Phase 6: Evaluation</b> <u>Perform evaluation</u> : Evaluate metatheory.	<b>Chapter 8</b> Evaluate metatheory, discuss implications, assess AQUAL framework		Critique the resulting theory Articulate critical self-reflection		<b>M<sub>A</sub> - Metatheorising for adjudicating</b> Adjudicating on the scope & adequacy of other theories.	<b>Truth claims</b> Develop hypotheses or "truth claims"  <b>Evaluation Phase</b> Apply criteria for theory evaluation, discuss limitations and further research

In the following sections, an outline of the sampling and analysis techniques used in this study is presented in more detail.

#### 4.2 Sampling Procedures

Maximum variation was selected as the sampling procedure. Maximum variation is a purposive form of sampling and is appropriate for research that seeks out “important shared patterns that cut across cases and derive their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity” (Patton, 1990, p. 172). With this type of sampling, “Any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest (Patton, 1990, p. 172).

The chief objective with this form of sampling was to end up with a pool of theories that represented the great diversity of explanatory approaches towards organisational transformation. Two means were employed for maximising the variety of theories included in the multiparadigm review. The first involved searching through online databases. The databases included Blackwell Synergy, JStor, Proquest 500 International, Worldcat, Wiley Interscience, Science direct, Academic Search Premier, Business Source Premier, Soc Index and Sage. The term “organisational transformation”, its synonyms and variants were used in keyword searches in online databases for organisational, management and business studies, sociology, psychology and other disciplines where such literature might appear. The search results were used to identify a comprehensive collection of articles which described theories of transformational change in organisations over the past thirty years. The second means for maximising the sample variation involved using previous reviews of organisational change. These reviews identified a great range of theories and paradigms of change and transformation (see 4.2).

Table 4.2: Literature reviews used to maximise theory sampling

Review	Focus of Review
Burrell & Morgan (1979)	sociological paradigms of change
Levy & Merry (1986)	paradigms and theories of organisational transformation
Chapman (2002)	theories of organisational transformation
Dunphy (1997)	theories of organisational change
Beer & Nohria (2000)	paradigms and theories of organisational change and transformation
French, Bell & Zawacki (2005)	paradigms and theories of organisational change and transformation
Porras & Silvers (1991)	theories of organisational change and transformation
Morgan (1996)	paradigms and metaphors for organisations
Weick & Quinn (1999)	Paradigms and theories of organisational change

From these two means of maximising the sample of relevant theories, approximately 600 articles and books were identified as an initial sample for consideration. These were reduced to around 300 documents by reading abstracts and contents pages to arrive at a set of texts that provided detailed descriptions of theories and models of organisational transformation. This set of articles and books and the theories they described formed the basic sample for the study.

### 4.3 Paradigm categories

The many theories of transformation were initially sorted into paradigm categories. This process aided the theme analysis and helped to organise the resulting information. Lewis and Kelemen (2002, pp. 260-261) also point out that,

By categorising extant literature within a paradigm framework, reviewers distinguish the selection focus of different lenses. Highlighting paradigm diversity serves to open theoretical choice ... all lenses are inherently exclusionary and parochial. By clarifying paradigm alternatives, researchers may compare their work to a wider realm of literature, recognise their theoretical predilections, and appreciate insights enabled by opposing viewpoints.

The paradigm categories were particularly useful in appreciating “insights enabled by opposing viewpoints” and in the analysis of relationships between explanatory lenses. The range of paradigms used for categorising theories was based on, i) paradigms outlined in existing reviews of theories of transformation and change (see Table 4.2) and ii) on other paradigm groupings that emerged from the sample of theories themselves (see Table 4.3). For example, no existing review had identified a learning paradigm as a particular perspective on organisational transformation and yet there were many theories that discussed transformation within a learning context. Consequently, a learning paradigm group was created to accommodate these theories.

Table 4.3: Transformational paradigms, representative theories and authors

Paradigm	Theories/Models of Transformation	Representative Authors
A. Cultural	collective culture: myth, ritual, worldviews personal culture: beliefs, personal values	Phillip & McKeown (2004), Clapper (2001)
B. Developmental	action inquiry, spiral dynamics, corporate transformation	Torbert (2004), Cacioppe & Edwards, 2005b
C. Evolutionary	population ecology, ecological theory of organisations	Carayannis (1999), Maton (2000)
D. Functionalist	business process re-engineering, technology and transformation, corporate transformation	Burrell & Morgan (1979) Sarker & Lee (1999), Ensmenger (2003)
E. Interpretive	feminist theory, environmental models, large group interventions	Boje & Rosalie (2003b), Stroeh & Jaatinen (2001)
F. Learning	dialogical learning, knowledge levels, double- and triple-loop learning	Van Eijnatten, van Galen & Fitzgerald (2003), Akbar (2003)
G. Multiparadigm	theory e/theory o, network organisation, discontinuous change	Burrell & Morgan (1979) Schultz & Hatch (1996), Chapman (2002)
H. Organisational environment	holonic enterprise theory, inter-organisational theory	Kilman & Covin (1988), McHugh, Merli & Wheeler (1995)
I. Paradox/Dialectic	competing values framework, dialectical theories	Quinn & Cameron (1988b), Davis, Maranville & Obloj (1997)
J. Process	Lewin's field theory, transition cycle, rhizomic model, "n" step models	Chia (Chia, 1999), Collins (1998)
K. Psychological/Cognitive	logics of action, reframing theory, information processing, decision-making theories,	Spitaledda (2003), King (1997), Bacharach, et al., (1996)
L. Spirituality	spirituality and the new sciences, contemplative leadership	Benefiel (2005), Eggert (1998)
M. Systems and New Sciences	soft systems theory, complex adaptive systems, dissipative structures, chaos theory,	Lemak, Henderson & Wenger (2004), Lewis (1996)
N. Teamwork	meso theory, group theory, team-based approach to transformation	Dionne, Yammarino, Atwater & Spangler (2004), Burke, Wilson, Talas (2005)
O. Transformational leadership	top-down, bottom-up, combined approaches	Beach (2006), Rooke & Torbert (1998)

Table 4.3 provides the complete list of paradigms of transformative change, some representative theories and research. The paradigms and their constituent theories and models are presented in alphabetical order. In some cases a theory utilises themes from more than one paradigm. In these instances the dominant theme has been used to identify the appropriate paradigm for categorisation. However, because themes from across paradigms were also collated, these secondary themes were not lost in this categorisation process. The grouping of theories into paradigms permitted an orderly analysis and aided in the tracking and collation of the results. The theme analysis itself occurred at the much finer level of detail within each theory. The method of analysis is described in more detail in the following section.

#### *4.4 Identifying explanatory themes*

The basic sample of around three hundred articles and books was analysed to identify the second-order concepts of interest, that is, fundamental explanatory themes for organisational transformation. This took the form of a thematic analysis technique known as “text scrutinising” (Luborsky, 1994; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The conceptual themes identified in this process provide the basic “data” for the subsequent theory building phase of the study. Scrutinising texts for core themes involves looking for textual elements that disclose patterns. These elements include (Ryan & Bernard, 2003):

- repetitions: These are “topics that occur and reoccur” (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p. 83);
- indigenous categories: The conceptual schemes that authors use to organise their texts;
- metaphors and analogies: Identifying themes through root metaphors and guiding analogies;
- similarities and differences: This involves finding convergences and divergences within the text;
- linguistic connectors: Terms such as “because”, “since”, “always”, and “as a result” often disclose core assumptions, causal inferences and the basic orientations of the research;
- theory-related material: The thematic content is often disclosed by explicit reference to theory;
- graphical material: Images, diagrams and other graphical material can indicate core themes;
- structural themes: Themes can be evident in the article titles, headings and subheadings.

The scrutinising of the sample of texts identified the basic themes that theorists use in their explanations for organisational transformation. These explanatory themes cover a great range of different orientations towards explaining how, why, what and when organisational transformation occurs.

#### *4.5 Building explanatory lenses through bracketing and bridging*

The large number of explanatory themes included much overlap and conceptual redundancy. They were consolidated and reduced in number through using bracketing and bridging techniques (Lewis

& Grimes, 1999). Applying these techniques resulted in the amalgamation of themes to form abstract explanatory lenses. These lenses were used as the building blocks for the metatheory building phase of the study.

Bracketing is a qualitative form of thematic analysis used for finding underlying concepts within particular theories and paradigms. Bracketing is essentially a “data reduction” process where researchers “ignore certain aspects of complex phenomena and focus on facets and issues of particular interest” (Lewis & Grimes, 1999, p. 673). Bracketing identifies “the underlying universals” (Gearing, 2004, p. 1433) that a particular theory adopts to research a phenomenon. The following is an example of the bracketing technique performed in this study.

Several theories within the learning paradigm explain transformation as a process requiring radical change in an individual’s learning processes. From this view, subjective shifts in such things as interpretive frameworks and conscious intentions are seen as fundamental for deep change. In contrast, other theories focus on behavioural forms of learning where some method, technique or practical situation has to be physically engaged in for learning to occur. Such theories emphasised the need to change structures and systems to enable individual behaviours to change. Still more theories see the learning process of encounter between individual and collectives as the most crucial aspect of change. These theories speak of the cyclical nature of learning and employ terms such as single-, double- and triple- loop learning. Bracketing these strands of explanation we can say that organisational learning is a cyclical process that requires interior reflection and exterior behavioural change for both individuals and collectives. Such a conception conforms to several learning cycle models. This “learning lens” will be described in detail in the following chapter. This example shows how bracketing together themes from various theories within the same paradigm category can form a unified and coherent conceptual lens for explaining transformational phenomena.

Bridging looks for connections and transition zones that span paradigms. In other words, the bridging is a form of theme analysis that identifies conceptual lenses from “across paradigms” (Lewis & Grimes, p. 675). An example of bridging can be seen in the wide use of stage-based models of transformation. Several paradigm categories saw transformation as a series of qualitative stages through which organisations transitioned in complex and idiosyncratic ways. These paradigms included spirituality, leadership, development, and learning. Bridging involves a type of inter-paradigm scanning that seeks out strong thematic concordances between theories from different paradigms and brings them together to form explanatory lenses.

In summary, the bracketing and bridging techniques are applied to maximise parsimony, minimise conceptual redundancy and retain uniqueness of each of the explanatory lenses. Bracketing is done within a paradigm and bridging is performed between paradigms.



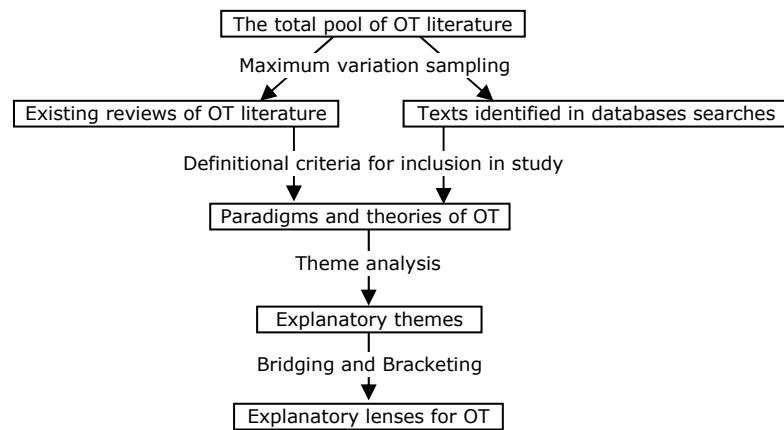


Figure 4.1: Methodological phases for developing explanatory lenses

The methodological phases involved in developing explanatory lenses are shown in Figure 4.1. The figure shows that maximum variation sampling procedure was used to generate a diverse sample of theories. These theories were grouped into paradigms to aid in the analysis and organisation of information. From these theories, a large number of themes were found and, through the use of bracketing and bridging techniques, core explanatory lenses identified. An audit trail, that is, a scheme for identifying how specific lenses relate to themes, theories and paradigms, has been kept to enable the tracking of how each chunk of “data” is connected to each lens (see Appendix B).

## 5. Summary

This chapter has compared metatheory building methods used in organisational studies and other social sciences. From these comparisons, and suggestions for improvements from other researchers (Saunders et al., 2003), a general method for metatheory building has been proposed and its phases described. This resultant metatheory building method provides a basis for identifying second-order concepts at the level of individual theories, in contrast to the paradigm-level approach of other methods. This new method has been applied in the current study and a summary has been given of the phases of research for developing an integral metatheory for organisational transformation. In particular, this chapter has described the sampling and analysis techniques used to identify explanatory lenses. In the next chapter the results of this analysis will be described in detail.

## Chapter 5: Multiparadigm Review and Analysis

Metatheory treats the multiplicity of theorizations as an opportunity for multiple operations of analysis and synthesis. (Weinstein & Weinstein, 1991, p. 140)

### 1. Objectives

This chapter reports the results of the multiparadigm review and analysis of literature on organisational transformation. A multiparadigm review differs from a standard literature review in that it analyses the underlying, second-order concepts of theories from many different research paradigms. Like other meta-analytical forms of research, a multiparadigm review is “much more than what we usually mean by a literature review” (Noblit & Hare, 1988, p. 9). The purpose of the multiparadigm review and analysis is to identify the core explanatory themes for each of the theories of organisational transformation and from them to describe the lenses that theorists use to explore transformational phenomena. In following chapters, these lenses will be located with a metatheoretical framework. The objectives of this chapter are to: i) report the results of the theme analysis, ii) describe the lenses identified through the bracketing and bridging analysis, and iii) provide a collation and summary of the explanatory lenses identified.

### 2. Results of Theme Analysis

The sampling of theories resulted in a wide range of conceptual approaches to explaining transformation. From scrutinising the set of texts of around 300 articles and books, 472 separate themes relating to the explanation of transformation in organisations were found. Some theories had multiple themes running throughout their descriptions and theoretical frameworks while others focused on only one or two key themes. Examples of themes for a number of different paradigms are provided in Table 5.1. For example, under the cultural paradigm some major themes were shared worldviews, interpretive schemes, assumptions, myth, and story as sense-making processes.

Table 5.1: Paradigm categories and example themes

Paradigm Category	Examples of explanatory themes
Cultural	rituals, ceremony, symbols and archetypes, interpretive schemes, shared worldviews and assumptions, myth and story as both sense-making and inspiring vision
Developmental	stages of personal transformation, stages of development of collective identity, emergent processes, levels of worldview development, the transformational process, time span
Functionalist	reproduction of behavioural norms and structural systems, IT and whole-system change, design of physical environment, alignment/congruence, structural redesign
Interpretive	hierarchical nature of organisations, empowerment, emotion, indigenous culture, message conveying strategies, power, corporate social responsibility, multiple stakeholder model
Learning	learning cycle, learning process, mediation is transformational, organisational learning, collaborative communication, intersubjectivity, multilevel nature of learning,
Organisational environment	inter-organisational cooperation, unions and governments, avalanche environmental change, environmental circumstances, trans-organisational source of transformation
Process	phase-based models of transition, multilevel nature of change, micro-macro dynamics, organisational hierarchy, transformational tracks, non-linear progression
Spirituality	stages of spiritual transformation, relationship, connectedness, environmental crisis, transformational leadership, holism and spirituality, the emergence of new worldviews

As already mentioned, the paradigm groupings served an heuristic purpose for categorising theories according to their primary explanatory approach to transformation. There were significant redundancies, overlaps and repetitions among themes from both within and between different paradigms. As an example of redundancy between paradigms, themes on features of stage-based transformation were found not only in the developmental paradigm, but also in the spirituality, leadership and learning paradigms. Redundancies were also found within paradigms. For example, many theories within the process paradigm offered phase-based models that differed only slightly in their type and number of transition phases. The theme analysis techniques of bridging and bracketing served to reduce these repetitions and redundancies.

### 3. Lenses Identified through Bracketing

In this section, themes from within the same research paradigm are bracketed together to develop lenses that are a paradigm's definitive means for explaining organisational transformation. For example, under the learning paradigm will be found all those lenses that learning theories propose as fundamental to explaining radical change. The paradigms are presented in alphabetical order.

#### 3.1 Culture paradigm

Organisational culture is a term that covers a large amount of conceptual territory. Edgar Schein, a noted authority in this field, has said that, in terms of our conceptualisations of organisational culture, "We are still operating in the context of discovery and are seeking hypotheses, rather than testing specific theoretical formulations" (Schein, 2005, p. 125). Keeping in mind Schein's caution, the following are some of the major explanatory themes identified in the culture paradigm literature.

i) Culture as organisational interiors: Organisational culture is, "a shared, frame of reference, comprising a collection of deeply varied values and assumptions" (Forster, 2005, p.322) and includes all those "taken-for-granted, underlying, and usually unconscious assumptions" "symbols, stories, myths", "rituals and rites", "values, norms, ideologies, charters, and philosophies" Schein (2005). Figure 5.1 shows culture as the subjective, interior aspects of the organisation. Theories from this paradigm regard a transformation of these interior aspects culture as essential for any valid occurrence of deep change.

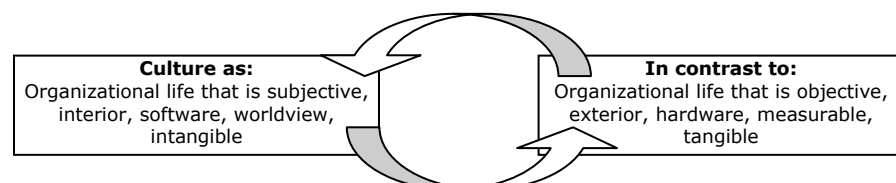


Figure 5.1: Culture as the intangible interiors of organizational life

ii) Organisational archetypes: Transformation can be regarded as the reorganisation of an individual's or organisation's entire cultural system or "archetype" (Greenwood, Suddaby & Hinings, 2002). Culture is not simply a random collage of values and idiosyncratic worldviews (Greenwood et al., 2002; Griffiths, 1997) but can be seen as a "design archetype" (Greenwood & Hinings, 1988, p. 295). It is this coherent structure or archetype that transforms from one organisational design to another (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996). McNulty and Ferlie (2004, p. 31) point out that some theorists "use the concept of 'archetype' to operationalise organisational transformation".

iii) Organisational identity: Several theorists use the notion of "organisational identity" (Weick & Roberts, 1993), "organisational mind" (Sen, 2003, p. 49), autopoiesis (Hernes & Bakken, 2003; Kay, 2001) to express the idea that social collectives, such as organisations, possess a holistic and collective capacity for self-organisation. These approaches emphasise the whole-systems nature of transformation and draw on holistic concepts such as identity to develop their explanations. For example, as Poole explains below, radical change implies that an organisation moves from a non-transformed identity to a transformed identity:

A second-order type change implies that the change of the pretransformation organisation identity will be revised during organisation change and replaced by 'transformed' organisation identity. (Poole, 1998, p. 48-49)

Without a transformation in organisational identity no consolidated movement in the system as a whole is possible.

### *3.2 Developmental and life-cycle paradigm*

i) Transformational stages: Developmental theories see transformation as a non-linear movement across qualitatively distinct stages of consciousness, cognition, morality and so on. Here, the course of development is not, as it is with life-cycle models, a time-related sequential unfolding of stages but is an interior process subject to a complex range of factors including environmental conditions (Fisher, Rooke & Torbert, 2003). Stage-based theories of transformation investigate many aspects of organisational life including structural organisation, planning, corporate consciousness, core management tasks, leadership, employee consciousness, worldviews, focus of awareness, motivation, and needs. Table 5.2 summarises these theories and compares their stages.

Comparing the rich descriptions provided by the different theories makes it possible to calibrate stages against each other so that a full spectrum of stages and substages can be presented. The notable point of this comparison is that, there are correspondences between the models in their sequencing of stages. For example, all models describe formative stages of development that

Table 5.2: A Comparison of Stage-based models of Organisational Transformation

Stage	Byrd (1982)	Nelson & Burns (1984)	Beck & Cowan (1996)	Bleich (1996)	Barrett (1996)		Fisher, Rooke, & Torbert, (2003)		Lester (2003)	Cacioppe & Edwards (2005b)
8			Holistic, spontaneous				Liberating disciplines (ironist)	Post-conventional		Integral
7b			Systemic, developmental, world-centric	Boundaryless	Society	Spiritual	Foundational community of inquiry (magician)	Postconventional	(decline)	Visioning
7a					Community					
6			Egalitarian, sociocentric	Stakeholder value	Meaningful		Collaborative inquiry (strategist)			Contributing
5b						Mental	Social network (individualist)	Conventional	Renewal	Achieving
5a	Renewing	High-performance Proactive	Individualist, meritocracy	Professional			System productivity (achiever)			
4c					Transformative		Experiments (expert)	Success		Organising
4b	Consolidating Controlling		Authoritarian, absolutist	Technocrat						
4a	Planning						Incorporation (diplomat)			Asserting
3b	Organising		Egocentric, exploitative	Shareholder value	Self-esteem					
3a				Ownership						
2	Staffing	Reactive	Tribalistic, peer group focus, compulsive		Relationship	Emotional	Investment (opportunistic)	Preconventional	Survival	Bonding
1b			Instinctive, survival-sense		Survival	Physical	Conception (impulsive)		existence (birth)	Surviving
1a										

emphasise organisational survival and relationship building. Adopting terminology from the field of human development, these are referred to as preconventional stages. Following these are stages of organising and achievement. These stages are concerned with the conventional functions of developing efficient and effective organisational systems and cultures. Then follow stages to do with collaborative learning, meaning-making and contributing to the broader community. These are the postconventional stages. Finally, there are stages referred to as integral, holistic or spiritual where there is an integration of preceding stages in the pursuit of an ongoing process of transformation, what Torbert and his colleagues call “transformational inquiry” (Fisher, Rooke, Torbert, 2003). These are called the post-postconventional levels of organisational transformation.

ii) Sedimentation/layering: Several authors (Cacioppe & Edwards, 2005b; Cooper, Hinings, Greenwood & Brown, 1996; Levy & Merry, 1986) make the point that previous organisational stages or are not completely removed when a new stage becomes dominant. Instead, there is a process of “sedimentation” where new stages are layered over old ones so that the functional and cultural capacities of previous forms of organising are included within the range of capacities of the new stage (Cooper, et al, 1996, p. 624).

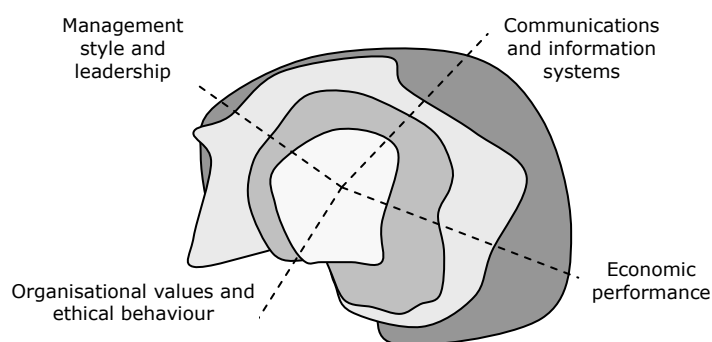


Figure 5.2: Sedimentation for various aspects of OT

Figure 5.2 depicts the inclusive nature of stage-based development and the sedimentation process where organisations can simultaneously exhibit forms of organising from several different stages of development. The figure represents an organisation that has developed a level of consistency across several important dimensions but its capacity for supporting those organising aspects with an adequate values base is lacking. The idea of sedimentation helps to explain the complex layering observed in the systems, activities and cultural life of any organisation (Cowan & Todorovic, 2000).

### 3.3 Evolution and ecology paradigm

i) Environmental selection (variation, selection, retention and reproduction): A major theme of evolutionary approaches deals with the dynamics of selecting new organisational forms (Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996). From this perspective, transformation comes about through the selection and retention of innovative capacities that are aligned with the demands of niche organisational and

social environments. Variation refers to innovative and experimental activities and flexibilities within organisations that can either flourish or drop away depending on their selection by changing environments. The selection process can be implemented either within organisations or by dynamic environments that lie outside the organisation. Successful innovations are retained and reproduced to go on to become a major activity or dominant orientation of the organisation. This cycle of innovative variation, selection and retention (and reproduction) creates the imperative for organisations to transform. Figure 5.3 shows this cycle within the context of qualitatively different transformational phases.

ii) Evolution-revolution: The variation-selection-retention model of evolutionary dynamics has many similarities with the punctuated equilibrium model of organisational transformation. The reiterating variation-selection process results in the alteration of periods of incremental or evolutionary change with periods of transformational or revolutionary change. Periods of incremental change and radical transformation alternate as new organisational forms emerge and are selected for and retained. Figure 5.3 depicts this transformational process for some major characteristics of an organisation, its people, culture, tasks and structure (see Tushman and O'Reilly, 1996).

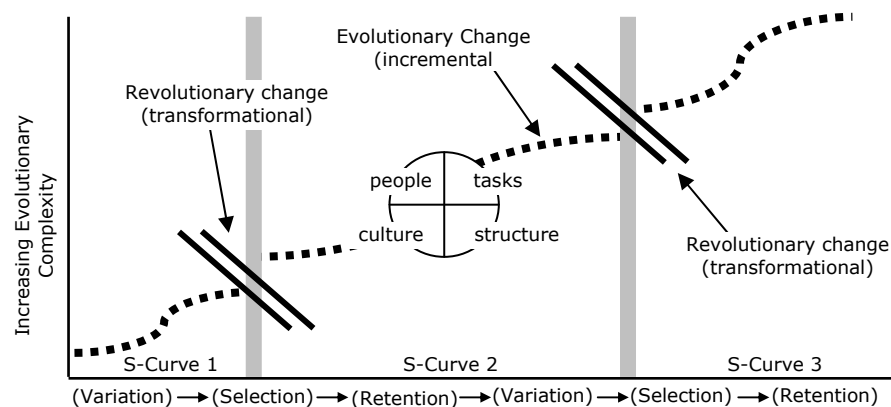


Figure 5.3: Evolutionary and revolutionary stages in organizational change

Organisations faced with dramatically changing environments need to be “ambidextrous” in handling both incremental and transformational change (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2004).

iii) Coevolution: One group of themes within the evolutionary paradigm emphasises the concordances between micro, meso and macrolevels in the transformation process. Ford and Backoff make the point that organisations can be “construed as located in coevolving environments” (1988, p. 109). This co-evolution means that the interaction within and between organisations and their environments produces an evolutionary response in each. Radical change is seen as a holarchic pattern with individuals, groups, organisations, organisational populations, communities, and societies all coevolving together (see Figure 5.4) (Ford & Backoff, 1988; Ford & Ford, 1994)

### 3.4 Functionalist paradigm

i) Growth lens: A small number of functionalist theories explain organisational transformation as a transitioning between levels or stages of economic functioning and productive performance (Wood, 1999). To continue to be economically successful, organisations need to create new forms of structure and new productive processes that correspond to these various stages of growth. Wood (1999) sees these stages as discontinuous and defined by fundamentally different “actions, strategies and behaviour”. Functionalist theories describe stages in association with particular milestones in the life-cycle of an organisation (Lester, 2003). Typically, these stages follow the pattern of, i) conception, ii) start-up, iii) expansion, iv) consolidation, v) decline/renewal (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.3: Some Organisational Life-Cycle Models

	<b>Life-Cycle Growth Models and Representative Theorists</b>				
<b>Stage</b>	Life-cycles and management (Miller, 1991)	Life-Cycles Features (Daft, 1992)	Life Stages of Nonprofits (Simon, 2001)	Stakeholders (Jawahar & McLaughlin, 2001)	Review of theories (Lester, Parnell & Carraher, 2003)
<b>6</b>			revue and renew	decline/transition	decline/renewal
<b>5</b>	aristocrat – excessive structures	very large, very bureaucratic	produce and sustain	mature	success
	bureaucrat – overly organised				
<b>4</b>	administrator – efficient systems	large, bureaucratic			
<b>3</b>	builder and explorer – growth	medium, pre-bureaucratic	ground and grow	emerging growth	survival
<b>2</b>	barbarian – basic systems	small, non-bureaucratic	found and frame	start-up	existence
<b>1</b>	prophet – not organised		imagine and inspire		

ii) Technology: Several theories of transformation regard technological innovation, particularly in the communication and information technology (CIT) field, as the most important driving force for the emergence of new organisational forms (Dervitsiotis, 2003; Gray, 1999). CIT is not only seen as the major external imperative for propelling an organisation onto the transformation pathway but also as the key internal means for managing radical change (O'Callaghan, 1998; Yates & Van Maanen, 2001).

iii) Efficiency/productivity: The theme of transformation through organisational efficiency and improved productivity is a prominent one throughout much of the functionalist literature. Efficiency-based theories recognised that dramatic improvements in employees' productivity, service delivery, product costs, etc., were not sustainable without corresponding “reengineering” of the systems and structures that defined the core characteristics of the organisation. Levels of efficiency and productivity are often associated with particular forms of organisational functioning. For example, the start-up stage has low levels of efficiency and productivity. As the organisation moves through its life-cycle, the efficiency and productivity of organisational systems increases until the stage of consolidation. At the point of decline/renewal the organisation must face the decision either to undertake the difficult path of self-renew itself or to risk going into decline (see Figure 5.4).



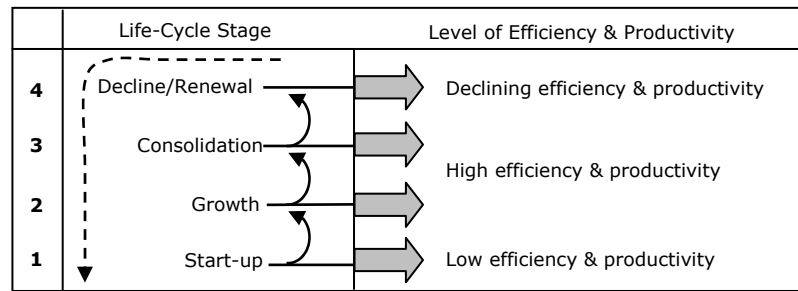


Figure 5.4: Efficiency and productivity and life-cycle stage

iv) Physical design: A number of functionalist approaches made mention of the importance of the physical design and ergonomics in transformation. Cameron (2003), for example, stressed the importance of workplace design and the impact of physical ambience on emotion and mood in workplace. The principle here is that physical and ergonomic environments, workplace design, and settings that are conducive to safe and healthy occupational endeavours form the basis of an individual's capacity to produce work, to be creative and to find contentment in the workplace.

v) Time span: Time is a variable that occupies a crucial place in organisational research and particularly in theories of change and transformation (Ancona, Goodman, Lawrence & Tushman, 2001). Functionalist theories make a distinction between long-term and short-term change and associate transformational change with long-term patterns of growth. This is particularly true for the different levels of growth propose in life-span models of transformation. Wood makes this distinction in his discussion of long-term growth cycles.

An organisation's ability to make the leap from one curve to the next is the key to long-term growth. Once your company has made it through the first growth cycle, it's going to experience the cycle all over again. You face all the same challenges, just at another level. (Wood, 1999, p. 3)

Struckman and Yammarino (2003) also use the time lens as a way of defining transformative and incremental forms of change. They dichotomise the time variable into long and short-term categories and look at this time dimension in the context of changes in an organisation's core and peripheral structures. The result is a framework of four types of change – short and long-term radical change and short and long-term continuous change.

### 3.5 Interpretive paradigm

i) Gender: Gender is a central theme in many postmodern theories of transformation. Feminist theories of transformation in organisations have emphasised three views on the place of women and the feminine in the workplace (Kark, 2004; Kark, Shamir & Chen, 2003; Knights & McCabe, 2002). The most common areas of shared concern among the different gender-related theories of

transformation are organisational hierarchy, participation in decision-making, marginalisation, personal and social power, and the implications within social settings of organisational transformation for communities and global systems (see Knights & Kerfoot, 2004).

ii) The interpretive turn: Postmodernity is associated with the “interpretive turn” towards the analysis of text, communication and systems of meaning. Interpretive schemes are a common explanatory theme among postmodern theories of change (Deetz, 2003). The focus here is on the role of interpretation in how an organisation makes sense of its internal and external environments. From this perspective transformational change comes about through radical change in an organisation’s communicative worldviews, its shared meanings and interpretive schemes (Stroeh & Jaatinen, 2001).

iii) Experiential approaches: Postmodern approaches often use experiential explanations in their study of transformation in organisations (Collins & Rainwater, 2005; Dixon, 1998). The personal impact of large-scale change on employees offers a more grounded way of understanding the realities involved in transformational events. For example, change always provokes strong emotional responses and yet such impacts have typically been neglected in functionalist literature (Collins & Rainwater, 2005). Research in this tradition attempts to “capture the lived experience of change” and to uncover the “uncertain, emotive, shifting and contradictory nature of managerial intentions” (Badham & Garrety, 2003, p. 26). Table 5.4 provides a summary of the contrasts between experiential and functionalist theories of organisation transformation. Where experiential approaches focus on individual experiences and the impact of change on the microlevel, functionalist approaches concentrate on structural change and the macrolevel of the organisational system.

Table 5.4: Contrasts between experiential and functionalist theories

Issue	Experiential Concern	Functionalist Concern
<b>Level of focus</b>	microlevel of the individual	macrolevel of the organisation
<b>Ontological focus</b>	emotions and experiential impacts	behaviours, systems and productivity
<b>Human experience</b>	the “blender of change”	opportunity for improvement
<b>Worker portrayal</b>	the worker as victim of change	the worker as resistant to change
<b>Language</b>	change as chaotic and unpredictable	change as programmatic and controllable
<b>Timeline</b>	ongoing	according to timelines and deadlines.
<b>Structure</b>	destructuring	Restructuring
<b>Communication</b>	uninformed	one way information

iv) Indigenous approaches: A small number of studies looked at organisational transformation from the perspective of indigenous peoples. The conceptual approaches behind these studies emphasise indigenous culture as the driving force behind change. Consequently, the belief system or interpretive schemes of the community organisations involved are seen as the target of the transformation process. Change is regarded as transformational when “the members of the

organisation understand themselves and the organisation through a new interpretive scheme whose source lies in traditional aboriginal values” (Newhouse & Chapman, 1996, p. 1001). This interpretive approach also values the input of “wise elders” – the people who are regarded as spiritual and cultural leaders in traditional communities.

v) Mediation and communication: A great many postmodern theories of transformation see text, language and communication as the primary site for transformational potential in an organisation (Cooper & Burrell, 1988; Deetz, 1995; Stroeh & Jaatinen, 2001; Taylor & Every, 2000). Transforming communication creates transformational relationships. Such approaches emphasise the role of social mediation in transformation. Social mediation occurs in the exchanges between two or more social entities, for example, in the relationships between individuals or between organisations in industry groups. Social mediation of radical change becomes particularly important when organisations are seen in the context of complex inter-organisational environments.

vi) Stakeholders: Stakeholder models of organisational transformation have arisen because of concerns that the narrow focus on ownership has led to unintended negative consequences for communities and societies in general. Stakeholder models are based on the premise that increased community participation in organisational culture will lead to transformational goals that are more in line with the values and goals of those communities (Deetz, 1995; Jawahar & McLaughlin, 2001).

vii) Diversity: Diversity was a central theme in theories that see the inclusion of difference as fundamental to transformational change. Deetz summarises this view as follows (1995, p. 6): “We need widespread participation because diverse group participation in corporate decisions will lead to better decisions than are currently being made”. Broad and varied participation is the central theme of diversity theories of transformation (Dreachslin, 1999a). With participation comes rejuvenation in an organisation’s capacity to explore new ways of doing things (Ford, 2005).

### *3.6 Learning paradigm*

i) Learning process: Theories of learning and transformation emphasise the dynamic connections between change in behavioural action and emotional response and intellectual reflection. Learning is a social process that involves individuals as well as collectives. It is a multifaceted process that engages both personal agency as well as social relationships (Easterby-Smith & Lyles, 2003). The reciprocal nature of these elements means that learning is often represented as a cyclical process that moves across traditional boundaries between individuals and collectives and between interior subjective states and exterior objective behaviours. Consequently, the learning process in this typically described as a cycle consisting of phases of, i) behavioural activity, ii) experiencing, observing and reflecting, iii) interpreting and meaning formation, iv) testing implications and evaluating the results (see Figure 5.5).

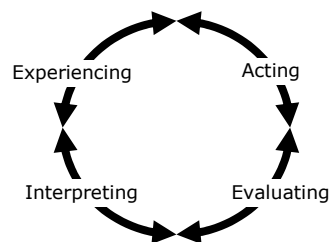


Figure 5.5: The learning cycle

ii) Learning loops: Learning theories discriminate between various types of learning and draw a distinction between these types using such terms as “lower level” and “higher level” learning (Fry & Griswold, 2003), single loop and double loop learning (Argyris & Schon, 1978), and adaptive and generative learning (Senge, 1990). This higher (double and triple loop) learning enables an organisation to question its core assumptions and this allows for the development of a much deeper understanding of the possibilities for radical change (Rowley, 2006).

iii) Knowledge levels: An important concept in organisational learning approaches to transformation is how the outcomes of single, double and triple loop learning result in similarly multileveled bodies of organisational knowledge. Knowledge levels are associated with distinct patterns of organisational transformation and the qualitative shift to new forms of organising entails similar discontinuous shifts to higher forms of both learning and knowledge (Gorman, 2004). Akbar, in his discussion of knowledge levels stresses this link between transformation and the capacity of the organisation’s learning paradigm or “theory in use” to effect “new knowledge” (2003, p. 2009).

Knowledge levels also provide the basis to explain the differences in levels of transformative effects of new knowledge. ... The transformative effects of single and double loop learning are differentiated on the basis of whether or not these are restricted within the organisation’s “theory in use” (Argyris, 1976, 1977). The level of transformative effect stems from the scope that a given knowledge level provides.

The concept of knowledge levels links ideas about the sense-making capacity of organisations and how that relates to transformative potentials (Moss, 2001).

### 3.7 Multiparadigm and eclectic approaches

i) Multiparadigm thinking: Multiparadigm thinking is an approach to theorising that acknowledges the contributions of many different conceptual orientations toward organisation transformation. It also attempts to find some system of complementary relations between these various contributions. In contrast, eclectic approaches are more pragmatic in that they attempt to use whatever theories, models and concepts that might be at hand for understanding a particular aspect of change. In

identifying core conceptual assumptions and their relationships, the goal of multiparadigm theory building can be seen not as “a search for *the* truth, but is more of a search for comprehensiveness stemming from different worldviews” (Gioia & Pitre, 1990, p. 587). This “comprehensiveness” takes the form of large-scale frameworks in which models and theories can be systematically situated.

ii) Subjective-Objective: Change theorists often assume that either subjective or objective ontologies are responsible for transformation. In their multiparadigm analysis of organisation theory, Burrell and Morgan (1979) identify the subjective–objective dimension as one of their core conceptual lenses for comparing theories. The subjective-objective dimension delineates between theories which, on one hand, see reality as “the product of individual consciousness ... cognition ... [and] mind” or, on the other hand, see it as “external to the individual – imposing itself on individual consciousness from without” (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 1). This conceptual lens enables a distinction to be made between theories of change that focus on tangible, empirical factors those that look at the more intangible and subjective aspects of organisations (see Figure 5.6). Burrell and Morgan (1979, p.1) describe research paradigms as differing in their understanding of, “the nature of knowledge as being hard, real and capable of being transmitted in tangible form” and knowledge that “is of a softer, more subjective, spiritual or even and transcendental kind”. The subjective-objective lens opens the possibility of investigating theories in their differing orientations to such issues as causality, ontology, methodology, human nature and epistemology (see Figure 5.6).

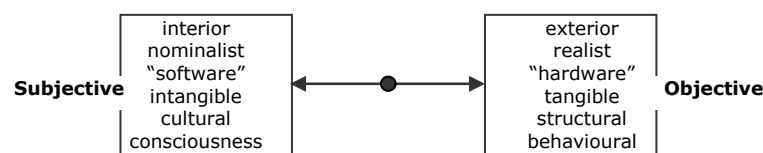


Figure 5.6: The subjective-objective lens

iii) Radical and regulatory change: Multiparadigm frameworks of change often include a dimension that distinguishes between radical or transformative change and regulatory or incremental change. This dimension offers explanations that focus either on the need to retain stability and the status quo or on the need for revolutionary change and transformation. Burrell and Morgan use “regulation” to refer to explanations of change which emphasise the “underlying unity and cohesiveness” of social entities (1979, p. 17). They use the term “radical change” to refer to explanations of change which emphasise the “radical transformations” and “deep-seated structural conflict” (1979, p. 17). These conceptions of change correspond closely to distinctions that have previously been described between, for example, first and second-order change, evolutionary and revolutionary change, and translational or transactional and transformational change (Chapman, 2002). Figure 5.7 summarises these distinctions.

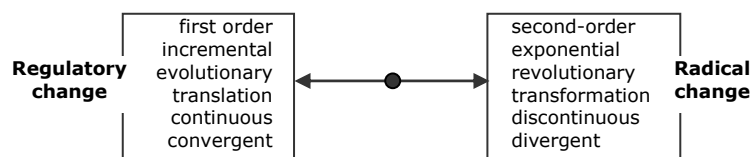


Figure 5.7: The regulatory-radical change lens

iv) Agency and communion (autonomy and relationality): The distinction between agency (autonomy) and communion (relationality) is a common ingredient in many theories of social and organisational transformation (Giddens, 1985; Hernes & Bakken, 2003; Lockie, 2004; Reicher, Haslam & Hopkins, 2005). Theories take two different approaches to agency. One relates to personal agency (Dirsmith, Heian & Covaleski, 1997; Hurley, 1998) and the other has to do with the collective's capacity to act in a concerted and focused manner (Hobson, 2000; Reicher et al., 2005). Both forms of agency are about the processes of decision-making, self-regulation and goal-focused activity. A social entity's capacity for relationship and communion can also be seen as a characteristic of individuals and/or groups. Individuals are inherently communal and continually adjust their intentions and behaviours according to social and relational exigencies. Similarly, groups and larger collectives adapt their activities and intentions in relating to other groups so that their goals can be achieved and their identities maintained.

Theories of transformation often take preference for one side in this agency-communion dimension to the exclusion of the other and so differ strongly in their explanations for how agency and structure influence change (Reed, 1997) (see Figure 5.8). This debate appears in the literature in such things as the division between views that see change as a function of organisational control, directive management, and transformational leadership and views that see it as a result of power relationships, communal networks and cultural identity (Deetz, 1996).

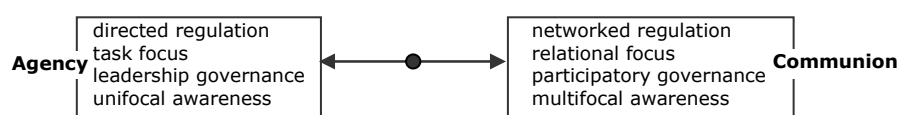


Figure 5.8: The agency-communion lens

### 3.8 Organisational environment paradigm

i) Transformational imperatives: Many theories of transformation emphasise dramatic changes that are occurring in organisational environments at the regional, national and global levels. Together they create a “transformation imperative” (Vollman, 1995) for organisations to respond to challenges and initiate radical whole-system changes. Suarez and Oliva (2005, p. 1033) refer to this as avalanche change:

Avalanche environmental change shakes off all existing archetypal templates in use by organisations and requires them to develop an entirely different concept of their role and *raison d'être* in the new institutional context.

Environmental theories regard the institutional context as the defining force for transformation and they focus their explanations and investigations of change on these environmental factors. Figure 5.9 depicts these inter-organisational and environmental factors.



Figure 5.9: (Inter)Organisational environments and the transformational imperative

ii) Inter-organisational networks: The dynamics that occur between organisations are regarded by some theorists as a crucial factor in the transformational process. These theories speak of “organisational networks” and “transorganisational development” and they highlight the impact that networked groups of organisations can have on their own transformational potential (Boje, 2002; Boje & Rosile, 2003a; Clarke, 2002, 2005).

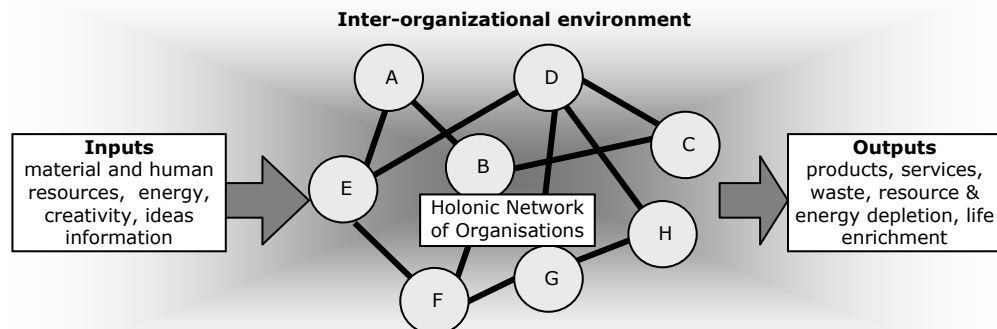


Figure 5.10: Inter-organisational environment as an holonic network

The “holonic network” theory of McHugh, Merli and Wheeler (1995), for example, is a theory of radical organisation reengineering that describes commercial environments as a network of linked organisations cooperating closely to produce their goods and services (see Figure 5.10).

iii) Corporate ethics, social responsibility and sustainability: A strong theme within theories that focus on organisational environments is the role of ethics and morals in transformation. These types of explanations emphasise corporate governance, ethical behaviour and social consciousness because they see transformation as an outcome of the relationship between organisations and their

natural, economic and social environments (Tan & Tan, 2003). One feature of these theories is the use of stage-based models to describe individual and collective worldviews towards such things as sustainability and ethical behaviour.

### 3.9 Paradox Paradigm

i) Paradox and dialectical change: The paradox theme has it that transformation results from oppositional processes and contending forces. Many aspects of organisational life are set within either an either/or framework of confrontational conflict or a both/and framework of creative complementarity. When viewed from within the context of conflict these oppositions are experienced as paradoxes that are very difficult or impossible to resolve. Seen from the rational level of formal logic, organisational paradoxes are “managed” as inherent problems where one side of the paradox is desirable and the other is to be avoided or minimised.

When viewed from an integrative context these oppositions are seen as a creative dialectic or complementary duality. Both poles of the dualism are seen as essential characteristics of the change process and which together create the possibility for synthesis. Table 5.5 presents a list of organisational characteristics that are commonly seen within a paradoxical framework of opposites or at least conflicting polarities. Some of the common paradoxes set up by theorists include top-down versus bottom-up leadership, the simultaneous need for stability and change and social responsibility and shareholder maximisation.

Table 5.5: Some common organisational paradoxes

Organisational characteristic	Two sides of the paradox or duality	
Management	top-down, command	bottom-up, participative
Organisational change	create the new	retain the old
Organisational learning	microlevel of the individual	macrolevel of the organisation
Transformation focus	subjective consciousness	objective processes
Leadership	transformational	translational
Scanning focus	internal processes	external environments
Corporate responsibilities	care and social concern	profit for shareholders
Skill development	high specialisation	multi-skilling
Organisation	flexible	stable
Human resources	human development	labour as resource
Growth	consolidation and market focus	expansion and market increase
Culture	develop informal culture	develop formal systems

ii) Dialectical process: Ford and Backoff point out that “It is through the interplay of paradoxical tendencies that transformations occur” (1988, p. 82). Paradoxical and dialectical theories are related in that what appears to be a paradox at one level, “two apparently contradictory elements” (Quinn & Cameron, 1988a, p. 290), will appear as a creative complementarity at another level. Dialectical theories are concerned with development and with the synthesis of some paradoxical problem at a new level of knowledge (Chae & Bloodgood, 2006). Figure 5.11 shows how a paradox at the



formal logic level of analysis is seen as a complementary duality at a dialectical level of analysis, which is, in the turn, seen as a interpenetrating mutuality at the trialectical analysis (Ford & Ford, 1994).

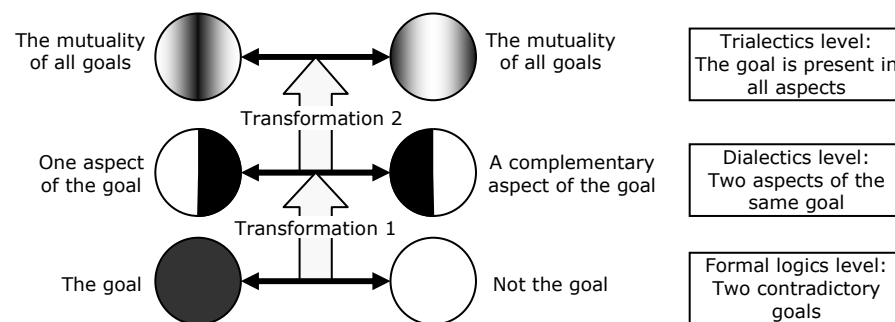


Figure 5.11: Levels of paradox and transformation

### 3.10 Process paradigm

i) Transitional process: Striking similarities can be seen in the descriptions of transitional phases between process theories of transformation and other theories of social and psychological change. This similarity has been noted previously (Elrod & Tippet, 2002; Nutt, 2003; Smith, 2001) and theorists often make comparisons between change models from a wide diversity of social disciplines. In a review of models of organisational group development, Smith (2001, p. 37) concludes that,

Many of the models, regardless of the classification scheme exhibit similarities in terms of their form, patterns of progression, terminology, and even the nature of the phases or stages that are posited by the theorists.

These “phases” are the most apparent features of transition process model. Collins, for example, calls process models of organisational change “n-step guides for change” (Collins, 1998) because they all share the notion of process phases or “steps”. Collins remarks that (1998, p. 84),

While it is true that *n-step* guides to change share a number of common and distinctive features, the recipes or schema often differ in terms of the number of steps into which they divide the change process: Some approaches outline five steps, other seven, others ten and so on.

A comparison of more than twenty process theories of change found that their constituent phases could be usefully calibrated into a 12-phase model (see Appendix C for comparison tables). This meta-model of twelve phases is derived from a collation and calibration of the many transition process models of organisational transformation.

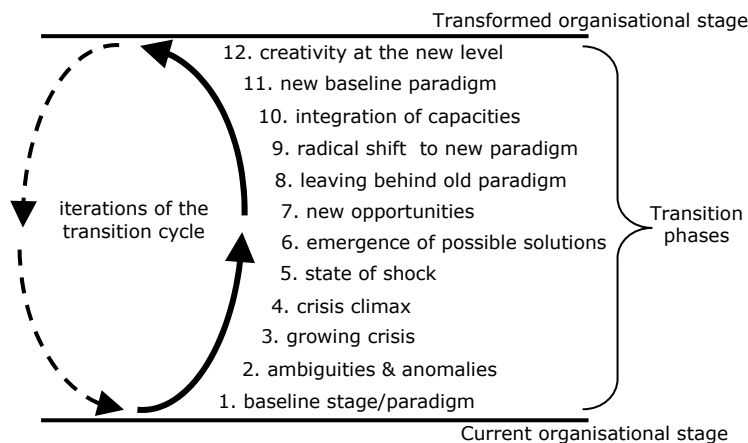


Figure 5.12: Transition process lens and its phases

The transition process can be described as follows (see Figure 5.12): First, there is a baseline paradigm where individuals, teams or larger collectives operate from within particular patterns of organising, behaving, thinking and feeling. At some point ambiguities and anomalies arise which cannot be assimilated into this baseline paradigm. These problems build into a crisis where management and staff struggle with significant problems and inefficiencies. At some point, a climax is reached which can take the form of some culminating event or series of events. This is often followed by a state of shock, denial, and inactivity. From this depressed climate there slowly emerge some opportunities for investigating innovations and experimentation. Alternatives arise from these experiments which offer potential solutions to problems. Gradually, these are taken up as new forms of thinking, behaving, and communicating to replace old forms of activity and methods of problem solving. A transformation occurs in which there is broad adoption of, and identification with, this new paradigm. A period of integration follows in which many existing structures, patterns and forms organising are reshaped and included within the new order of functioning. The new transformed order of functioning and identity becomes routinised so that translational activities work to reproduce and reaffirm the new established order. As mastery of the new forms of activity and thinking increases, so levels of creativity and innovation within these new boundaries increases.

ii) The “dark night” theme: The collation of the transition process theories of transformation consistently found that a crisis phase of disequilibrium, shock and defensive retreat accompanies all types of radical transition. Elrod and Tippet (2002) call this the “death valley” of change. Bartunek and Moch (1994), in their study of third-order change in organisations, liken this regressive phase to the “dark night” of mystical development. Whatever the preferred label, some severe form of crisis and its associated psychosocial response is a marked feature of all process models of transformation. Figure 5.13 shows this phase of crisis that exists in all process models of change. The crisis phase marks a necessary transition zone between the old and the new levels of activity.

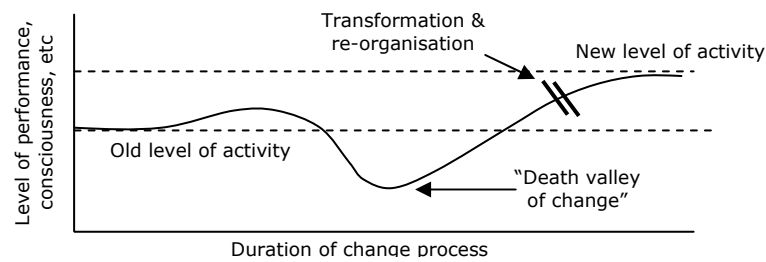


Figure 5.13: The classic change curve showing the crisis phase of transition

### 3.11 Psychological (cognitive-behavioural) paradigm

i) Microlevel focus: Psychological theories of transformation take a view that change is mediated through changes in the microlevel of organising, that is through individuals' psychological processes and behavioural activity. These processes usually take the form of motivating emotions and cognitive schemas or systems of belief to change individual behaviours. Take, for example, this definition of organisational transformation.

An organisational transformation is best defined as a planned change designed to significantly improve overall organisational performance by changing the behaviour of the majority of people in the organisation. (King, 1997)

Consequently, psychological theories provide explanations which are based on the development of new levels of cognitive schemas, patterns of emotions, forms of decision-making, frames of consciousness, states of awareness and other constructs to do with personal affect and cognition.

ii) Cognitive reframing: Cognitive theories see transformation as a function of the personal rearrangement of patterns of thinking. Transformations in these patterns are referred to as reframing because they radically change the context in which organisational phenomena are perceived and interpreted. Although cognitive reframing theories can apply to any level of personnel within an organisation, they are commonly applied to management levels where the psychological makeup and cognitive skills of managers is seen as pivotal in the transformation process. Bartunek (1988, p. 137) refers to this when she says:

Organisational transformation necessarily involves reframing. For example, virtually all definitions of transformational leadership in organisations view one of its integral components as the development in organisational members of a qualitatively different and more encompassing vision of what the organisation might be.

Reframing assumes a direct relationship between the transformation of the cognitive frame of individuals, their behaviours and, through these, the transformation of the organisation.

iii) Developmental inclusion: Transformations in cognitive reframing involve a shift from one frame of reference to one which is more complex and able to deal with more challenging organisational and environmental environments. The pattern of reframing and the descriptions of the various cognitive frames are structured according to the qualities of the stage model. One of these qualities is that of developmental inclusion which is also called the “transcend and include” principle (Miller & Cook-Greuter, 1994). For example, Fisher, Rooke and Torbert (2003, p. 42) refer to the sequence of stages in their development model as “frames” where,

“Each successive frame ... is ‘larger’ than the prior frame in that it includes all the possibilities of the prior frame and a whole new set of alternatives as well.”

The inclusive processes of cognitive reframing have implications for the concept of integration in such models. The integration of the capacities of formative frames becomes an essential aspect of the reframing process.

iv) Individual behaviour: An important theme in the psychological paradigm was the association between behavioural change in individuals and organisational change. From this perspective, organisational transformation is about the radical change in personal behaviour.

An organisational transformation is best defined as a planned change designed to significantly improve overall organisational performance by changing the behaviour of the majority of people in the organisation. (King, 1997)

Such a view sees organisational life as a public life of activity and observable behaviours. It is behavioural change that is the focus here and not change in thinking patterns or beliefs systems, although these may be regarded as an avenue to changing behaviour.

### *3.12 Spirituality paradigm*

i) Stages of spirituality: Spirituality theories use stage-based models of spiritual development to describe and explain the microlevel of individual transformation, the mesolevel of the transformation of teams and the macrolevel of organisational transformations (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Dehler & Welsh, 1994; Steingard, 2005b). An example of a model of stages of transformation for an organisation is provided by Harrison Owen (2000). His stages are Reactive, Responsive, Proactive, Interactive, and Inspired. In proposing these stages, Owen says that this sequence, “is quite simply the organisational analogue to the traditional evolutionary stages of individual consciousness” (Owen, 2000, p. 94). Such stage-based theories complement other more mainstream developmental models of transformation by describing stages that go beyond the conventional stages of high-performance, strategic excellence, and effectiveness to describe stages

of profound connectedness, awareness and service. These additional stages are usually described in more existential terms to do with ultimate meaning, deep purpose, and higher consciousness. These stages of spiritual transformation have also been associated with increased performance and effectiveness across the whole organisation. As Neal and her colleagues put it, “the cause of transformation may indeed be spirit, yet the result may indeed be an increase in effectiveness and productivity within the system” (Neal, Lichtenstein & Banner, 1999).

ii) Purpose and meaning: Another approach to transformation in the spirituality paradigm sees change as guided by a search for deep purpose and meaning (Bell & Taylor, 2003; Fry, Vitucci & Cedillo, 2005; McKnight, 1984; Steingard, 2005a). The emphasis here is not on the development of postconventional stages of spiritual transformation, but on the development of deeper insight into what is already present in people’s work lives. The discovery of meaning is central to this issue. As Cacioppe puts it (2000a, p. 49), “Discovering the meaning of one’s work is a central part of spirituality”. Deep fulfilment and discovery of one’s true potential through work and through work relationships is regarded as a pathway to personal transformation.

iii) Spiritual process: Several models of spirituality (Benefiel, 2005; Elrod & Tippet, 2002) have described organisational transformation as a process of spiritual transitioning. Such models concentrate on the dynamics by which radical change and spiritual transformation occur. For example, during the change process, crises and dilemmas are encountered that initiate a phase of intense existential questioning and motivation to move to some new way of understanding or acting. The term “dark night of the soul”, in borrowed from the Christian mysticism literature, is commonly used by organisational change theorists to describe this phase. In their model of “individual, organisational and societal transformation”, Neil and Lichtenstein (2000) see this phase of “dark night of the soul” as the initial phase in transformation process. This is followed by a phase of searching and questioning which in turn leads to a phase of spiritual transformation and finally to a phase of integration. Such models have much in common with more conventional process models of organisation transformation.

iv) Connectedness: Social and environmental connectedness and alignment is a common theme among theories within the spirituality paradigm. The emphasis is on the connectedness that exists between individuals, groups, organisations and communities in terms of their mutual responsibilities, ethical behaviours and care for integrity of natural and social environments. From this perspective, transformation is explained as relationality within organisations (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000) and between organisations and the socio-economic and environmental context in which they function (Fry, 2005). The inspiration for this approach comes from the concern for transformation in ethical conduct as well as interior consciousness. Giacalone and Jurkiewicz refer to this type of connectedness when they define workplace spirituality as (2003, p. 13):

A framework of organisational values evidenced in a culture that promotes employee's experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected in a way that provides feelings of compassion and joy.

v) Spiritual leadership: Leadership is an important theme in spirituality theories of transformation (Edwards, 2004; Eggert, 1998; Steingard & Fitzgibbons, 2004). There are many different conceptualisations of spiritual leadership. They include top-down models where the spirituality of executive levels is a focus, bottom-up participative models and reciprocal leadership models where the role of the servant leaders is highlighted. Spiritual leadership theories often emphasise the reciprocity of the leader-follower relationship and see that as a revolutionary force in social situations. Transformational leadership overturns the prevailing social structures and habits that limit human possibilities (Eggert, 1998)

### 3.13 Systems and New Science Paradigm

i) Deep structure: Deep structure is a fundamental concept in systems and new science theories of organisational transformation (MacIntosh & MacLean, 1999). The concept has been borrowed from the linguistics field to convey the idea of an underlying pattern of meaning or systemic activity that generates a surface structure of visible actions, designs and communications. The deep structure is the enduring pattern of energy and form that unifies a whole system. In the following quote Old differentiates between deep structure and other, more transactional, levels of organising (Old, 1995, p. 14):

Whole system organisational change can be thought of as change which occurs on three levels: (1) transactional - observable ongoing work; (2) systemic - strategy, structure, culture, rewards, technology information; (3) deep structure - underlying patterns. While change is occurring throughout organisations today, most of it seems to be at levels 1 and 2. There is a lot of rhetoric around change projects such as, 'large-scale', 'whole system', 'integrated' change, implying transformation. In reality, transformation needs to include the *whole* system and the whole system needs to be thought of in terms of both *breadth* (all system components - level 2) and *depth* (levels 1, 2 and 3).

Systems approaches, in particular, use the term in their descriptions of dynamic systems and of the periods of inertia and radical change that such systems undergo. For example, systems theorists MacIntosh and MacLean (1999) see deep structures as fundamental concept in their discussion of dissipative structures and transformation. Focussing on deep structure permits the possibility of recognising qualitative shifts in organisational forms. Consequently, all stage-based models of transformation assume some kind of transformation in an organisation's deep structure.

ii) System dynamics: The study of system dynamics is a strong feature of systems and new science approaches to transformation (Lemak et al., 2004; van Eijnatten, 2001). Among the many different types of dynamics that are described in these theories, several have particular prominence in the literature concerning organisational transformation. These include:

- fluctuation dynamics which refer to a system's movement between boundary states, system thresholds, bifurcation points, and different orders of stability.
- feedback systems, including positive feedback which magnifies the some initial fluctuation in a system and negative feedback which weakens or shuts it down (Gemmill & Smith, 1985).
- stabilisation dynamics which regulate and balance the dynamics of positive feedback
- self-regulation which enhancement and stabilisation creates a system's capacity for autopoiesis (Chiles, Meyer & Hench, 2004).

iii) Holarchic emergence: A core theme in systems approaches to transformation is the emergence of new forms of thinking, behaving, relating and/or organising (Dervitsiotis, 2003; van Eijnatten & Putnik, 2004). Emergence is the “inexorable thrust of the universe is towards infinitely ascending orders of differentiation, coherence and complexity (Fitzgerald, 2002, p. 202)”. Emergence is a characteristic of the whole system. As such, emergence is a “quality of a whole (holon) that is not present in any of its parts” (Fitzgerald, 2002, p. 353). Emergence is innately creative in that it includes properties that have “not previously been seen in the component parts of a system, usually in systems of lower complexity” (Dervitsiotis, 2003, p. 256). Emergence is essentially the appearance of qualitatively new and stable orders of interior (psychological) and exterior (behavioural) complexity in both micro and macro worlds of the organisation. Fitzgerald (2002, p. 350) has linked these characteristics to the intricate nature of organisational relationships.

No matter how disparate any two objects, e.g. particles, human beings, business units, etc., may appear, they remain inextricably linked in the context of a greater holarchy (hierarchy of holons which is a holon itself). Given the fact of connectivity, chaordic thinkers seek to optimise “holonic entanglement”: as managers, they realise their first and foremost responsibility to be the nurturing of relationships ... not just between people and groups, but among all holons comprising the extended field of the enterprise.

Constructs such as the holon and holarchies are used by some systems theorists to develop non-reductive ways of investigating the hierarchical relations between the emergent aspects of organisations (Mathews, 1996; Parker & Caine, 1996; van Eijnatten, 2001, 2004).

iv) Autopoiesis: Systems and new science approaches refer to the capacity for organisations to regulate their internal structures via a process known as autopoiesis. Autopoiesis is the dynamic equilibrium attained by a system through self-organisation, self-production and self-renewal.

Structural stability and change are the outcome of a system's maintenance of its defining structures and dynamics. Systems theories that employ the autopoiesis concept see change as a constant within organisational life (Marshak, 2004, p. 17):

This concept [autopoiesis] directly challenges assumptions of stability and episodic change that must be initiated, planned, and managed. Instead, it is assumed that change is continuous and that complex systems can be self-organising.

Because autopoiesis is about maintaining a dynamic identity, the idea has important applications to studies of radical change. Autopoiesis capacities are always involved in the change process because of the continual movement and exchange of a system's constituent elements with its environment (Hernes & Bakken, 2003; Kickert, 1993).

### *3.14 Team paradigm*

i) The mesolevel: Team-based theories of transformation regard the team, group or mesolevel of the organisation as crucial to processes of transformation (Burke et al., 2005; Dopfer, Foster & Potts, 2004; Esty, 1988; Harshman & Phillips, 1994). It is at this site that most activity occurs in initiating, trialling and experimenting with transformational processes. The mesolevel of the team allows for rapid adaptation because it has relatively fluid structure and its members can be selected and supported to maximise its cultural, cognitive and behavioural flexibility (West, Markiewicz & Trimpop, 2004). Organisations can also be restructured towards a team-based structure to emphasise the adaptive power and learning potentials of the mesolevel. Restructurings of this kind has been one of the most common strategies taken to promote transformational change (Burke et al., 2005; Cross, Yan & Louis, 2000; Harshman & Phillips, 1994). In contrast to focusing on the individual or the whole-of-system as avenues for achieving organisational transformation, the team-based approach sees groups as the primary target for implementing transformational strategies. It is a “a structural approach to organisation wide transformation using groups” (Esty, 1988, p. 350).

ii) Team learning: Several theories that emphasise the role of the mesolevel in transformation do so within the context of team learning (Bryson & Anderson, 2000; West et al., 2004). This view sees the transformational power of teams coming from their capacity to include all members in a process that can support learning through objective performance and subjective motivation. For example, West and Markiewicz (2004) point out that there needs to be a shared understanding and a practical enabling of both subjective team consciousness and objective team behaviour for the development of effective teams. Effective teams develop when the innate process capacities of the team are enabled through “the team development process, which includes clarifying objectives, roles, communication processes and decision-making processes” (West & Markiewicz, 2004, p. 4). Figure 5.14 depicts these capacities as a continual process that supports team development. The



figure also shows how the capacities of decision-making, communication, role-taking and goal achievement might fit within a quadrants framework.

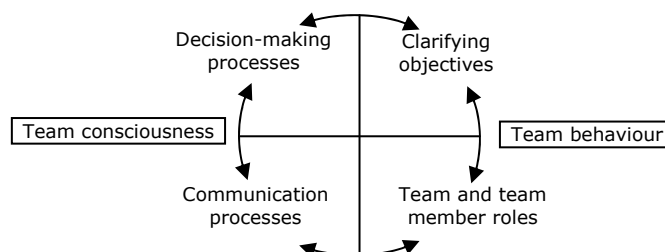


Figure 5.14: The process of team development

### 3.15 Transformational leadership paradigm

i) Top-down leadership: Many of the leadership-based explanations of radical change rely on the distinction, made by Burns (1978) and also by Bass (1996, 1998), between transformational and transactional leadership. Belasen describes transformational leadership in the following way:

Transformational leadership goes beyond rational management and the use of formal authority to achieve compliance. Transformational leadership involves influencing a shift in followers' mindsets and core values. (Belasen, 2000, p. 415)

Transformational leadership models are essentially top-down because the whole movement of transformation is from the leader, who is the active source of the change impulse, to the follower, who is, initially at least, the passive recipient of the change message (see Figure 5.15).

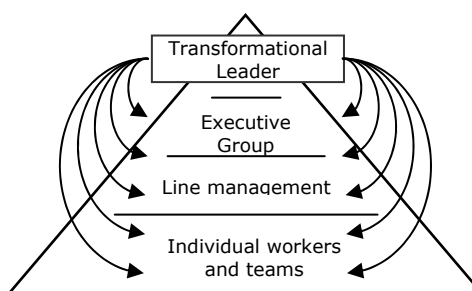


Figure 5.15: The top-down approach to transformational leadership

Chakraborty and Chakraborty point out that the transformational leadership process is “usually understood as flowing towards the followers” (2004, p. 179). Such theories assume that “Only a transformed leader can transmit transforming influence” (2004, p. 197). Hence, without the personal embodiment of espoused ideals or, as Poole (1998) refers to it “the alignment of words-deeds”, transformational leadership runs the risk of becoming a charismatic process of coercion through celebrity rather than true organisational reform.

ii) Bottom-up leadership: In bottom-up approaches to transformation change is recognised as a continual state and that organisations are inherently in a state of flux (Chia, 2002, 1999). The central task is to allow the people's natural instincts for decision-making, experimentation and creativity to emerge from their individual and group work and to harness that emergent creativity through participative forums and open organisational structures. Bottom-up theories of transformation include concepts such as industrial democracy, employee ownership, emergent leadership and shared governance (Brulin, 2000; Fallis & Altimier, 2006; Lupton, 1991). Figure 5.16 shows a bottom-up approach where leadership is recognised as a crucial function of individual workers, team leaders and line management.

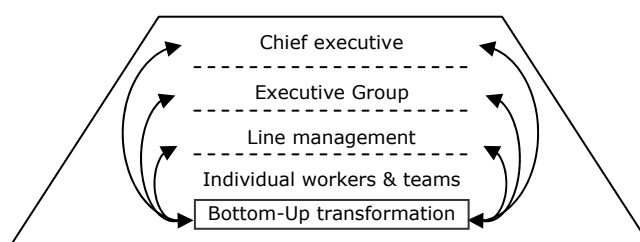


Figure 5.16: The bottom-up approach to transformational leadership

iii) Reciprocal leadership: Reciprocal leadership models of organisational transformation see the role of leader and the role of follower as co-creative (Bjugstad, Thach, Thompson & Morris, 2006). This view emphasises the collective nature of decision-making rather than the personal qualities of any particular individual (Collinson, 2006). The role of the leader is created out of collective agreements and cannot function without those agreements. Similarly, the role of follower is part of the collective system that enables co-ordination to occur. Hence, under the reciprocal view of leadership, roles are seen as part of the identity of the collective and transformation arises out of changed collective identities. This reciprocal vision of leadership is represented in Figure 5.17. The reciprocity of leadership and followership operates at each level throughout the organisation from the operational to the executive level.

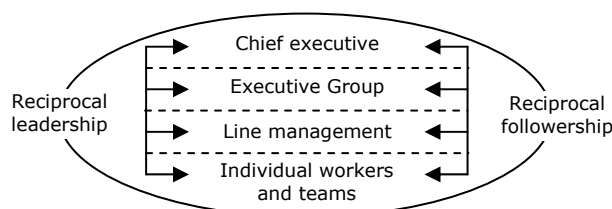


Figure 5.17: The reciprocal approach to transformational leadership

iv) Power-Empowerment: Investigating the topic of change management and leadership often involves questions of power. This is particularly true for bottom-up and reciprocal approaches to leadership (see, for example, Goethals & Sorenson, 2006). While top-down leadership models assume the institutionalisation of power relationships through hierarchical authority, alternative views stress the need for participatory decision-making and governance (Denis, Lamothe &

Langley, 2001; Ford, 2005; Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Functionalist and economic theories of transformation generally neglect the issue of power relationships and how these might be connected with transformation. Postmodern theories, however, place great importance on this lens and are sensitive to the interdependencies between shifts in power and the direction or outcome of the transformation process (Badham & Garrety, 2003; Butler, Scott & Edwards, 2003; Grey, 2003).

### 3.16 Summary of bracketing results

The bracketing of themes has reduced the very large number of 472 basic themes in theories of transformation to a manageable number of 53 conceptual lenses under the 15 paradigm categories. The following table lists these lenses according to their home paradigm.

Table 5.6: Conceptual lenses identified through bracketing

Category	Initial set of explanatory themes identified through bracketing
1. Culture	i) organisational interiors, ii) organisational archetypes, iii) organisational identity
2. Developmental & life-cycle	i) transformational stages, ii) sedimentation
3. Evolution and ecology	i) environmental selection, ii) evolution-revolution, iii) coevolution
4. Functionalist	i) growth, ii) technology, iii) efficiency/productivity, iv) physical design v) time span
5. Interpretive/Postmodern	i) gender, ii) the interpretive turn, iii) experiential approaches, iv) indigenous approaches, v) social mediation and communication, vi) stakeholders, vii) diversity
6. Learning	i) learning process, ii) learning loops, iii) knowledge levels
7. Multiparadigm & Eclectic	i) multiparadigm thinking, ii) subjective-objective, iii) radical and regulatory change, iv) autonomy and relationality (or agency and communion)
8. Organisational Environment	i) corporate ethics, social responsibility and sustainability, ii) transformational imperatives, iii) inter-organisational networks
9. Paradox	i) paradox and dialectical change, ii) dialectical process
10. Process	i) transitional process, ii) the "dark night" theme
11. Cognitive-Behavioural	i) microlevel focus, ii) reframing, iii) inclusive emergence, iv) behavioural change
12. Spirituality	i) stages of spirituality, ii) purpose and meaning, iii) spiritual process, iv) connectedness, v) spiritual leadership
13. Systems and New Science	i) deep structure, ii) system dynamics, iii) holarchic emergence, iv) autopoiesis
14. Team	i) the mesolevel, ii) team learning
15. Transformational Leadership	i) top-down leadership, ii) bottom-up leadership, iii) reciprocal leadership iv) power-empowerment

In the following section, the explanatory lenses that occur across different paradigms will be identified through bridging analysis. These lenses are crucial for developing a metatheoretical framework that does not simply reproduce the boundaries that define existing paradigms.

## 4. Lenses Identified through Bridging

Bridging requires a scanning of core themes that run across two or more paradigm categories in order to identify shared conceptual lenses (Schultz & Hatch, 1996). For example, theories from a number of paradigms emphasise the importance of the different organisational levels in their explanations of transformation. Connecting these themes allows for the proposition of a multilevel (micro-meso-macro) lens that runs across paradigm boundaries.

### 4.1 Miro-meso-macro

All theories of organisational phenomena make inferences about the micro, meso and/or macro characteristics of organisations, their members and environments (Alexander, Giesen, Münch & Smelser, 1987; Yammarino, Dionne, Chun & Dansereau, 2005). Micro explanations focus on the qualities of “individuals” and “small social units” and macro explanations focus on “large social units” (Alexander, 1987). Unfortunately, very few theories specifically take account of the multilevel nature of organisational life. A recent review of has found that very few studies adopt theoretical frameworks and research methods that tap into the multilevel nature of organisational phenomena (Yammarino, et al, 2005). This finding is particularly relevant for studies of organisational transformation where the multilevel nature of cultural elements like values, shared assumptions and ideologies is so relevant. Figure 5.18 depicts the nested, or holonic, quality of levels of organisations, where one level can be regarded as both a whole in itself and as a part of some broader level of organisation.

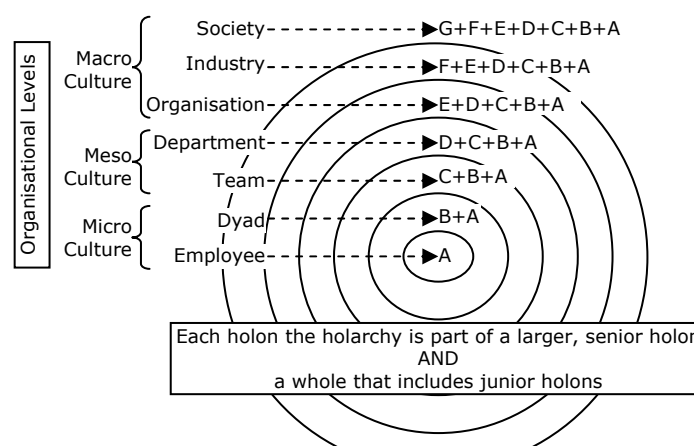


Figure 5.18: An ecological holarchy for organisations (after Edwards, 2005b)

Paradigms which emphasise microlevel explanations include the psychological/cognitive, developmental and leadership paradigms, and those that concentrate on macrolevel explanations include evolutionary, process and paradox/dialectic paradigms. Several paradigms, in particular the team paradigm, also rely on a middle level or mesolevel of explanation (Bacharach et al., 1996; House, Rousseau & Thomas-Hunt, 1995). Bridging between these paradigms results in a micro–meso–macro lens that emphasises the multilevel characteristics of transformation.

### 4.2 Internal-external

Many of the questions that theories and models of transformation seek to answer depend on assumptions about the locus of transformational processes. For example, theories from different paradigms take a position, either implicitly or explicitly, on whether the generation of change has an internal or external source (Anderson et al., 2000; Macdonald, 1994; Van de Ven & Poole, 1988).

One of these approaches, developmentalism, has it that “change is set in motion from within the system that is undergoing change” (Van de Ven & Poole, 1988, p. 36). On the other hand, accumulation or social construction theories, postulate that, “change comes from outside the system” (Van de Ven & Poole, 1988, p. 36). Developmentalism and social construction theories fall on either side of the “nature versus nurture” debate as to the locus of causal factors in transformation. Figure 5.19 shows the internal-external dimension and the three basic types of explanation that derive from it: those that focus on internal or external factors and those that propose interactive explanations.

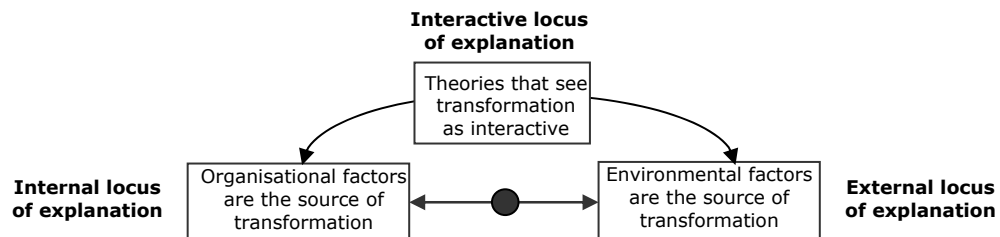


Figure 5.19: The internal-external lens

#### 4.3 Interior-exterior

A common theme that arose repeatedly across different paradigms was one that juxtaposed an “interior” versus “exterior” frame of reference. This lens describes a dimension that differentiates between transformational factors that are readily observed and factors that are not so openly acknowledged but which are, nonetheless, commonly experienced. Where interior factors of the organisation are regarded as informal, subjective, “soft” and related to such things as values, meaning and organisational philosophy, exterior factors are regarded as formal, objective, “hard”, and related to such things as systems, structures and organisational goals. This interior–exterior distinction is used or assumed in the culture, psychological, learning, leadership, systems, and developmental paradigm groupings.

Levy and Merry (1986) found the interior-exterior dimension to be commonly used across several paradigms of transformation. Beer and Nohria (2000) also base their Theory O and Theory E categories on this distinction. Figure 5.20 shows some of the common distinctions that the interior-exterior dimension discloses.

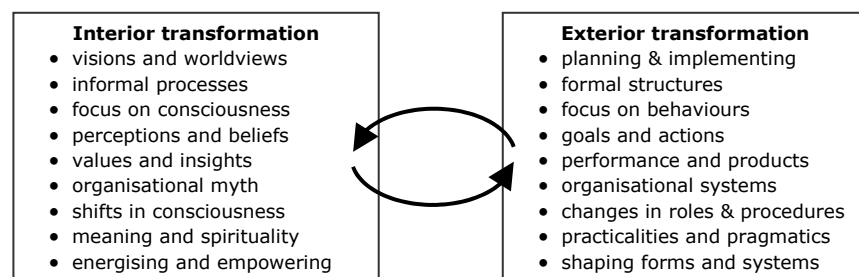


Figure 5.20: The interior-exterior dimension

It should be noted that the interior-exterior lens is quite different to the internal-external lens described above. “Interior” is not synonymous with “internal” and “exterior” is not synonymous with “external”. The interior-exterior dimension is associated with subjective and objective distinctions respectively. The internal-external dimension relates to organisational boundaries and on which side of that boundary an event occurs.

#### *4.4 Transformational domains (organisational streams)*

All theories within each of the paradigm groupings regarded transformation as a whole-of-system process that involved qualitative shifts in all the main aspects of organisational life. For example, Chapman (2003) proposes that, if transformation is to be successful in the long-term, radical changes need to be achieved in such things as organisational structure and culture, management systems, business processes, employee attitudes, beliefs and values. There are many such lists of different domains of transformation mentioned in theories from all paradigms. In particular, theories within the multiparadigm paradigm group recognise the multimodality nature of transformation as evidenced in the following quote from Beer and Nohria (2000, p. 142):

One does not produce real change by relying on a single means such as reward systems or structure. Organizational designs are integrated systems consisting of structure, formal systems, informal processes, reward and measurement systems, and human resources practices. Effective change requires changing a combination of policies, or all of them, to create a new and integrated design. And all of the policies must be aligned or mutually reinforcing.

This multimodality is a focus of the research of transformation theorist Jerry Porras and his colleagues (Collins & Porras, 1997; Porras, 1987; Porras & Silvers, 1991). Porras describes a modular conceptualisation where organisations are thought of as multiple “streams” of operations or relatively independent subsystems. These streams are grouped under four main areas: i) organising arrangements, ii) social factors, iii) technology, and iv) physical setting. Streams themselves have various modalities the flow throughout the whole organisation. Organising arrangements include sub-streams like organisational goals and strategies, formal structure, policies, and administrative systems; social streams include culture, values, norms, language, rituals, and interaction processes; the technological streams consist of technical systems, tools and workflow systems; the physical settings streams consist of space configuration, physical ambience, interior design, and architectural design

Organisational streams are interconnected in “significant and powerful ways” (Porras, 1987, p. 51) and can be seen to operate at the level of individuals, groups and larger organisational units (Porras, 1987, p. 39). Figure 5.21 shows the holarchical nature of these interconnections at the levels of the

individual, team, organisational subdivision, the organisation and its environment. Porras' organisational streams flow through the whole organisational at every level.

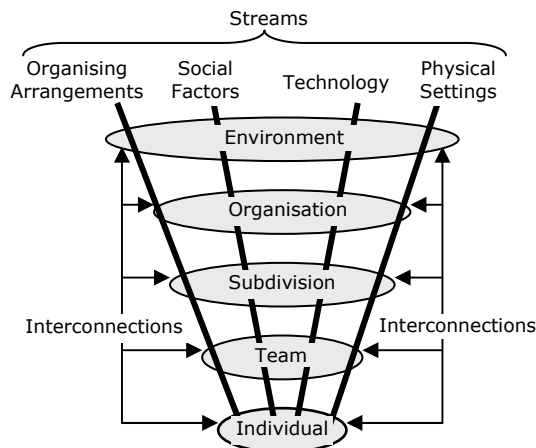


Figure 5.21: Organizational streams and ecological levels

#### 4.5 Personal perspectives

The theme of subjectivity and personal perspective is a central feature of postmodern theories of change (Badham & Garrety, 2003; Chia, 1999; Leigh & Gifford, 1999) and of other transformational approaches such as the developmental action inquiry theory (Reason & Torbert, 2001; Torbert, 2000) and the communications approach of Bradbury and Lichtenstein (2000). One way of bridging the different perspectival themes between these theories is to use the notion of personal perspectives, i.e. the first, second and third person perspectives, as forms of inquiry that can examine organisational life from many orientations.

Table 5.7: Perspectives and types of inquiry

	<b>First person inquiry perspectives</b>	<b>Second person inquiry perspectives</b>	<b>Third person inquiry perspectives</b>
Types of data disclosed	discloses subjective information about my/our transformational experiences in organisational settings.	discloses interpersonal information about your transformational experiences in organisational settings.	discloses objective information about the transformational experiences of individuals and groups in organisational settings.
Inquiry method examples	case study methods, autobiography, journaling	relational methods, dialogical and therapeutic methods	statistical, experimental and observational methods

Table 5.7 describes a conceptual lens based on the fundamental perspectives of first, second and third persons. This model includes the third person methods used in conventional research and the first and second person methods of postmodern and experiential approaches. While to this time, the study of organisational transformation has been dominated by third person perspectives, the growing importance of postmodern approaches have contributed to the subjective (first person) and relational (second person) research methods of inquiry. A more comprehensive explanation for organisational transformation needs to include a perspectival lens and thereby take into account alternative perspectives.

#### 4.6 States of consciousness

States of consciousness is an important explanatory principle in the cognitive (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003), developmental (Cacioppe, 2000a&b) and spiritual paradigms (Fry & Whittington, 2005). States are the subjective aspects of everyday consciousness and, as such, offer a window into how change is experienced. Under the turbulent conditions of transformation, identity can be a shifting state in which consciousness is constantly moving and open to significant fluctuations. For example, in instances of peak experience, extraordinary performance or regressive episodes, individuals and groups can temporarily identify with forms of consciousness that are far removed from the everyday (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). In these cases, states of consciousness can open up individuals' awareness to very different realms of experience. Pursuing transformation through altering the states of consciousness of organisational members is a feature of many intervention approaches of the 1980's (Adams, 1984; Levy & Merry, 1986) and, more recently, has been linked to organisational spirituality and its influence on organisational change (Benefiel, 2005; Parameshwar, 2005; Shakun, 1999; Wall, 2003).

#### 4.7 Emotion

From the beginning of the scientific study of organisational change, it has been acknowledged that emotion and affect has been an ever-present aspect of the experience of change. Sixty years ago Kurt Lewin (1947, p. 229) made the observation that, "To break open the shell of complacency and self-righteousness it is sometimes necessary to bring about emotional stir up". Theories that emphasise human emotions tend to take polarised positions over its contribution. Functionalist and behavioural theories view emotion as a factor in the phenomenon known as "change resistance" (LaMarsh, 2005), while other, more interpretive approaches, see emotion as a source of truth about the negative effects of control, coercion and alienation in the transformation process (Manki, 2003). Table 5.8 shows the contrasts between these two perspectives for the role of emotions in transformation. Depending on the transformational context, both viewpoints have something to contribute to an integrated understanding of the role of emotions in transformation.

Table 5.8: Contrasts between functionalist & interpretive views on emotion in transformation

Topic	Interpretivist Emotion as ...	Functionalist Emotion as ...
<b>Energy</b>	expression of energy	expression of resistance
<b>Importance</b>	centrally important	peripherally important
<b>Truth</b>	a method of truth-telling	something to be hidden
<b>Motivation</b>	a source of inspiration & motivation	a source of conflict and time-wasting
<b>Health</b>	healthy expression of experience	expression of pathology and weakness
<b>Normative</b>	normative and to be included	exceptional and to be avoided
<b>Significance</b>	essential to change process	ubiquitous side-effect of change
<b>Gender</b>	human	feminine, un-emotional as masculine
<b>Level</b>	both individual and collective	purely individual



#### 4.8 Alignment and configuration

Alignment is an important explanatory theme bridging several different paradigms. The concept has several definitions all of which refer in some way to the degree of mesh or cohesion between two organisational entities and their structural configurations (Ghoshal & Bartlett, 2000; Sullivan, Sullivan & Buffton, 2002). Alignment can refer to the coherencies between an organisation and its environment, or between subsystems within the organisation, or between espoused values and expressed behaviours, or between various characteristics of individual members, teams and the organisation as a whole (Bacharach, et al, 1996). Several forms of the alignment lens are mentioned by McKnight in the following (1984, p. 148):

Alignment is a unifying concept describing the meshing of purpose with organisational practice. This perspective reminds us for organisations, like individuals, are made up of parts, designed to serve some whole. The major aims of aligning an organisation are: 1) to harmonise the relationships among its various parts (person, team, department) so that each understands and contributes to the purpose of the whole; and 2) to clarify the organisation's relationship to the larger purposes of human evolution and environmental health -- the spiritual uplifting of the larger culture. Alignment results in less competition among component parts of the system and in greater support for continued existence from the surrounding culture.

Perhaps the most common usage of the idea in transformation studies is in technological alignment (Avison, Jones, Powell & Wilson, 2004). The fast pace of technological change means that technological (mis)alignment frequently has a high profile in the concerns of management.

#### 4.9 Health-pathology

A consistent context for the discussion of transformation in many theories across several paradigms is that of organisational and personal health (Brache, 2001; Fineman, 1996). Wherever there are definitions of health, there are also implied definitions of pathology and illness and, in identifying personal and organisational potentials of transformation, theorists are also providing ways of identifying pathological forms of those potentials. This has been an ongoing concern with theories of organisational transformation since the 1980's. The impetus for the early theories of transformation often came from the desire for a radically new vision for how organisations could contribute to personal and community health. How they could “enhance life” and take on the role of “nurturing servants” (McKnight, 1984, p. 152). These considerations continue to motivate theories of transformation to the present day. The health-pathology lens has been used in diagnosing the “positive zones” and “negative zones” of organisational transformation (Belasen,

2000), cooperative and non-cooperative forms of change management (Senge, et al. 2007) and healthy and “sick” forms of theorising about change (Sorge & van Witteloostuijn, 2004).

One of the most detailed theories of organisational health and pathology comes from Quinn and Cameron who have developed a model based on the balancing of “polarities through transformational strategies” (1988a, p. 306). Theirs is a psychological model of levels of reframing which is predicated on a “developmental learning process at both the cognitive and behavioural levels” and which leads to “the rebalancing of polarities and to peak performance” (1988, p. 306). Table 5.9 shows healthy, balanced zones and unhealthy, imbalanced zones for a number of core organisational characteristics including participation, control and direction (Quinn & Cameron, 1988).

Table 5.9: Healthy and unhealthy zones for core organisational characteristics  
(after Quinn & Cameron, 1988)

<b>Organisational characteristic</b>	<b>Unhealthy Pole</b> (too little of the characteristic)	<b>Healthy Zone</b> (characteristic in balance)	<b>Unhealthy Pole</b> (too much of the characteristic)
Participation	non-participation	participation openness	inappropriate participation
Control	lack of control	stability continuity	ironbound tradition
Direction	directionless	clear planning	blind dogma
Productivity	non-productive	productive, accomplished	perpetual exertion, workaholism
External growth	no external growth	sustainable growth	unprincipled opportunism
Internal growth	no internal cohesion	cohesive internal growth	internally fragmented
Commitment	lack of commitment	high commitment, free to criticise	uncritical commitment, obedient

Excessive emphasis on one side of a bipolar dimension results in many negative implications for organisations and their members. For example, the dimension of task-relationship is a commonly used to investigate an individual’s or team’s approach to work. Emphasising one end of this dimension over the other results in diminished levels of performance. Applying this to organisations as a whole, Forster makes the point that (2005, p. 323):

The main disadvantage of strong task-focused organisational cultures are that they can legitimate unethical and illegal behaviour, can be highly resistant to change and can allow companies to become cut-off from the outside.

In such instances, a balance between task-focused agency and relationship-focused communion is called for. The health-pathology lens adds a crucial capacity to metatheorising frameworks for assessing the normative balance that a particular theory of transformation possesses.

#### 4.10 Top-down/ bottom-up

Transformation theories make liberal use of the distinction between “top-down” and “bottom-up” explanations. As Levy and Merry (1986, p. 208) noted in their review of transformational theories,

Approaches to transformation can be classified into two basic categories: those that attempt to bring change through the upper echelons of the organization and those that attempt to bring change through the lower echelons of the organization.

The top-down and bottom-up explanations are best seen as variants of a conceptual lens that focuses on general forms of decision-making, organising or governance. The top-down approach assumes that organisations transform through the decisions of executive management and the strategic decision-making bodies of the organisation. The bottom-up approach assumes that organisations change through the participatory inclusion of the lower echelons and of ordinary employees and individual entrepreneurs. Some examples of the bottom-up approaches to transformation are entrepreneurial models (Brezinski & Fritsch, 1996; Chakravarthy & Gargiulo, 1998), emergent change (Weick, 2000), participatory decision-making (Bennis, 2000; Dunphy, 2000) and shared leadership (Fallis & Altimier, 2006).

#### *4.11 Types*

Explaining transformation in terms of “types” is a common feature of theories from several paradigms groupings (Bamford, Rogers & Miller, 1999; Charon, 2003). Some approaches included types of transformations (Blumenthal & Haspeslagh, 1994; Tosey & Robinson, 2002), organisational types (Blom & Melin, 2003; Carman & Dominguez, 2001), types of change efforts (Atwater & Atwater, 1994), psychological types (Charon, 2003) and change process types (Nutt & Backoff, 1997b). These typologies are metatheoretical frameworks for classifying, describing and making factual claims about transformation (Doty & Glick, 1994).

#### *4.12 Relational exchange*

Paradigms that use stage-based models of transformation sometimes describe the environmental and relational needs that pertain to each of those levels. Transformation, from this perspective, is about the relationships between internal and external levels and the materials, energies and resources that flow between them. For example, Barrett’s (1998) corporate transformation model, which is based on Maslow’s needs hierarchy, describes the “motivating forces” that drive change at each of the seven levels of personal and organisational consciousness. Another example comes from work of Dunphy, Griffiths and Ben (2003) on organisational sustainability. They propose a model of sustainability based on various organisational stages and the corresponding aspects in the natural and social environment that support and stimulate transformation through those stages. Wilber calls the relationship between developmental and environmental levels as a system of “relational exchange” and defines this as “patterns of relational exchange with the surrounding environs” (2003c).

### 4.13 Spirituality

The explanatory lens of spirituality is used not only by theories within the spirituality paradigm, but is also utilised in the process, development, leadership and new sciences paradigms. The concept of spirituality is defined and described in a variety of ways and, as pointed out previously, these variations can be usefully considered in the context of the AQAL elements of quadrant dimensions, levels, lines, states and types. A common element in all of these approaches is that spirituality-based explanations for transformation allude to the importance of deep mystery and ultimate meaning. An associated concept here is paradox and the inescapable contradictions that lie at the core of organisational life. In a special sense, the notion of spirituality is best expressed in paradoxical terms in that it is ultimately mysterious and ineffable and yet has a potent and practical importance to many people and cultures. For many transformation theorists this profound mystery is the most important feature of all truly transformative events – they are deeply mysterious and profoundly paradoxical and can therefore be described as being essentially spiritual (Lichtenstein, 1997)<sup>3</sup>.

### 4.14 Summary of bridging results

In the foregoing, the bridging procedure has been used to identify themes that are employed by theories that come from two or more paradigm categories. These themes have been analysed to develop 13 conceptual lenses that span across paradigm boundaries and which serve to ensure that lenses are not simply reproducing paradigm demarcations. Table 5.10 lists these 13 lenses and describes their focus of explanation.

Table 5.10: Conceptual lenses identified through bridging

Explanatory lens	Focus of explanation
1. Miro-macro	the multilevel ecological context of organisational entities and environments
2. Internal-external	the intra- and extra-organisational environments
3. Interior-exterior	the subjective-cultural and objective-structural aspects of organisations
4. Streams	the multimodal nature of organisational life
5. Personal perspectives	the modes of inquiry associated with 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> person perspectives
6. States of consciousness	the subjective states of awareness associated with the transformation process
7. Emotion	the role of emotion and effect in organisational transformation
8. Alignment	the degree of concordance and connection between organisational entities
9. Health-pathology	the level of balance and imbalance in organisation and its environment
10. Top-down/bottom-up	the structural exercising of power, regulation and decision-making
11. Types	the various typologies generated from dimensions of organisational life
12. Relational Exchange	the exchanges that occur between organisational levels and those of its environment
13. Spirituality	the deep mystery and profound paradox of organisational transformational

These 13 lenses together with the 53 identified from the bracketing procedure give an initial pool of 66 lenses. This pool of lenses provides an extremely rich base for developing a comprehensive

<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note here Wilber's use of the term "paradoxical thinking" to describe the process of representing spiritual experience in rational terms.

theoretical framework for transformation. However, there is still significant room for refining these elements further into a more parsimonious set of lenses. The following section continues the process of data reduction and refinement.

## 5. Refining Conceptual Lenses

The refinement of lenses is a qualitative process that is guided by the need for a parsimonious set of elements in building the metatheory. Similarities and differences between lenses will be considered with the aim of reducing the number of lenses while retaining their conceptual scope and explanatory power. The theory building criteria of parsimony, abstraction, and internal consistency will be important guiding principles in the integration and development of this refined set of conceptual lenses. Several authors have highlighted the importance of these evaluation criteria in the relationship-building phase of theory construction (Bacharach, 1989, Torraco, 2002, Whetten, 1989, Wacker, 1998). A theory should be parsimonious in that it should use as few conceptual elements in its explanations as possible. Although this is a difficult task for such a complex field as organisational transformation, it is one that needs to be attempted if metatheorising is to have a substantive role in this field. The sorts of questions that serve as a basis for considering this issue of parsimony include: Does a particular lens add a unique insight to our explanation that is not addressed by another lens? Is there conceptual redundancy between lenses? Can a particular lens be explained by the relationships between other lenses? How might several lenses be integrated?

Abstraction is another criterion of relevance for developing lenses. The abstraction criterion is important in that theory building should be able to “integrate many relationships and variables into a larger theory” (Wacker, 1998) and not be dependent on the detailed description of particularities. The central question to be considered here is: Does a lens bring together different conceptual elements into a coherent construct? The aim of asking such questions is to derive a set of conceptual lenses that are relatively independent of each other, in that they each contribute unique aspects to the complex picture of transformation.

To assist this refinement process lenses will be categorised according to their research focus. This categorisation approach was adopted by Levy and Merry (1986) in their review of transformational theories and by Whetten (1989) in his discussion of approaches to theory building. Theories of organisational transformation differ as to whether they concentrate on “why” transformation occurs (causal focus<sup>4</sup>), “how” it occurs (process focus) and “who” (human focus) or “what” is being (content/structure focus). There is also a multiparadigm category of explanation that cuts across all these areas of inquiry. These categories – how, why, who, what and multiparadigm inquiry - will serve as a means for ordering the refinement of lenses in this section. The

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<sup>4</sup> Causal focus is meant here as concentrating on the permitting, enabling, precipitating and triggering conditions that are associated with transformation.

metatheoretical resources provided by the AQAL framework will play a significant role in this refinement process. The resulting lenses are called “integral lenses” for two reasons: i) they are informed by the use of the AQAL (integral theory) framework, and ii) they integrate several of the lenses identified from the multiparadigm review. First to be considered is the relationships between conceptual lenses that focus on the “what” of transformation, that is, on the content of transformational change.

### 5.1 Lenses focusing on the “what” of transformation

Many of the initial set of conceptual lenses investigate the “what” of transformation, that is, the structures, systems or configurations that are transformed when an organisation undergoes radical change. These lenses will be compared here with the aim of reducing their number through identifying their commonalities and connections. A prominent group of lenses emphasise the structural nature of organisations as patterns or forms of social interaction that persist over time and in different situations. According to this view, organisational structure is a persistent configuration that can maintain long-term patterns of social exchange. Consequently, organisations exhibit consistent traits and possess recognisable features that are definitive of the deep structures that form their cultural and social identity.

The conceptual lenses of stage-based development, institutional archetypes, deep structures and autopoiesis all hold to this structural view. The concept of institutional archetype adds the idea of an underlying interpretive scheme that provides an overall gestalt or configuration to an organisation’s deep structure. Wilber has argued that “structures are always presented as holistic, transformational, and autopoietic patterns” (2003d) and it is the constellation of these qualities that enables organisational change to be studied as the unfolding of deep structure archetypes. The stage-based lens is adopted by researchers who want to study these holistic, structural archetypes as they unfold over time. Hence, the developmental lens is sensitive to transformational, whole-system movement of an organisation from one pattern or order of functioning to another pattern or order of functioning. Finally, the notion of autopoiesis adds the quality of self-organisation to these deep structure stages of transformation. These arguments support reducing the archetype, transformational stage and deep structure lenses to the one lens of deep structure (see Table 5.11)

Table 5.11: Deep structure lens

Lenses from the multiparadigm review	Integral lens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organisational archetypes</li> <li>• transformational stage</li> <li>• deep structure</li> <li>• autopoiesis</li> </ul>	→ deep structure

The multiparadigm review revealed many different conceptual approaches to explaining “what” was the actual content of change, that is, what were the structures, objects and elements that underwent transformation. Using AQAL as our guiding framework for organising these explanations, we can see that several lenses relate to developmental capacities. An important element of AQAL is its model of developmental levels or stages of human development. There are many ways of presenting and describing the sequence of these stages, and Wilber (2000e) has summarised these stage-based models of human development as consisting of physical/somatic identity, affective identity, egoic/rational identity, existential identity and spiritual identity. This type of developmental sequence is seen in both stage-based models of transformation as well as in separate theories of transformation that focus on one or other of these developmental structures. Several of our lenses can be brought together to form this developmental spectrum. They include physical environment, affect and emotion, cognitive reframing, interpretive schemes, deep purpose and meaning, spiritual stages of transformation and stage-based development. These lenses can be accommodated within a single developmental stages lenses that maps out this holarchy of development (see Table 5.12)

Table 5.12: Developmental holarchy lens

<b>Lenses from the multiparadigm review</b>	<b>Integral lens</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical environment</li> <li>• emotion</li> <li>• cognitive reframing</li> <li>• interpretive schemes</li> <li>• deep purpose and meaning</li> <li>• spiritual stages of transformation</li> <li>• stage-based development</li> </ul>	→ developmental holarchy

Stage-based models of transformation do not regard development through the stages as a linear or sequential process and they acknowledged a variety of “tracks” and developmental pathways in navigating from one distinct form of organising to another. One aspect of this complexity comes from the “transcend-and-include” relationship between stages. More complex and integrative forms of organising are based on and, to some degree, include simpler, more formative organisational stages. This process of ongoing development and integrative inclusion might be called inclusive emergence because of this non-equivalent inclusiveness of development. An example of this inclusive emergence principle is seen in the sedimentation lens (Greenwood & Hinings, 1993). Inclusive emergence is a dynamic cycle of transformation and integration. As organisations develop through qualitatively different forms of deep structure, they also require more integrative forms of governance, otherwise they run the risk of becoming fragmented into a variety of subcultures, each expressing different developmental identities. Accordingly, the lenses of sedimentation, transcend-and-include and developmental inclusion can be equated with what might be called the inclusive emergence lens (see Table 5.13)

Table 5.13: Inclusive emergence lens

Lenses from the multiparadigm review	Integral lens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sedimentation</li> <li>• inclusive emergence</li> <li>• developmental inclusion</li> <li>• time span</li> </ul>	→ inclusive emergence

There are, of course, many different kinds of structures and patterned forms of organisational behaviour and knowledge. Several lenses focus on the different ways in which structural aspects of organisation are manifested, expressed and communicated. These are the “hardware” aspects of the organisation. Others look at transformation as a radical change in the “software” of the organisation, and see it as expressed in intangible, informal, and subjective cultural forms. From a multiparadigm perspective both these orientations are required for developing a more comprehensive explanation of transformation. Together, they describe two poles of an explanatory lens that is equivalent to the interior-exterior lens identified through the bridging procedure and as seen in the AQAL framework. The lenses of culture, subjectivity and experiential approaches relate to the interior pole of this dimension and the lenses of growth, technology and efficiency/productivity relate to the exterior pole (see Figure 5.14).

Table 5.14: Interior-exterior lens

Lenses from the multiparadigm review	Integral lens
the interior pole <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• culture as organisational interiors</li> <li>• subjective pole of organisational life</li> <li>• experiential approaches</li> </ul> the exterior pole <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• growth</li> <li>• efficiency/productivity</li> <li>• behavioural change</li> <li>• objective pole of organisational life</li> </ul>	→ interior-exterior

Research questions related to the “what” of transformation inherently involve assumptions about the micro/macro nature of what is transformed. One approach sees transformation as resulting from the microlevel of individual agency and action (Bacharach et al., 1996; Pettigrew, 1987). This psychological perspective is often opposed by sociological theories that frame explanations of transformation within the macrolevel context of the organisation and its environment. A critical concept in this macrolevel approach is the idea of a distinct organisational identity. Here, identity is seen, not as an aggregate of individual attributes but, as a holistic quality of the whole organisation and it is this collective characteristic that is presumed to undergo transformation (Hiller, Day & Vance, 2006). A non-reductionist appreciation for the causal powers of collective levels is the hallmark of macrolevel explanations of change (Giesen, 1987). Between the two poles of the individual and the collective lies the intermediate world of the mesolevel where group structures and team-based development are regarded as the driving force behind contemporary approaches to radical change. Almost all theories of organisational transformation adopted one or other of these three perspectives, but often do so without any rationale for their particular choice. The



micro/macro conceptual lens is represented in AQAL as the individual–collective dimension of AQAL. Table 5.15 represents the micro-meso-macro as an integral lens that incorporates organisational identity. This lens can be regarded as an ecological holarchy where the part/whole nodes are defined by an ecological inclusion of many organisational levels.

Table 5.15: Ecological holarchy lens

Lenses from the multiparadigm review	Integral lens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organisational identity</li> <li>• microlevel focus</li> <li>• mesolevel, micro-macro</li> <li>• team development</li> </ul>	→ micro-meso-macro (ecological holarchy)

In summary, lenses that focus on the content of transformation, that is, on “what” is transformed, are extremely varied in what they focus on. Some focus on exterior changes related to radical improvements in performance, effectiveness and efficiencies while others focus on the interior characteristics of organisational life such as values, personal beliefs and states of consciousness. These interior and exterior elements can be looked at from the micro world of the individual, the meso world of the group or from the macro world of the whole system. The content of transformation can also be considered through the developmental holarchy lens as stages that unfold over time and that manifest themselves in the different organisational design archetypes and deep structures. Each of these lenses will have an important role to play in building the integral metatheory for transformation.

### 5.2 Lenses focusing on the “who” of transformation

The “who” question of transformation investigates the experiences and characteristics of the people involved in the transformation event. This includes not only the organisational members but also other stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, shareholders, community members and so on. Conceptual lenses that focus on the “who” of transformation are dominated by research on management and leadership (Breu, 2001; Bryman, Gillingwater & McGuinness, 1996; Friedman, 2000). The top-down and bottom-up lenses offer different explanations as to who is responsible for authentic transformation and researchers from the two camps debate over which view provides the best account of change. Dexter Dunphy describes this situation as follows (2000, p. 123):

One of the most hotly debated issues in the field of organizational change has been whether change is best developed participatively with the active involvement of organizational members or lead from above by the CEO and top executive team.

However, these two orientations can also be seen as complementary explanations for the “who” questions of transformation. The reciprocal leadership lens is an attempt to accommodate the top-down and bottom-up explanatory dimension from a more multilevel perspective. The reciprocal

nature of the leader–follower relationships means that leaderships is a collaborative process and members of an organisation step in and out of such roles many times during their working day. It is interesting to note that the literature that addresses the spiritual nature of leadership often sees transformation as the radical reordering of the leader-follower relationship. Servant leadership is a phrase that has been coined to describe the spiritual approach to transformational leadership (Spears, 1998; Spears & Lawrence, 2001). There is a radical reorientation here which retains a hierarchy of decision-making yet turns it on its head so that the leader identifies with the “bottom” levels of the hierarchy of power and acts as their servant. The religious ritual of the leader washing the feet of the members of the congregation is a symbolic representation of this perspective (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002).

Each of these viewpoints, the top-down/bottom-up, spiritual and reciprocal leadership and power/empowerment offers a distinctive contribution to conceptualisations of organisational transformation as it relates to the decision-making and governance aspect of organisations. They all share a concern with power and empowerment in one form or another. In each of these approaches, transformation is explained according to where in the organisational structure the source of organising power, decision-making and general governance is seen to reside. Such a structure exists irrespective of whether the organisation has a traditional hierarchical form, or a flattened heterarchical form or a networked team-based form. This multilevel lens is holarchical in that each organisational level possesses decision-making and organising capacities (see Table 5.16). This type of holarchic lens explains organisational change as an outcome of decision-making capacities and the power to influence, control, lead, direct, supervise, manage, or oversee some organising function. This important lens will be called here the governance holarchy. This lens provides a conceptual window into multilevel issues related not only to the developmental or ecological levels of an organisation but also to its spheres of power and decision-making.

Table 5.16: The governance holarchy lens

Lenses from the multiparadigm review	Integral lens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• top-down/bottom up</li> <li>• spiritual leadership</li> <li>• power-empowerment</li> <li>• reciprocal leadership</li> </ul>	→ organising or governance holarchy

The diversity and stakeholders lenses look at transformation in terms of the relationships between issues of planning, consultation and control and community involvement. Together they can be regarded as an enhanced stakeholder lens that looks at the diversity of interests involved in transformation. One of the premises of such models is that an organisation’s capacity for large-scale innovation comes from the diversity of ideas and interests that are represented not only in the internal levels of decision-making and governance but also in an organisation’s everyday contact with its major stakeholder groups (Benn & Dunphy, 2007). From a broad stakeholder perspective,

the focus moves beyond shareholders, customers and suppliers to include public interest groups, local communities and natural environments. The stakeholder lens offers a fresh look at “who” needs to be involved in guiding the transformation process (Table 5.17).

Table 5.17: The stakeholder/diversity lens

<b>Lenses from the multiparadigm review</b>	<b>Integral lens</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stakeholder lens</li> <li>• diversity lens</li> </ul>	→ stakeholder

Feminist, interpretive and indigenous approaches to transformation consider the underlying assumptions that privilege particular groups or forms of behaviour or forms of organisational structure over others. This way of examining transformation questions underlying assumptions concerning power, language, and purpose and seeks to uncover forms of meaning that are local as opposed to universal, that are relational as opposed to conceptual, that are community building as opposed to economy focused. The postmodern lens sees change research as value-laden rather than value-neutral and, consequently, a basic form of inquiry in this approach is to uncover pre-existing assumptions rather than accept particular orders as pre-existing natural states. Social constructionist, feminist and indigenous approaches to transformation question many of the basic assumptions regarding managed and planned change and, instead, emphasise an emergent and local approach that values cultural diversity over a uniform hierarchical order. This postmodern form of explaining change is called a decentering lens because one of its most characteristic qualities is to develop narrative of change that come from the periphery, from the local, from the hidden and unheard voices of those experiencing and affected by change (Badham & Garrety, 2003).

Other lenses that focus on the “who” issues include personal perspectives and experiential approaches. The personal perspectives lens of subjective (first person), relational (second person) and objective (third person) forms of inquiry also challenges mainstream approaches to investigating change. Because it includes subjective and relational forms of inquiry, this lens discloses sources of data that open up new ways of conceptualising change (Torbert, 1999). The perspectives lens also occupies a prominent position in AQAL analyses (see Table 5.18).

Table 5.18: The postmodern perspectives lenses

<b>Lenses from the multiparadigm review</b>	<b>Integral lenses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feminist lens</li> <li>• indigenous lens</li> <li>• interpretive turn</li> </ul>	→ decentering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal perspectives</li> </ul>	→ perspectival
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• experiential approaches</li> <li>• states of consciousness</li> </ul>	→ states of consciousness

### 5.3 Lenses focusing on the “why” of transformation

Conceptual lenses that focus on the “why” of transformation consider all those conditions, qualities and situations which permit, enable, precipitate and trigger the transformational process (Levy & Merry, 1986). The sources for these processes can be traced back either to internal organisational factors or to external factors such as the competitive force of inter-organisational networks or the transformational imperatives of social environments. The multiparadigm review found several lenses that assume that transformation can be understood according to the internal-external dimension and the interplay of factors across organisational boundaries (Diamond, Allcorn & Stein, 2004). A full explanation of why transformation occurs will need to include both poles of this explanatory dimension (Lee & Grover, 2000). Table 5.19 proposes that several lenses be accommodated with this internal-external lens.

Table 5.19: Internal-external lens

Lenses from the multiparadigm review	Integral lens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>organisational environments</li> <li>environmental imperatives</li> <li>internal and external</li> <li>inter-organisational network</li> </ul>	→ internal-external

The social mediation, communication and technology lenses also offer explanations on why transformation takes place. Mediation is the process by which change is effected through the intervention of a social agent, group, artefact or tool. The means of social mediation, for example, language, tools, social norms and cultural assumptions “provide the link or bridge between the concrete actions carried out by individuals and groups, on the one hand, and cultural, institutional, and historical settings, on the other” (Wertsch, Del Rio & Alvarez, 1995, p. 21). So, for example, community concern and action over climate change might be considered as mediating organisational change because it facilitates the intents of organisational groups and their members to transform their organisation. Social mediation provides a way of envisaging change via the intermediacy of cultural artefacts such as electronic and print media (Frank, 1998). The mediation lens offer an alternative to the more regular view of transformation as occurring through innate internal factors.

Table 5.20: Social mediation lens

Lenses from the multiparadigm review	Integral lenses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mediation</li> <li>technology</li> <li>communication</li> </ul>	→ social mediation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>relational exchange</li> </ul>	→ relational exchange

Relational exchange is also employed to provide answers on why transformation takes place. This lens is retained as an integral lens because of its conceptual scope and particular relevance to

explaining transformational across multiple levels. Table 5.20 presents the social mediation lens as an integration of the mediation, communication and technology lenses.

The alignment, coevolution and configuration lenses provide explanations for why transformation occurs which are based on the comparative configuration of structural and/or situational factors. These comparisons are often referred to as forms of alignment between, for example, leadership style and type of change (Bacharach et al., 1996), or between organisational structure and that of its environment (Djelic & Ainamo, 1999), or between structural forms as they appear at different levels of the organisation (Sammut-Bonnici & Wensley, 2002). The coevolution lens proposes that configurations that exist at one organisational level can initiate or support the transformation of structures at other levels. Consequently, each of these three lenses can be seen as forms of alignment that are adopted by many theories of transformation (see Table 5.21).

Table 5.21: Alignment lens

Lenses from the multiparadigm review	Integral lens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• alignment</li> <li>• coevolution</li> <li>• configuration</li> </ul>	→ alignment

#### 5.4 Lenses focusing on the “how” of transformation

Questions regarding the “how” of transformation inquire into the processes and transition dynamics by which it occurs (Levy & Merry, 1986). Theories that offer responses to the “how” research question are often called process theories (Galambos, 2005; Nutt, 2003). The transition process, “dark night” and spiritual process lenses are all concerned with the various transitional phases of transformation and can all be incorporated within the transition lens.

The systems dynamics lens also provides accounts of transformation that involve process-related ideas. This lens contributes unique insights about the dynamics involved in radical change. These include the concepts of feedback dynamics, bifurcation points and (dis)equilibrium. Consequently, system dynamics is retained as a separate integral lens (see Table 5.22).

Table 5.22: Transition process lens

Lenses from the multiparadigm review	Integral lenses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• transition process</li> <li>• the “dark night”</li> <li>• spiritual process</li> <li>• time span</li> </ul>	→ transition process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• systems dynamics</li> </ul>	→ system dynamic

Another set of lenses that focus on the “how” of transformation comes from the organisational learning paradigm and these generate explanations that are based on learning processes and

concepts to do with organisational knowledge. Many learning theorists propose cycles of learning (Dixon, 1999b) that involve interiors and exteriors (Miller, 1996) and individual and collective dimensions of learning (Casey, 2005; Fry & Griswold, 2003; Jorgensen, 2004; Mumford, 1992; Murray, 2002; Schwandt & Marquardt, 1999). A comparison between these and other learning models (see Appendix D) finds that learning phases can be associated with particular AQAL quadrants - the active learning phase relates to the behavioural quadrant, reflective learning relates to consciousness, interpretive learning relates to the cultural quadrant and the validation phase to the social quadrant. Consequently, the learning process can be represented as a cycle of active physical engagement, conceptual reflection, cultural interpretation and social validation that is iteratively followed to produce knowledge and insight in individuals and collectives. Each learning phase utilises different learning skills that can be classified according to two dimensions: the concrete experience-abstract conceptualisation dimension and the individual task-interpersonal relationship dimension (Mainemelis, Boyatzis & Kolb, 2002).

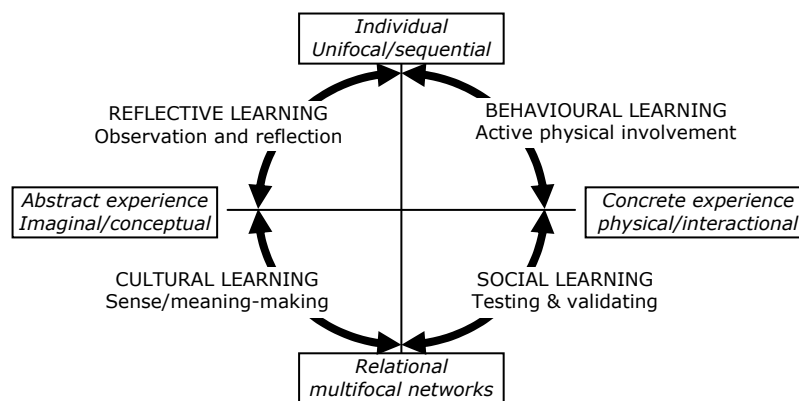


Figure 5.22: The integral cycle of learning (single loop)

Figure 5.22 shows these relationships as they relate to a single-loop learning situation. In double- and triple-loop learning, this cycle is built into a multidimensional view that describes “different hierarchical levels of learning” (Stewart, 2001, p. 3). Akbar (2003) has argued that there are clear links between knowledge levels and learning and has proposed a model for integrating “the knowledge creation view and single and double-loop learning models” (2003, p. 1997). Drawing together these views, i.e. the learning cycle, stage-based models of transformation and the knowledge levels model, it is possible to develop a more integrated view for combining learning process cycles, learning loops and hierarchies of knowledge (Romme & Witteloostuijn, 1999). Together, these lenses form a learning process lens that can generate explanations of transformation from an organisational learning and knowledge perspective (see Table 5.23).

Table 5.23: Learning lens

Lenses from the multiparadigm review	Integral Lens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning process</li> <li>• learning loops</li> <li>• knowledge levels</li> </ul>	→ learning

The lenses of revolution-evolution and radical-regulatory change both offer insights into how transformation occurs. Cycles of evolution and revolution are conceptually compatible with cycles or regulatory and radical change. These lenses can be integrated within the Wilberian notion of translation-transformation that was discussed previously.

Evolutionary theories also concern themselves with research questions about the “how” of transformation (Burns & Dietz, 2001). Here the central concepts of variation and selection are used to explain how transformation can arise within local settings and be reproduced throughout whole systems (Jones, 2005). Although AQAL does not include an evolution lens comprised of the variation, selection, retention and reproduction cycle, the evolutionary selection lens is retained here because of its importance in, for example, punctuated equilibrium models of transformation (Gersick, 1991; Wischnevsky & Damanpour, 2004) (see Table 5.24)

Table 5.24: Transformation-translation and evolutionary selection lenses

Lenses from the multiparadigm review	Integral Lens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evolution-revolution</li> <li>• radical-incremental change</li> </ul>	→ transformation-translation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evolutionary selection</li> </ul>	→ evolutionary selection

### 5.5 Multiparadigm lenses

Multiparadigm lenses, by definition, are employed in theories from several different research paradigms to explain and investigate transformative change. Their explanatory power ranges across all questions concerning the “what”, “who”, “when” and “why” of organisational transformation. Multiparadigm lenses derive from the cross-paradigmatic analysis of the core themes of several different theories and are, therefore, not easily reduced to other lenses. Consequently, these multiparadigm lenses are inherently integrative and all are retained for inclusion in the metatheory described in the next chapter. Table 5.25 shows the multiparadigm lenses of types, spirituality, agency-communion and health-pathology included in the set of integral lenses.

Table 5.25: Multiparadigm lenses

Lenses from the multiparadigm review	Integral Lenses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• types</li> </ul>	→ types
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• spirituality</li> </ul>	→ spirituality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agency-communion</li> </ul>	→ agency-communion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• health-pathology</li> </ul>	→ health-pathology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• transformational domains (streams)</li> </ul>	→ streams

## 6. Summary of Integral Lenses

The rationalisation and refinement of the large number of conceptual factors identified in the multiparadigm review has resulted in a more parsimonious and set of 24 integral lenses and these

are listed in Table 5.26. Even though the refinement process has greatly reduced the number of lenses, there are still many available as basic building blocks for assembling the integral metatheory for organisational transformation.

Table 5.26: Integral lenses for organisational transformation

<b>Integral Lenses</b>	
<b>for the “what” of transformation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deep structure</li> <li>• developmental holarchy</li> <li>• inclusive emergence</li> <li>• interior-exterior</li> <li>• (ecological holarchy)</li> </ul>	<b>for the “why” of transformation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• internal-external lens</li> <li>• social mediation lens</li> <li>• relational exchange lens</li> <li>• alignment lens</li> </ul>
<b>for the “who” of transformation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• states of consciousness</li> <li>• streams lens</li> <li>• organising or governance holarchy</li> <li>• stakeholder/diversity</li> <li>• decentering</li> <li>• perspectival lens</li> </ul>	<b>for the “how” of transformation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• transition process lens</li> <li>• system dynamic lens</li> <li>• learning lens</li> <li>• transformation-translation lens</li> <li>• evolutionary selection lens</li> </ul>
<b>multiparadigm lenses – for multiple questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• types lens</li> <li>• spirituality lens</li> <li>• agency-communion lens</li> <li>• health-pathology lens</li> </ul>	

This large number of lenses is an expected outcome of the theme analysis process. There are several reason for this: i) the complexity of social events and of transformational issues means that many forms of explanations are possible, ii) the large number of extant paradigms and theories in the literature also means that a relatively large number of lenses should result from the theme analysis, and iii) AQAL metatheory’s principle of non-exclusion, i.e. the inclusion of as many valid conceptual approaches as possible, inclines integral metatheory building towards including more lenses rather than less.

In the next chapter the relationships within and between the integral lenses listed in Table 5.26 will be considered. Clarifying the relationships between components is an essential part of any (meta) theory building project. These relationships determine to a large degree the metatheoretical system to be outlined in a following chapter.



## Chapter 6: Relationships Between Conceptual Lenses

In the relationship building step [of theory building], parsimony, fecundity, and abstraction virtues enhance the theory by using only necessary relationships, offering new areas for investigation, and integrating relationships for a higher abstraction level. Also in this stage, internal consistency is important to verify which relationships are logically compatible with each other. Generally, as more internally consistent relationships are integrated into a theory, the theory can explain more, therefore raising the theory's abstraction level. (Wacker, 1998, p. 370)

### 1. Objectives

This chapter discusses the relationships between and within the conceptual lenses identified from the multiparadigm review. Identifying and describing these relationships is essential for developing a metatheoretical framework for studying transformational phenomena (Wacker, 1998). The major metatheory building resources that will guide this process are: i) AQAL metatheory and ii) the lens relationships already described in the extant literature. Commenting on the need to describe relationships between theoretical elements in the “relationship-building” phase of theory construction, Wacker stresses that, “the literature provides the best guidelines as to which relationship are theoretically important for investigation and which relationships may be considered fundamental” (Wacker, 1998, p. 370). Consequently, the relationships described in the various literatures analysed in the multiparadigm review will be an important guide in achieving the objectives of this chapter. The relationships between the various elements of the AQAL framework will also act as a critical guide for developing an integral approach to organisational transformation. Of special importance in this process will be the holon construct. As mentioned previously, holons are useful in investigating complex multi-level phenomena from a non-reductive standpoint. Consequently, they will have a particularly important role in seeing how lenses can be combined to create more integrative approaches to the study of transformational phenomena.

There are some theory building criteria that have particular relevance to the task of identifying underlying relationships between lenses. Internal consistency is one such criterion. Internal consistency means that definitions and relationships are applied across the framework in a reliable, consistent and logically coherent manner. As Wacker states: “Internal consistency refutations means that the theory *logically* explains the relationships between variables” (emphasis in the original) (1998, p. 365). Hence, questions that guide this process include: Are relationships between lenses consistent and not contradictory? Do these relationships hold for all combinations of lenses? Do reductionist forms of lenses exist? Uniqueness is another criterion that is used here to judge the adequacy of a lens. Uniqueness refers to the capacity for concepts to be independent and discernable distinct from one another. Clearly, if a lens is to provide some unique insight into a

social event, it must disclose very distinctive views and generate explanations that are not shared by, or at least reducible to, other approaches. These criteria of internal consistency, abstractness and uniqueness will guide judgments on the relationships between the identified explanatory lenses.

In summary, the identification of relationships between lenses will be guided by the findings of the multiparadigm review, the metatheory resource of AQAL framework and the evaluation criteria mentioned above. Using these resources, the objectives of this chapter are to:

- i) identify the fundamental patterns that are shared by particular lenses and categorise lenses according to these patterns;
- ii) describe the basic types of holonic relationships;
- iii) describe some common problems found in the relationships within and between lenses;
- iv) describe the relationships between lenses using combinations of lenses to form metatheoretical frameworks (integral indexing).

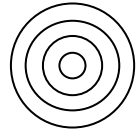
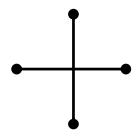
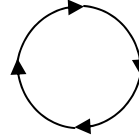
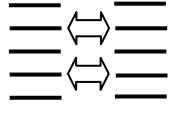
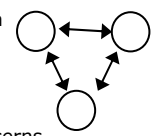
## 2. Lens Categories

One simple way of identifying and describing the relationships between lenses is to consider their fundamental morphological patterns, for example, whether they are defined by bipolar or cyclical relationships. These categories can be grouped according to their conceptual shape. The idea is that our explanations are deeply metaphorical and those metaphors can be categorized according to basic visual patterns. This is a kind of vision-logic at its most fundamental level of application (Wilber, 1995). Mintzberg and Westley (1992) undertook a similar task in their study of the patterns found between theories of organisational change and represented those patterns as various types of cycles and spirals. Looking at these basic patterns, we see that the set of integral lenses can be categorised into the following groups:

- i) the holarchical category - these lenses take the form of multilevel holarchies, e.g., the developmental, ecological and governance lenses;
- ii) the bipolar category - these lenses are defined by complementary dualisms or paradoxes that form binary dimensions, e.g., agency-communion and internal-external lenses;
- iii) the cyclical category - these lenses are depicted as iterative or phased cycles, e.g., the transition process lens and learning lenses;
- iv) the relational category - these lenses share a relational form or interactive mode of representation, e.g., the mediation lens and alignment lenses;
- v) the standpoint category - these lenses take the form of subjective or personal perspectives, e.g., personal perspective lens and the states of consciousness lens;
- vi) the multiparadigm or multimorphic category – these lenses that can appear in several categories, e.g. the spirituality lens can be expressed as a holarchy, a process and as a state of consciousness.

Table 6.1 shows the categories that result from grouping lenses according to basic patterns of relationships. Grouping lenses into these categories assists in the investigation of how lenses inter-relate and, in the following sections, some relationships that exists both within and between categories will be briefly explored.

Table 6.1: Categories of Conceptual Lenses for Organisational Transformation

Categories of Conceptual Lenses	
<b>Holarchy category:</b> Lenses expressed as holarchical structures, the “what” of transformation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>developmental holarchy: transformational levels, stages of discontinuous change</li> <li>ecological holarchy: spatial levels multilevel, micro-meso-macro, organisational levels</li> <li>governance/organising holarchy: levels of decision-making, power relations, management</li> <li>deep structure: the pattern of persistent features that define levels</li> </ul>	
<b>Bipolar category:</b> Lenses expressed as dualities and polarities, the “why” of transformation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interior-exterior: contrasting poles of for example subjective-objective</li> <li>transformation-translation: radical change-incremental change</li> <li>internal-external: the inside and outside of organisational boundaries</li> <li>agency-communion: autonomous-relational, task-relationships</li> <li>health-pathology: balanced-unbalanced, whole-fragmented</li> </ul>	
<b>Cyclical process category:</b> Lenses expressed as cyclical processes, the “how” of transformation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>system dynamics: bifurcation points, feedback processes, cyclical dynamics</li> <li>learning: single, double, triple loop learning; integral cycle of learning</li> <li>transition process: transition cycles, change processes</li> <li>inclusive emergence: transcend-and-include cycles</li> <li>evolutionary selection: emergence through variation, selection, retention cycles</li> </ul>	
<b>Relational category:</b> Lenses expressed as relational processes, the “how” of transformation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mediation: social mediation through artefact-in-use</li> <li>alignment: concordance between two structures, processes or entities</li> <li>relational exchange: exchanges that occur between two structures or processes</li> </ul>	
<b>Standpoint category:</b> Lenses expressed as perspectival standpoints, the “who” of transformation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stakeholder: viewpoints of employees, managers, customers, communities</li> <li>states of consciousness: condition of subjective awareness of stakeholders</li> <li>personal perspective: first, second and third person perspectives – singular &amp; plural</li> <li>decentering: hidden standpoints, hegemonic vs. peripheral viewpoints, local vs. universal concerns</li> </ul>	
<b>Multimorphic category:</b> Lenses expressed in multiple forms, can consider the “what”, “why”, “how” and “who” of transformation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>spirituality: a transpersonal level of development, a particular line of development, a process, etc</li> <li>organisational streams: domains of organisational life, e.g. people, structures, cultures, systems</li> <li>types: non-developmental typologies of key organisational entities</li> </ul>	

Each of the morphological categories is loosely associated with particular types of questions about change. Holarchical lenses are useful for explaining the structural questions of “what” changes, bipolar lenses for the causal questions of “why” change occurs, cyclical lenses for the process questions of “how” it occurs, relational lenses for the contextual questions of “when” it occurs, standpoint lenses for the personal questions regarding “who” is involved in the change. The multimorphic category contains lenses that can be expressed in a variety of forms and can answer several several questions regarding change and transformation.

### 3. Relationships between Holarchical Lenses

#### 3.1 *The importance of the holon construct*

Holarchical lenses are particularly important for exploring the transformation relationships between integral lenses. Whatever lenses a theory of transformation uses, it must include in some fashion some construct that can capture the structures and/or processes involved in an organisation's radical shift from one order of functioning to another. As we have seen, the holon construct was developed precisely for this purpose and for this reason it occupies a prominent place in several theories of radical change (see, for example, Edwards, 2005; Krarup, 1979; Landrum & Gardner, 2005; Mathews, 1996; McHugh et al., 1995; Terenzi, 2005; van Eijnatten, 2001). The holon construct also has the capacity to act as a scaffold for displaying other types of lenses. The AQAL framework and the chaordic systems thinking approaches of van Eijnatten and his colleagues (van Eijnatten, 2001; van Eijnatten & Putnik, 2004; van Eijnatten & van Galen, 2002) are good examples of how holons can support multiple lenses in relationship. Wilber uses the developmental holon for describing his quadrants model and van Eijnatten integrates such concepts as connectivity, consciousness, emergence and complexity levels within a systems-based view of holons.

There are three different types of holonic lenses identified in the multiparadigm review. One is based on developmental relationships between levels of transformational growth, another on ecological relationships between organisational levels and a third on organisational relationships between levels of governance and decision-making. The developmental (stage-based) lens is clearly relevant to transformational concerns and its capacity to represent transformative development is fundamental for theory building in this field. However, the other two forms, while not explicitly transformational in character, are also commonly used in theories of transformation.

#### 3.2 *Three forms of holarchical relationships*

Various forms of the holon/holarchy construct have always been evident in the literature on holons. Koestler emphasises the ecological form in his endeavour to represent biological, organisational and social levels in a hierarchy of spatial and functional relationships. Wilber, on the other hand, shows how holons can be used to represent the genealogical and developmental relationships between stages of human and sociocultural development. These are very different types of relationships and Wilber in particular has been at pains to ensure that they are not confused (Wilber, 2000f; Wilber & Zimmerman, 2005). Wilber argues that theorists who do not clearly distinguish between developmental inclusion and spatial inclusion produce confused holarchies and that the relationships between holons and holonic levels in those holarchies are invalid (Wilber & Zimmerman, 2005). This is called the "mixing problem". The literature on organisational evolutionary dynamics refers to these two different forms of structural relationships as

genealogical and ecological hierarchies (Baum & Singh, 1994). Genealogical holarchies are based on time and developmental inclusion whereas ecological holarchies are based on spatial relationships and environmental inclusion. The developmental or genealogical form of holarchy (Wilber) is seen in transformational theories that focus on stage-based development. The ecological form of holarchy (Koestler) is seen in theories of transformation that focus on organisational levels, that is, on the micro, meso and macrolevels of organising and on transformation as it occurs within those levels, for example, within individuals, teams, organisations, inter-organisational, and broader sociocultural environments.

In addition to these two, a third form of holarchy is proposed here - the governance holarchy. As explained previously, this lens is concerned with the relative organising power or decision-making capacity that exists between different individuals, levels and groups within an organisation. The governance holarchy is not built on the criteria of developmental or ecological relationships but on the governance-related relationships of organising and decision-making power.

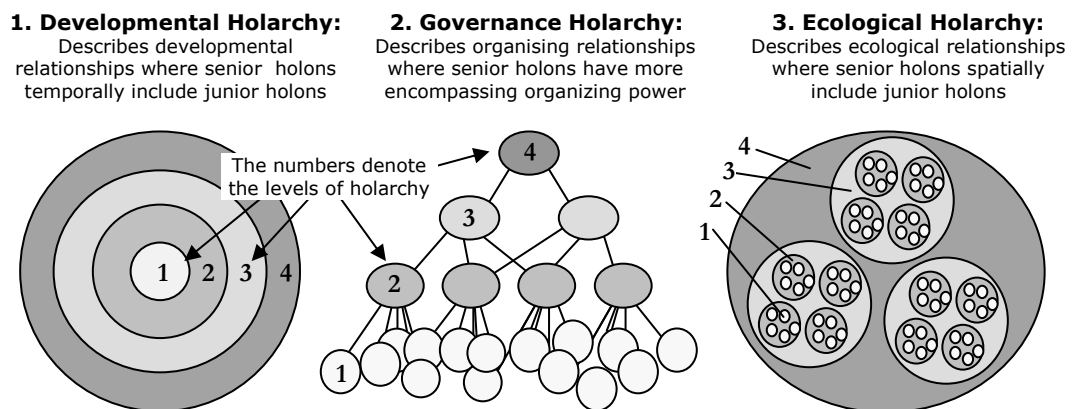


Figure 6.1: Three forms of holarchical relationships

Figure 6.1 depicts the three forms of holarchical lenses and their internal relationships: i) the developmental or stage-based holarchy describes transformational shifts, ii) the governance holarchy is seen in all organised collectives and describes the group's capacity for autopoiesis, self-regulation, management and decision-making; and iii) the ecological holarchy maps the spatially nested quality of inclusive organisational levels. All three are holarchical forms of explanatory lenses because each is built upon the basic pattern of a part/whole serial relationship. They are all different forms of holarchies because they base their definition of part/whole relation on different boundary-drawing criteria. With each of these holarchical lenses it is important to remember that the regulatory processes that govern interactions between holons are multidirectional and relational in character. Even in governance holarchies, more encompassing levels do not determine what the less encompassing levels will do in isolation from the organising agency of those parts. "Higher" holarchical levels do not cause "lower" levels to behave or think. The exchange is always a two-way process. Hence, in the governance holarchy constituent holons are best seen as leader-followers.

Each of these three forms of holarchy is present in theories of organisational transformation. The developmental lens is seen in theories that explain transformation as a function of the stage-based development of certain organisational entities such as individuals, teams, organisations or organisational environments. The ecological lens is most evident in systems and complexity theories that see transformation as a result of emergent processes. The governance lens is predominantly utilised by leadership theories which advocate top-down or bottom-up approaches to transformation. In the following section, the relationships between other types of lenses will be discussed.

#### 4. Relationships Between Integral Lenses

##### *4.1 Exclusionary relationships between lens categories*

The multiparadigm review found that theorists generally rely on only a small number of conceptual lenses in developing their explanations of organisational transformation. This means, for example, that process theorists tend to ignore structural lenses such as those used by multilevel theorists and, correspondingly, developmental theorists make very little use of the transition process or learning lenses. Theorists who come from a “standpoint” or relational perspective often neglect the developmental and multilevel lenses and those lenses expressed as bipolar dualities. In fact, the extensive list of explanatory lenses listed in Table 6.1 tells us that most theorists are relying on a very limited conceptual base in developing explanations for transformational occurrences. This exclusionism has several unfortunate implications for theories of transformation in organisational settings. One is the lack of use of the stage-based development lens. We have seen that transformation requires a qualitative shift on the part of the whole organisational system from its current status quo to a more complex and integrative form of organising. Without sensitivity to the existence of these transformational potentials, theorists run the risk of proposing models of change that are not conceptually adequate for explaining qualitative transformation. This issue will be explored in more detail in a later section. It is important to note at this point, however, that whatever lenses a change theorist may work with, their approach will be problematic if the developmental holarchy lens is excluded. Their conceptualisation of transformation will be missing a definitive aspect of radically alternative forms of organising.

##### *4.2 Relationships between holarchical and other lens categories*

On the other side of this issue lies the problem of developmentalism. Developmentalism occurs when a theorist relies solely on the holarchical category of lenses to investigate transformational phenomena and excludes all those other forms of explanation (i.e. non-developmental lenses) which might also be relevant. When cyclical, standpoint, or interaction lenses are excluded, the result can be forms of explanation that rely too heavily on the ranking of levels of development, the

grading of worldviews, and the diagnosis of the relative position of social entities on particular developmental scales (as they apply to organisational members, leaders, teams, or the organisation as a whole). This narrow use of the developmental lens results in a rigid view of hierarchy where the definition of higher and lower makes no use of heterarchical and non-developmental concepts. Theorists who adopt relational and standpoint lenses rightly criticise stage-based theories that rely heavily on vertical explanations of growth while neglecting horizontal ones. Post-modernist theorists who use relational and contextual lenses in their explanations of change are suspicious of theories that are based on notions of transformational or developmental hierarchies. Their concern is that a reliance on stage-based explanations of transformation (i.e. those theories using the developmental levels lens) will lead directly to prescriptive concepts of “progress” and to the privileging of “higher levels” of performance and functioning. Postmodernism argues forcefully that these prescriptions are part of the problem and not part of the solution and that transformation which is based on modernist (developmentalist) ideas of progress and advancement will result in injustices, environmental problems, power inequities and social dislocations of all kinds (Buchanan, 2003; Grey, 2003).

Although these critiques are well based, they do not address an issue that lies at the heart of all theories of transformative change. Postmodernist theorists of organisational change also call for the transformation of organisations towards more humane and sophisticated forms. This call assumes the need for a *trans-form*-ing into some other way of organising. The concept of transformational potential necessarily means that there is some idea of a preferred state of organising. Hence, all theories must have some notion of qualitatively distinct forms of organisation. As many writers have argued (Habermas, 1995; Young, 1997), without some guiding vision of favoured social arrangements, the relativism of postmodernism is susceptible to a directionless “flatland” that merely generates deconstructive criticism with no capacity for constructive criticism. Wilber has made the point that even postmodernism assumes some preference hierarchy in making judgements about change and in criticising developmental theories (Wilber, 2000a, p. x).

Granted, rigid social hierarchies are deplorable, and oppressive social rankings are pernicious. Postmodernism has fortunately made us all more sensitive to those injustices. But even the anti-hierarchy critics have their own strong hierarchies (or value rankings). The postmodernists value pluralism over absolutism--and that is their value hierarchy.

These two camps, one which relies on applying multilevel and developmental lenses for its explanations and the other on relational and perspectival lenses, are in debate over many aspects of organisational change (Easley & Alvarez-Pompilius, 2004; Gole & Hirschheim, 2000; Hassard & Kelemen, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Weaver & Gioia, 1994). A selection of these debates and the respective positions taken by developmentalist and relativist proponents is shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Positional differences between developmentalism and relativism

Debated topic	Developmentalist view (developmental levels lens)	Relativist view (standpoint lenses)
Type of transformation	stage based	emergent
Leadership	top-down	bottom-up
Management structure	hierarchical	heterarchical
Aspect of change	structural	processual
Teleology	developmental	cyclical
Methodology	individualist	collectivist
Epistemology	universalising	localising

Approaches that rely solely on the developmental lens prefer hierarchical arrangements that support top-down, transformational leadership styles. Their explanations are concerned with the presence or lack of various developmental stages and the means by which these stages can be advanced along some spectrum. Those who take a relativist position rely on the standpoint and relational lenses that support bottom-up and emergent process that can be described in cyclical and heterarchical terms rather than structural and hierarchical ones.

#### 4.3 Relationships between cyclical and other lens categories

The parochialism between developmental and postmodern theorists is only one example of a number of “paradigm wars” (Jackson & Carter, 1993) that result from a reliance on certain categories of explanatory lenses to the exclusion of others. Another example is the division between theorists who rely on the cyclical category of lenses and those who adopt the holarchical and bipolar lenses which are inherently more content based and structural in focus. For example, process theories develop explanations that are based on the dynamics and characteristics of change as it occurs through time (Chia, 2002). In contrast, theories that use bipolar lenses often combine them to create structural models that distinguish between different types of organisational designs and environments. The ensuing debates are polarised around the issue of change in structural types versus change as processual dynamics. One side describes typologies and categories based on the combinations of bipolar dimensions while the other eschews categorical models in favour of descriptions of process, flow, change dynamics, continuous change, and learning processes (Chia, 2002). A more inclusive metatheory of transformation would value both these approaches and recognise the complementary relationship between cyclical and bipolar categories of lenses.

The foregoing discussion highlights the need for a complementary approach towards using lenses from different categories. A multiparadigm and integral approach to explaining the complexities involved in transformation recognises that each of these groups of lenses can offer significant contributions. They complement each other in providing insights into the “how”, “when”, “why”, and “who” of transformation. However, before looking at these complementary relationships, we need to look in more detail at the form of these explanatory lenses themselves. While it is important that multiple lenses be employed in our explanations, it is also crucial that we use them in



their most complete form. Lenses are defined by the relationships between their constitutive (second-order) elements or, what might be called, facets. The issue of the internal relationships between different facets of a lens is a crucial one that has implications for its application in metatheory development. Some theorists use only facets of a lens and, consequently, produce reductionist explanations of change. The following section introduces this issue of lens reductionism.

#### *4.4 Reductionist forms of lenses*

Perhaps the most common way of formulating a conceptual lens is as a complementary duality or bipolar paradox where opposing qualities define a certain dimension of organisational life. We see this in, for example, in the two dimensions that constitute the multiparadigm framework of Burrell and Morgan and in the AQAL framework where several of the main conceptual elements are expressed as complementary dualities. However, many theories make use of only one pole of a bipolar dimension in researching organisational transformation. Perhaps the most common example of this is the debate between theorists who see organisational culture (the interiors) as the central explanatory concept for transformation and those who see organisational structure (the exteriors) as the main player in change. Wilber argues strongly that culture and structure (interiors and exteriors) are two complementary sides of a continuum that exists for all social entities and that one side of this dimension cannot exist without the other. Explanations based on one end of this bipolar continuum will necessarily be partial and interventions that are designed on this reduced conceptualisation of social life will usually end with problematic outcomes. Culture and structure, the informal interior and formal exterior aspects of organising, complement and support each other and together form two ends of an important conceptual lens for exploring transformation.

Several researchers of organisational change have commented on the very poor results of programs that focus purely on transforming organisational culture or, alternatively, on solely the restructuring of organisational operations and systems (Applebaum & Wohl, 2000; Forster, 2005; Kotter, 1998). The failure of many transformational programmes may be due, in part, to the application of models that utilise reductive versions of these types of lenses. Focusing on one pole of a bipolar continuum to the exclusion of other possibilities is also seen in the explanations that use one or other pole of dimensions such as individual-collective, agency-communion, interior-exterior, transformational-translational change and internal-external.

The multiparadigm review found that this tendency for theorists to use truncated versions of lenses also applied to the other lens groupings. Stage-based development theorists, for example, did not always make use of the full spectrum of levels of development identified in the literature. In Chapter 5, several stage-based models of transformation were compared and their stages calibrated against one another. For example, Table 5.2 shows that, of the eight theorists included in this

comparison only three specifically described the most advanced stages of transformation. Five theorists did not include the radical, postconventional levels associated with the more holistic, inquiry-based and spiritual forms of organising and three did not include stages beyond the conventional levels. This could be called “levels reductionism” in that a reductive model of stages is employed and a restricted explanation of the range of transformational potentials is offered as a result. Theorists who employed truncated or reductive versions of these holarchical lenses propose models of transformation that are accordingly restrictive in their view of transformative possibilities, and, consequently, their models do not consider the full range of potentials identified by other approaches.

There is another more intense form of lens truncation that drastically reduces the whole spectrum of transformational potentials to two simple levels – the current organisational “status quo” and the envisioned form of organisation “going forward”. Proposing theories of radical, discontinuous change requires researchers to conceptually represent the movement from the present form of organising to some fundamentally different form – a *trans-form*-ation. However minimal the explicit reference to the developmental lens may be, all such theories assume that some form of organising is preferable to another. Even evolutionary or incremental explanations involve some notion of qualitative difference in an organisation’s core functioning over time. However, reducing multiple levels of transformation potential down to the simple dichotomy of status quo versus transformed runs the risk of change becoming directionless. The danger of change for change’s sake can appear to make sense in times of turmoil because any change is a movement away from the status quo.

Reductionist forms of the ecological holarchy lens appear when ecological levels are limited to levels that are found within the organisational setting and do not include levels outside the organisation. This results in the neglect of broader environmental, inter-organisational and social levels of ecology when explaining environmental imperatives and triggering mechanisms for transformation. Alternatively, some theorists, particularly those from an evolutionary dynamics perspective (Baum & Singh, 1994), develop multilevel models of organisation environments but do not consider the social ecologies within organisations themselves. In these instances, the danger is to overlook the importance of individuals, dyads and teams and other organising subsystems within the organisation’s own ecological levels.

Another issue relates to a kind of constriction of the full range of ecological levels into a simple bipolar dimension. This occurs, for example, when a micro-meso-macro model is reduced to a bipolar micro-macro model. Multilevel models involve a distinction between the levels of individual, dyad, team or group level, department, organisation and inter organisational environment. Some theorists, however, (and this is a problematic feature of Wilber’s AQAL framework) reduce these multiple levels into a simple bipolar individual-collective dimension. The

resulting model displays a subsequent loss in descriptive capacity through ignoring the relational and team-based mesolevels of the organisation in explaining transformational processes.

#### *4.5 Reductionism in cyclical lenses*

Explanatory lenses expressed as cyclical processes also suffer from forms of epistemological reductionism. The transition process lens, in particular, is sometimes expressed in a very pared-back form. A well-known example of this reduced version is the change model of Kurt Lewin (Lewin, 1952; Rosch, 2002). Lewin's model is frequently simplified to a three-phase model of unfreeze–move–refreeze. This summary hardly does justice to the very sophisticated model that Lewin actually worked with, however, this three-phase version is widely quoted and leaves out many phases identified in other process models. Collins (1998) calls these process models “N-step guides for change” because they all describe a similar change process but differ in the number of steps or phases that that process entails (“N-steps”). A common issue with N-step models is that the omission of certain critical steps of the cycle and thereby view and explain change through a simplified lens that does not include the full range of process phases. Three examples of this type of process lens reductionism are found in models that omit: i) the inactivity or “state of shock” phase, ii) the experimentation phase and iii) the integration phase. Because of their prevalence in theories of transformation, these reduced forms of the transition process lens are worthy of further discussion.

Some N-step models omit the transition phase that describes a low point in the transition process. Various described as a state of shock, depression, or despair in individual transformation and as inaction, chaos, or resistance in organisational transformation, this phase has been tellingly labelled, “the death valley of change” by Elrod and Tippet (2002). Interestingly, some models ignore this phase and present transition models that only describe phases of positive movement from one stage of functioning to the next and they make no mention of phases of negative affect, widespread confusion or self-doubt. These theories sometimes use neutral terms such as “adaptation” or “transitioning” phase to describe these period of chaos. Understandably, this omission, or at least neutral labelling, is more common among functionalist approaches to transitioning where it is more likely that the affective and sub-cultural impacts of change are overlooked.

Another phase that is commonly omitted from the transition process lens is the experimentation or emergence of possible solutions phase. This phase is where there are multiple small experiments and innovations occurring in ideas, processes, collaborative projects, conversations, technological systems and trial-and-error attempts at developing new ways of understanding and doing things. From these local trials at novelty, there emerge successful behavioural and sense-making innovations that can spread through the organisation. N-step theories that leave out this phase underestimate the power of local experimentation within organisations and the capacity that these

small trials have for system-wide transformation. These models of the transition process tend to undervalue internal innovations and overestimate the value of importing new systems, technologies, personnel, structures, processes and so on.

A third phase that is frequently neglected in theories that utilise the transition process lens is the integrative phase that follows the transformation to a new level of organising. In moving from one level of organising to another not only must old cultural beliefs and practices, structures and systems of organising be given up in favour of qualitatively new forms, but those old capacities need to be integrated into some way. New forms of organising do not merely replace old forms. They need to be retained and built upon to create the new organisational design. And it is this integrated step that many transition models leave out. The transition process is, under these approaches, a one-off revolution where the old is totally replaced by the new. Such models lack the developmental insights gained from adopting the explanatory lens of inclusive emergence. Under this non-inclusive understanding of transformation, whatever is defined as old or as belonging to the previous order can potentially be seen as superfluous to the newly transformed organisational state. Consequently, “old” employees and managers, technologies, cultural and structural systems and organisational identities can all be subject to “redundancy”. This view of transformation has no integrative capacity, neglects the impact of discarding its “old” human, technological and physical resources and becomes a race for whatever is new.

A final example of reductionism in lenses expressed as cyclical processes comes from the area of organisational learning. We have seen that these processes typically include phases of behavioural involvement (hands-on), reflection (conceptual), sense-making (interpretive), and social validation (performance, evaluation). Sometimes phases from these learning cycles can be omitted or neglected resulting in dysfunctional types of learning. Where the behavioural phase is missing, learning can become overly conceptual and abstract. Where the reflective phase is missing, learning can become a simplistic and uncoordinated process of trial and error. Where the interpretive phase is missing learning can be seen as a perfunctory and uncreative process of passive memorising. Where the social validation phase is missing, learning becomes disassociated from any evaluative basis.

The multiparadigm review also found that transformational learning theories situate these learning cycles within a vertical dimension of qualitatively different levels of analysis as seen in models of single, double and triple-loop learning. Learning theories that do not recognise these multiple “loops” or levels might be able to provide insight into translational learning but lack the capacity to disclose information or knowledge that is valuable for transformational learning. Translational learning, or single loop learning, can only provide solutions to problems from within the organisation’s current paradigm. Theories based on translational learning models see change as an incremental increase in knowledge, that is, as an increase in the quantity of information being

processed. As a result, what goes for “transformation” in single-loop models is an infatuation with the technological aspects of organisational learning and the management of knowledge that results from that technology. Without a lens that can be sensitive to qualitative change, transformational theories are reduced to focusing on horizontal increase, technological innovation and systems efficiencies.

#### *4.6 Conflated relationships between lens categories*

Particular problems arise when reductionist forms of holarchical lenses are conflated with lenses from the bipolar category. When a multilevel holarchy is reduced to a bipolar form there is a strong tendency to associate this false bipole with other valid bipolar lenses. An example of this is seen in transformational theories that link the poles of a reduced ecological holarchy lens (individual-collective) and other valid bipolar lenses such as agency-communion, task-relationship, masculine-feminine leadership styles. This is evidenced in the tendency to regard only individuals as having agency (Van de Ven & Poole, 1988) or leadership as an essentially agentic activity (Reicher et al., 2005).

Wilber (1990) has drawn attention to this problem in his essay “The Pre-/Trans Fallacy” (ptf) where he points to the confusions that take place when multilevel developmental models are erroneously reduced to a simple two-stage bipole and then aligned with a valid bipolar structure. Referring to this conflation of multilevel and bipolar explanatory dimensions, Wilber says (1990, p. 258): “The problem ... is that some theorists use real or structural bipoles in order to support and carry their own versions of a ptf [reductionist] bipole”. Wilber gives an example of this confusion in a discussion of the relationship between stages of development in logical reasoning and the binary nature of brain anatomy. The confusion starts with the reduction of multilevel development in reasoning into a simplistic two-stage model of normative and non-normative logical modes. Next, particular modes of reasoning are associated with particular hemispheres of the brain. This ends in the erroneous proposition that the left hemisphere is associated with normative forms of reasoning, that is, with sequential and verbal forms, while the right hemisphere is associated with non-normative forms of reasoning, that is, with its affective, intuitive and holistic forms. Throw into this picture the bipolar distinction between masculine and feminine and the result is a fallacious mix of ideas regarding the stages of development in reasoning.

This confusion between developmental and binary dimensions has been described in detail because of its frequent occurrence in developmental theories of organisational transformation. Certain stages of organisational development, team development, or personal transformation become associated with one end of a binary dimension and the logical outcome of such a model is to aim for change towards the other pole of this dimension. Transformation then becomes movement between two ends of a complementary duality rather than a qualitative shift to a new form of

organising that accommodates both poles. Without a clear conception of the range of transformational forms available to organisations, radical change runs the risk of becoming “change for change’s sake”. Some theorists attempt to avoid this problem by identifying some other important lens, such as interior-exterior lens as providing a direction to change. The problem is, however, that these other bipolar lenses merely reinforce the patterns of ping-ponging between, for example, cultural renewal (interior renewal) and restructuring (exterior renewal). Ping-pong transformation occurred on a large scale during the 1990’s when the pendulum of organisational transformation swung between focusing on cultural change (the interiors) and organisational restructuring (the exteriors) and back again with limited success and substantial disruption to workforces (see Dunphy, 2003; Forster, 2005). Highly structured organisations saw transformation as a renewal of its culture, while organisations with a strong cultural base saw radical restructuring and a focussing on systems and processes as the holy grail. Both mistakenly associated particular poles of the culture-structure (interior-exterior) dimension with the goal of transformation instead of seeing that both culture and structure needed integration within entirely new forms of organising.

This type of lens category conflation results in destructive iterations of an unhealthy, ping-pong transformation where change moves endlessly between the two poles of some valid bipolar dimension of change, for example the interior-exterior dimension (culture-structure). This results in repetitive and ultimately destructive cycles of restructuring and cultural renewal. Transformation traps such as these are particularly difficult to resolve when combined with a reduced two-stage view of transformation as described earlier. The outcomes for employees of these ping-pong transformations are low morale, resistance to change programmes and the disenchantment of staff for positive expectations of such programmes. The literature on the causes and effects of excessive change (Falkenberg, Stensaker, Meyer & Haung, 2005; Zajac, Kraatz & Bresser, 2000) have found that excessive change actually reduces an organisation’s structural efficiencies and reduces its capacity to respond effectively to rapidly changing environments. The relevant point here is that these change traps are associated with forms of theorising that assume reductionist and conflated forms of conceptual lenses.

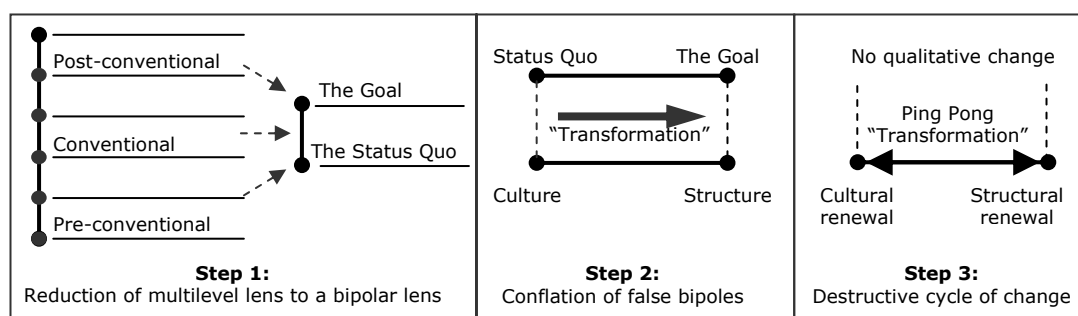


Figure 6.2: Conflated relationships between holarchical and binary lens categories

Figure 6.2 shows the steps involved in this form of lens category conflation. The first step is the reduction of the many levels of transformation potential down to the dichotomy of, i) “status quo” and, ii) “the goal”. The second step is identifying some valid binary lens that is used as the basic diagnostic tool for assessing problems and setting direction, e.g. culture-structure. The third step is to associate one end of this bipole with the “status quo” and, hence, point to the other pole as “the goal”. When, for example, the restructuring or cultural renewal “transformation” has reached finality after some years, the results are generally not convincing (as we have seen from the empirical studies of transformation programmes) and so another round of ineffective transformational renewal begins, only this time in the opposite direction. The last two decades have seen several iterations of this ping-pong transformation, resulting in a destructive cycle of change. Badham and Garrety (2003) call the experience of working in such organisations “living in the blender of change” and they refer to the management culture that supports this endless quest for change “the carnival of control”. This phenomenon has been particularly evident in the waves of reform undergone by the public service sector (Farazmand, 2003).

The example outlined here has been for the interior-exterior lens in its form as culture-structure and there are several other bipolar lenses that fall prey to this type of reductionism and lens conflation. Of particular note is the top-down or leader-follower reductionism that is associated with the hierarchical nature of decision-making in organisations (the governance holarchy lens). Applying our reduction model to this bipolar dimension we find that the “status quo” is equated with the organising style of the current CEO and “the goal” is then to find some other CEO whose organising style will provide top-down transformation of the organisation. After an average of 3-4 years that CEO becomes the “status quo” and the search for the new CEO (the goal) begins again. The organisation is trapped in a bipolar cycle of current CEO (status quo) and transformational CEO (the goal) because it has reduced the multilevel governance holarchy into a simple top-down view of management.

Another example can be seen in the conflation between status quo-transformational goal and the agency-communion lens. Here the “ping-pong transformation” occurs between forms of organising that are based on either centralised authority or decentralised networking. Depending on the status quo condition, the transformation goal is reduced to a movement from agentic forms of organising to relational forms. While both agency and communion are crucial aspects of organising, choosing one over the other leads to cycles of reform that merely move around on the same level of organisational development, or, using the terminology of Greenwood and Hinings, the same design archetype. From an epistemology of change perspective, the central issue here is the lack of awareness of the multilevel nature of transformation and, in particular, the inclusive emergence of those levels. Knowing that one of the defining features of transformation is its multilevel nature should warn against the adoption of theories that explain radical change in terms of dichotomies or two-stage models of transformation (the “status quo” and “the goal”). The

combination of the holarchical lens of transformational stages and the inclusive emergence lens provides a heuristic method for setting a direction for vertical development. This mitigates against the types of conflated associations between holarchical and bipolar lenses described here.

The preceding sections have considered some forms of reductionism that apply to the use of metatheoretical lenses in explaining transformation. The following points are offered as guidelines for minimising these problems:

- Identify and, wherever possible, utilise the full range of levels for all holarchical lenses.
- Ensure that the developmental holarchy lens is not reduced to a simple bipole and never abbreviate it to less than three levels of transformative potential (pre-conventional, conventional and postconventional stages)
- Maintain at least three intra-organisational levels for the ecological holarchy lens, e.g. micro, meso, and macro.
- Include intra- and inter-organisational levels when using the ecological holarchy lens.
- Ensure holonic lenses are not associated with bipolar dualities. Do not express or reduce holonic lenses to a bipolar form and then associate its poles with those of a valid bipole.
- Include both poles of a bipolar lens by recognising its full conceptual scope (identified through a multiparadigm review of relevant paradigms and theories).
- Cyclical lenses need to retain all phases to allow for an accurate assessment of change. In particular, the “death valley”, experimentation phase and integration phases of the transition lens need to be included in models of the transition process.
- Utilise the inclusive emergence lens when describing or explaining deep structure transformation.
- Avoid extreme developmentalism by including the mediation lens and avoid extreme relativism by recognising the need for the developmental lens in explanations of transformation.
- Ensure that non-reductive forms of lenses are used when combining lenses to propose metatheoretical matrices and frameworks

#### 4.7 Integral indexing

In most cases, it would be expected that the set of lenses listed in Table 6.1 should each provide unique insights into the phenomena associated with organisational transformation. In other words, each lens opens some kind of portal into an aspect of transformation that is afforded by no other lens. Each lens sees a dimension of transformation that is orthogonal to the dimensions associated with other lenses. This orthogonal relationship means that lenses can be crossed to develop matrices where each cell represents some unique window into transformational phenomena and into the theories that have been developed to explain those phenomena. Another way of putting this is to say that all the major explanatory themes of theories of organisation transformation can be accommodated within various constellations of these lenses. If, for example, we cross the lenses of



interior-exterior and micro-meso-macro we can develop a matrix which indexes theories of transformation according to their focus on, for example, the relative importance of cognitive and cultural versus behavioural and structural change for each organisational level.

Table 6.3 sets out this example in further detail by developing a framework for indexing theories of transformation according to their multilevel focus and their concentration of either interior or exterior aspects of organisational life. At the microlevel of individual interior, theories focus on cognitive changes in belief systems and states of consciousness whereas behavioural theories focus on performance, productivity and goal achievement. At the mesolevel of the team, theories concerned with the interior focus on team culture, values and shared norms and formats while exterior theories focus on performance outcomes and group incentives. At the macrolevel of the organisation, cultural theorists focus on organisation-wide systems of meaning making in the development of collective vision whereas structural theorists look at transformations in structures, systems and technologies.

Table 6.3: An example of integral indexing using interior-exterior and micro-meso-macro lenses<sup>5</sup>

	<b>Interior Change</b>	<b>Exterior Change</b>
<b>Micro (individual)</b>	<u>Cognitive theories</u> theories of personal transformation focusing on cognitions, beliefs systems, states of consciousness	<u>Behavioural theories</u> theories of personal transformation focusing on behaviours, job performance, & goal achievement
<b>Meso (team)</b>	<u>Team culture theories</u> theories of team transformation focussing on team culture, shared mental maps and team values	<u>Team performance theories</u> theories of team transformation focusing on team performance, group incentives, and outcomes
<b>Macro (organisation)</b>	<u>Organisational culture theories</u> theories of organisational transformation focussing on organisational culture, vision, & meaning making	<u>Organisational structure theories</u> theories of organisational transformation focusing on organisational structures, systems, technologies
<b>Macro-macro (organisational environment)</b>	<u>Cultural theories</u> theories of social transformation focussing on the informal culture of industry, community and society and international environments	<u>Socio-economic theories</u> theories of social transformation focusing on social and economic structures, market forces and broad technological changes

The point of this example is to show that any of the integral lenses developed to study organisational transformation can be combined to develop typologies and indexing systems to help in the systematic explanation of transformational phenomena. In the following pages, other examples will be provided where theorists have used several lenses to develop models of change. These examples show the types of relationships that are possible with different lens combinations. Wilber has described this indexing process of crossing the fundamental dimensions that describe his AQAL framework as follows:

<sup>5</sup> This is an example of the epistemological use of integral lenses. If the focus of interest was in identifying the organisation's cultural, structural, cognitive and behavioural "realities" that existed under each of these headings, that would be making an ontological use of these lenses.

AQAL indexing ("integral indexing" or "holonic conferencing") allows individual paradigms to be seated next to each other at the integrative table, in such a way that each individual paradigm is honored and acknowledged. (Wilber, 2003b)

The purpose of integral indexing is not to synthesise or unify theories and paradigms but rather to accommodate them within a metatheoretical framework that acknowledges the plurality of approaches while also showing how they might be connected in systematic ways. Multiparadigm theory building recognises “the special and profound contribution” of different theoretical perspectives as well as their limitations and boundaries (Wilber, 2000c, p. 38-39).

The large number of integral lenses resulting from the multiparadigm review means that there are a great many different combinations and permutations available for exploring the epistemological frameworks of researchers, for accommodating their contributions and for developing new insights into explaining transformation. The following explores some of those possibilities and points out where theorists have erred in their assumptions about the relationships between lenses. What follows is further evidence that the array of conceptual lenses identified above can be combined in a variety of meaningful and imaginative ways. These explorations also show the theoretical fecundity that can be generated when the core insights of different theories and paradigms are allowed to converse with each other.

#### 4.8 Relationship between the developmental holarchy and transition process lenses

Two of the most important and frequently used lenses for explaining transformative events are the developmental holarchy and transition process. Although no theory was identified that combined these lenses in a comprehensive way, several theories provided insights into how these lenses could be amalgamated. Theories utilising the transition process lens outline change phases in moving from one form of organising to a qualitatively different one. On the other hand, developmental theories describe the structure and content of those forms of organising and say little about how the transition between them occurs. Bringing these two lenses together provides a model that describes both the spectrum of organisational forms and the transition process that occurs as organisations struggle to shift developmentally through that spectrum. Figure 6.3 gives the graphical representation of this combination of developmental and transition process lenses.

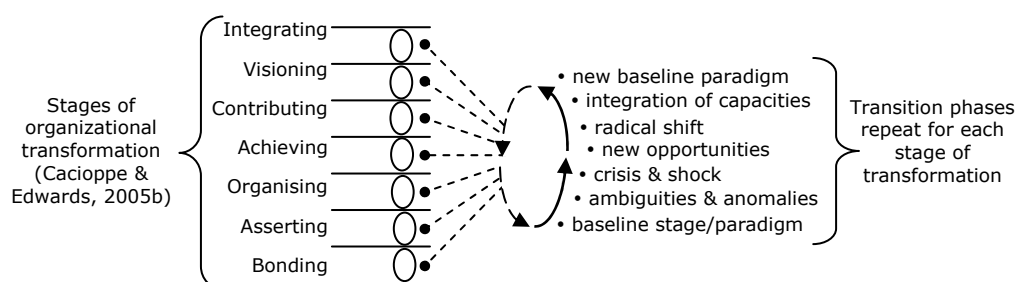


Figure 6.3: Combining developmental and transitional cycle lenses

Reiteration of the transition process occurs for each stage of transformation. The change curve that describes the process of growing inconsistencies, crisis, shock, renewal, radical shift, integration and renewed stability occurs for each stage of transformation, whether that be for organisation, individuals, teams, or any other organisational holon. In systematically combining both the process and stage lenses, this complementary model untangles the often-confused relationship between transformational stages and transitional phases. In fact, there is often no distinction made between these two explanatory lenses in the literature on organisational transformation. They are both presented as “models of change” and sometimes their phases and stages are included indiscriminately within the one model (see Nutt, 2003). However, from the metatheoretical point of view, it is clear that transformation and transition models do not refer to the same phenomena. Bringing these two lenses together clarifies several issues that are puzzling and unresolvable when using either lens in isolation. For example, transformational events are strongly associated with confusion, negative emotion, stress and even poor performance. The complementary model provides a coherent and testable explanation for this observation. Transformation occurs through transition and transition always involves a phase that has been variously described as the “dark night” and the “death valley of change”. Such a phase, as Elrod and Tippet (2002) point out, occurs whenever significant change is experienced. Authentic transformation necessarily involves such dark times and if they are not encountered at some point by an organisation then transformation has probably not occurred.

Combining the developmental and transitional lenses form a basis for including many other varieties of lenses and representing them holonically provides a graphical space to start this theory building framework. Figure 6.4 shows a holonic framework depiction of the developmental and transition process lenses. The stages of development are aggregated into pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional stages. The transition process will take place for each shift in an organisation’s journey through the spectrum of transformational stages. This process is not a linear one and unresolved process issues can stymie transformation and lead to states of rigidity and bureaucratization and even lead to organisational regression (Kilburg, Stokes & Kuruvilla, 1998).

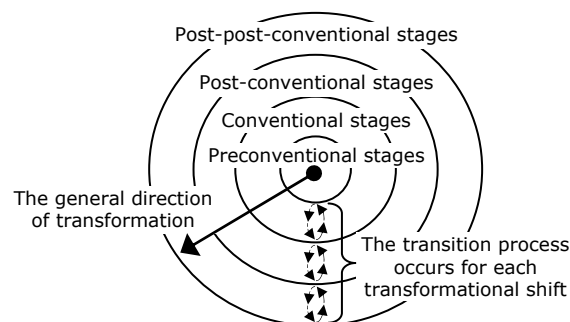


Figure 6.4: A holonic framework for development and transition

#### 4.9 Relationships between bipolar lenses and quadrant models

Frameworks for explaining transformation are often based on combinations of two or more bipolar lenses. These combinations create grids and simple matrices that provide a framework for outlining typologies and other explanatory models. Typologies are very important and often undervalued models for structuring knowledge and developing systems of explanation (Doty & Gluck, 1994). As transformational theorists Greenwood and Hinings (1988, p. 296) explain in the following, typologies order the structural relationships between theoretical concepts.

Typologies are important, in a general sense, because they are ways of extracting and directing key theoretical ideas. They are specifically important and central to organisation theory because of the general proposition that there are different kinds of organisation and that these generic differences have consequences for performance, power, decision-making, conflict, morale, job satisfaction, etc. One of the key points about typologies is that they are holistic in nature, emphasising the totality of relationships between a set of concepts; types are based on idea of coherence between organisational elements.

Perhaps the most well known of such typologies within organisational change research is the multiparadigm paradigms framework of Burrell and Morgan (1979). Another example of a quadrants approach in organisational change theory comes from the work of Simpson and Cacioppe (2001) and their analysis of “unwritten ground rules” and organisational culture. They crossed the individual-collective lens and the interior-exterior lens as they relate to the informal cultural rules and norms of the organisation. Because the relationship between these fundamental lenses is an orthogonal one, the authors claim that the domains that they uncover are themselves unique and definitive aspects of organisational life. If this is so, it should be the case that other organisational theorists find similar fundamental domains. Such support is found in the work of Fisher, Rooke and Torbert (2003) and their identification of four territories of experience which bear strong similarities with Wilber’s four quadrants. Two of these territories, intention and planning, relate to the Wilber’s “interiors” and two, behaviour and assessing, relate to his “exteriors”. Two other territories, intention and behaviour, are associated with individual experience and two others, planning and assessing, are associated with the social realms.

There are several other quadrants models that are derived from crossing lenses similar to those proposed in Table 6.1. In their theory of “design archetypes” Greenwood and Hinings (1996) propose a theory of transformation where organisations are represented as the confluence of four domains of human identity and activity - “ideas and beliefs”, “doings and operations”, “values and meanings”, and “systems and processes”. They derive these qualities from the interaction of two dimensions that have strong parallels with the AQAL lenses of individual-collective and interior-exterior. A different combination of bipolar lenses is examined by Dunphy and Stace (1988) in

their review of strategic transformations. These theorists combine the individual-collective lens as it applies to strategic leadership with the transformation-translation approach to change. In so doing, they propose a typology of “change strategies” which includes dictatorial transformation (the coercive leader’s approach to radical change), collaborative transformation (the collaborative leader’s approach to radical change), forced evolution (the coercive leader’s approach to incremental change), participative evolution (the collaborative leader’s approach to incremental change). Nutt and Backoff (1993) also looked at transformational leadership and sought to find out the most important qualities for such leaders. They investigated the interior and exterior qualities of leadership as it applied to the microlevel of interpersonal exchange and macrolevel of sociocultural structures. In effect they crossed the interior-exterior lenses with the simple version of the ecological holarchy lens to propose four focal points for transformational leadership: framing and language (micro-interior), interpretive meaning-making (macro-interior), descriptive modelling (micro-exterior), and strategic fellowship (macro-exterior).

Table 6.4: Relationships between bipolar lenses

Theorists	Change Topic	Bipolar lenses combined	Quadrants generated	
Burrell & Morgan (1979)	organisational analysis	interior-exterior transform-translate	1. radical humanist 2. radical structuralist	3. interpretivist 4. functionalist
Quinn & Cameron (1988)	transformation of positive values	health-pathology internal-external	1. healthy commitment 2. political expediency	3. healthy innovation 4. anarchy
Dunphy & Stace (1988)	strategic transformation	individual-collective transform-translate	1. dictatorial transform. 2. collaborative transform	3. forced evolution 4. participative evolution <sup>a</sup>
Greenwood & Hinings (1996)	organisational design archetype	individual-collective interior-exterior	1. ideas & beliefs 2. doings & operations	3. values & meanings 4. systems & processes
Nutt & Backoff (1999)	transformational leadership	individual-collective interior-exterior	1. framing and language 2. interpretive process	3. descriptive modelling 4. strategic fellowship
Ghoshal & Bartlett (2000)	planned transformation	health-pathology transform-translate	1. regeneration 2. revitalisation	3. unsuccessful change 4. rationalisation
Simpson & Cacioppe (2001)	unwritten ground rules (UGRs)	individual-collective interior-exterior	1. UGRs for well-being 2. UGRs for behaviour	3. UGRs for culture 4. UGRs for systems
van Marrewijk & Hardjono (2003)	corporate sustainability	individual-collective interior-exterior	1. vision 2. action	3. values 4. monitoring
Torbert (2003)	territories of experience	interior-exterior individual-collective	1. intending 2. behaving	3. planning 4. assessing
West & Markiewicz (2004)	team development	individual-collective interior-exterior	1. decision-making 2. clarifying objectives	3. communication 4. team roles

Table 6.4 shows these and other examples of typologies for transformation developed through the combinations of bipolar lenses. The table provides examples of different combinations between all the bipolar lenses identified in the multiparadigm review. These examples are evidence of the theoretical insights that are possible when the relationships between different bipolar lenses are explored. A notable feature of many of the quadrants models listed in Table 6.4 is the use of the ecological holarchy lens in its reduced form of the binary micro-macro. As explained previously the ecological holarchy lens considers the spatial relationships between multiple levels of organising. This reductionism appears to be based on the grounds of parsimony, however there are disadvantages associated with reducing the ecological holarchy lens down to two levels. Theoretical

models relating to the mesolevel (e.g. teams and groups) and their contributions to theory construction can be overlooked when relying on the micro-macro reduction. As we have also seen, when multilevel lenses are reduced to a simple bipolar dimension, unwarranted associations between bipolar lenses can also arise. This can be especially problematic when multiple lenses are combined to form a multiparadigm framework such as a quadrants model. The types of concordances shown in Table 6.4 support the conclusion that the bipolar lenses derived from the study of transformation theories are largely independent of one another and that they each provide unique insights into complex social phenomena.

#### 4.10 Relationships between multiple combinations of lenses

Some theories of transformation combine several lenses to generate highly complex explanatory frameworks. One such approach will be described here in detail (see Figure 6.5). Nadler and Tushman (1999) propose a diagnostic model for organisational transformation - the “contingency model” - that combines several lenses to develop an extremely rich conceptual base for exploring transformation. Their approach includes the concept of an “organisational design” (deep structure lens) made up quadrants of formal tasks, people issues, cultural issues and formal structures (i.e. based on interior-exterior and individual-collective lenses). This organisational design is an open system that receives inputs, manages throughputs and produces outputs (systems lens). Through the evolutionary process of variation, selection and retention (evolutionary lens), the organisational system goes through punctuated periods of revolution to reappear in a new transformed design (developmental holarchy lens and transformation-translation lens). For transformation to occur the organisational design needs to adapt to both larger environmental and societal changes as well as internal needs for innovation and differentiation (hence combining the internal-external and alignment lenses).

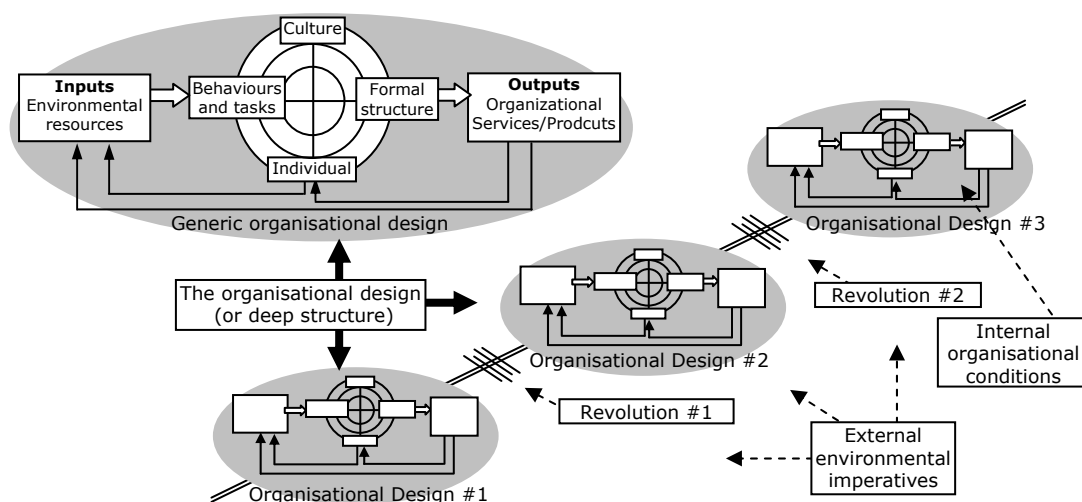


Figure 6.5: An example of a multi-lens transformational model (after Nadler & Tushman, 1999)

A major weakness in the model is that there is no developmental holarchy lens and therefore, while recognising the potential for whole-of-system transformation, the model has no capacity to identify the different stages of transformative development. Nadler and Tushman also place an emphasis on the structural and behavioural side of the interior-exterior lens and tend to neglect the cultural, experiential and consciousness aspect organising. However, their model nevertheless brings together many conceptual lenses and offers a fertile framework for explaining and generating new ideas about transformational events.

This example shows that very complex theories of transformation can be usefully analysed in terms of combinations of integral lenses to show their strengths and weaknesses. The Tushman and Nadler model also shows that the relationships between lenses can be regarded as orthogonal - they can be combined to generate frameworks that provide unique perspectives on organisational transformation. This example also shows that when several lenses are combined the complexities involved in building multiparadigm theories of transformation become strikingly apparent. However, this daunting level of complexity is the nature of organisational reality - it is complex, messy and difficult to conceptualise. Metatheory building provides a method for the tackling that complexity in a systematic and rigorous way.

## 5. Summary

In summary, this chapter has looked at the relationships between and within the integral lenses that resulted from the analysis of theories of organisational transformation. First, the set of integral lenses was grouped according to their morphological similarity. Six categories of lenses were proposed – holarchical, bipolar, cyclical, relational, standpoint and multiparadigm. These lenses form the basic buildings blocks for the metatheoretical system to be described in the following chapter. In considering the relationships between lenses, attention was first focused on the holon construct, on the major types of holons and holarchies identified from the review and how they can be applied in organisational research. This was followed by an investigation of different types of reductive and conflationary relationships within and between lenses. Examples were then provided for combining lenses to form typologies (integral indexing) and simple quadrant models as well as very complex models of transformation using constellations of integral lenses. In the next chapter, these lenses are brought together using the relationships identified here to describe a metatheoretical system for organisational transformation as it applies to the exemplar topic of sustainability.

## Chapter 7: An Integral Metatheory for Organisational Transformation

Clearly, the zeitgeist is ripe for gathering divergent philosophies and competencies together in collaborative social action research and scholarship to preserve the quality of environment we now enjoy. (Geller, 1992, p, 815)

### 1. Objectives

In this chapter sustainability will be used as an exemplar topic for describing the integral metatheory for organisational transformation. This will also demonstrate the metatheory's applicability to a specific topic within organisational studies. To do this, some foundational combinations of lenses will be presented and propositions made for how these frameworks can provide new insights into theories of transformation within a sustainability context. It is common practice in metatheorising to apply the newly proposed metatheory to exemplar topics as a means for describing the whole conceptual system and exploring its various elements. For example, having outlined the basic elements of his AQAL framework in 1995, Wilber subsequently applied this approach to the fields of consciousness studies (1997), philosophy of science (1998), psychology (2000e) and spirituality (2006). The same method will be adopted here in that, having identified and described our lenses for transformation and described some key relationships, this chapter will lay out a more detailed description of the metatheory within the more focused topic of sustainability. The specific objectives of this chapter are to:

- i) provide a rationale for choosing sustainability as an exemplar topic;
- ii) show how particular lenses can be applied to sustainability theory;
- iii) describe the integral metatheory through the use of combinations of lenses (metatheoretical frameworks) for studying theories of organisational sustainability;
- iv) provide an overview of the metatheoretical framework for organisational transformation.

### 2. Rationale

#### 2.1 *Why sustainability?*

There are several reasons for choosing organisational sustainability as a platform for outlining the integral metatheory for organisational transformation. First, organisational sustainability is one of the major themes running through the transformational literature (see, for example, Dervitsiotis, 2003; van Marrewijk & Hardjono, 2003). This topic highlights the multitude of challenges that currently face organisations. These challenges include concerns over the environmental impact of organisational activities, issues of community, corporate social responsibility, leadership, human resources and questions of governance and accountability. Second, these challenges amount to a



transformation imperative that is requiring radical reassessment of organisational goals and the means by which they are attained. Organisations need to survive and prosper to meet their primary objectives. However, they also need to respond to the social and environmental imperatives that surround them. This, in turn, means that new ways of conceptualising change are urgently needed, within both organisations and the social contexts in which they function. Third, organisational sustainability is a field of research that involves many viewpoints at both the level of general discourse as well as that of applied research. The variation and scope of concepts that come under the rubric of organisational sustainability require a conceptual framework that can accommodate many different paradigms and explanatory perspectives. Fourth, organisational transformation is frequently, and unreasonably, considered as relating only to organisational matters. The issue of sustainability clearly involves factors beyond the organisational boundary and includes such things as the influence of media, government regulation, macroeconomic climate, and community attitudes. Organisational sustainability, as a societal goal for the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, needs to be considered within the context of societal transformation. As Ritzer (2001) has argued, metatheorising has an important role to play in exploring such broad social issues. Fifth, the concept of a sustainable organisation is inherently concerned with transformation. Ian Lowe (2007) points out that most of the current assumptions of organisational success are based on non-sustainable economic practices. Achieving sustainability in organisational activities as well as at the macrolevel of national economies will require transformation on a very broad scale.

All of these considerations strongly suggest that sustainability is not only a very suitable topic for demonstrating the utility of a metatheory for organisational transformation, but that a metatheoretical approach is also urgently needed for the field of sustainability research itself.

## *2.2 The sustainability imperative*

Among the most urgent of all the transformational issues facing organisations is that of sustainability. The proliferation of terms such as “sustainable justice”, “sustainability imperative” and “corporate social responsibility” is indicative of the growing pressure on organisations to consider more broadly their impact on natural systems and social communities. Organisational sustainability is “the inclusion of social and environmental concerns in business operations and interactions with stakeholders” (van Marrewijk & Were, 2003, p. 107). These interactions also include an intergenerational aspect and this has been linked with the expression of collective hope for the future (Brundtland, 1987; Newman & Rowe, 2003). Sustainability is an inherently transformational idea. The growing importance of international cooperation between government, non-government and commercial organisations for dealing with environmental, political and social justice issues means that sustainability will be an ongoing requirement for the transformation to new, more sustainable types of organising.

The traditional growth and profit-maximization model, while still the dominant worldview of governments, markets and commercial business, has been extensively criticised by sustainability theorists (Barbier, 2006; Cogoy & Steininger, 2007). Current approaches to sustainability are focussing not only on environmental protection but also on broader societal goals such as those relating to social justice, the equitable distribution of resources and productive capacities and innovative models of economic development (Agyeman, 2005). Theories of organisational sustainability are becoming intimately involved with questions of ethics, social responsibility and the radical redesigning of organisational cultures, structures, values, goals, and technologies. As such, “Sustainability cannot be a matter of tinkering around the edges, but must involve deep change” (Andrews, 2006, p. 167). In a review of types of sustainable lifestyles lived in spiritual communities across America, author John Carroll (2004, p. 2) stresses the transformational nature of sustainability.

If therefore, we argue that sustainability of necessity is a conversion experience, if it is and must be predicated on a deep change of values themselves, and not on a half-hearted patch-it enterprise, then its expectation cannot be lodged in the prevailing system, the “dominant paradigm” as it is called. It must come from a deeper place.

The rapid changes seen in global environments and increasing concern of community groups with the social impact of organisational activities means that organisations are being called upon to reassess their fundamental goals and modes of operation. Several theorists of organisational transformation see sustainability as the most forceful of all imperatives for change (Loren, 2005; Old, 1995; van Marrewijk, 2003b; van Marrewijk & Becker, 2004; van Marrewijk & Hardjono, 2003). In their book on organisational change and corporate sustainability, the authors Dunphy, Griffiths and Benn (2003) propose a developmental model that they hope will lead corporations to make “a transformative leap to the fully sustainable and sustaining corporation”. Dunphy and his colleagues argue that, (2003, p. 3-4)

Some traditional organisational values and forms are not sustainable and, unless significantly reshaped, will continue to undermine the sustainability of society and the planet. ... Fortunately the transformation is already underway, driven in part by the changing demands of modern society and also by the leadership of farsighted and responsible people within and outside corporations who see the need for change. However, for the transformation to be successful, many more change agents are needed.

This challenge means that organisations and the values, visions, structures and practices which form them will need to be radically redesigned. This level of radical transformation has happened before in organisational history during, for example, the industrial revolution, and a similar level of change is required if organisations are to meet the sustainability imperatives they now face. One

implication of this for the academic world is that new ways of developing, reviewing and evaluating theory will be required for the emergence of innovative theories of sustainability.

The integral metatheory described in the following pages is one approach towards supporting the emergence of new ideas on sustainable organising. The large number of conceptual lenses identified in the multiparadigm review means that there are many possible combinations of lenses that can be used to develop new approaches to transformation in a sustainability context. The following selection of frameworks is intended to exemplify some of these possibilities. To do this, lenses will be selected from each of the lens categories and be combined to form several frameworks for discussion. The flexibility involved in choosing lenses does not mean that their selection is a completely idiosyncratic process. While integral approaches do propose that each integral lens can provide important insights to the study of any social phenomena, some will have more immediate theoretical relevance and/or utility than others. Consequently, an integral approach to metatheory building will always be a creative one which, while grounded in a close familiarity with extant theory, will always involve the capacity for conceptual innovation and, as Karl Weick expresses it, the exercising of disciplined imagination.

### **3. Integral Lenses for Organisational Sustainability**

Theories of transformation towards sustainability are diverse and offer multiple explanations for how organisations can move towards more sustainable philosophies and modes of practice. Every organisation is different in its purpose and mission, culture, structural design, business goals, and make-up of human personalities. There are, however, patterns of similarities that exist between individuals and groups, the social structures that they create and the goals that they pursue through organised social arrangements. Theories of organisational transformation are based on patterns within those arrangements and the set of explanatory lenses that have been identified in this study can be used to probe those patterns and regularities in a great many different ways. The following section shows how integral lenses from each of the six categories can be used to explore sustainability issues.

#### *3.1 Developmental holarchy lens*

The developmental holarchy lens offers understandings and explanations based on the underlying structures that inform and guide the ways we think and act, both as individual and as collectives. This lens focuses on the organisational design archetypes (deep structures) that are associated with qualitatively different levels of organisational sustainability. Several developmental holarchies have been proposed that describe multiple levels of organisational sustainability and a combined model of these is presented in Table 7.1. This stage-based model of sustainability development has been developed from the corporate sustainability models of van Marrewijk and his colleagues (van

Marrewijk, 2003b; van Marrewijk & Becker, 2004; van Marrewijk & Hardjono, 2003; van Marrewijk & Werre, 2003) and Dunphy, Griffiths and Andrews (2003). The model shows the developmental holarchy of transformations that are potentially available to organisations. Each sustainability stage is associated with certain kinds of environmental factors. For example, an organisation that is at the compliance stage is focused on market-driven standards such as competitive success and the maximisation of profits for shareholders. Organisations that are identified with the committed stage of sustainability are more in touch with stakeholder issues such as the attitudes of customers and employees towards environmental pollution, energy use, and waste management.

**Table 7.1: Stages of organisational sustainability**  
(based on Dunphy, Griffith & Benn, 2003; and van Marrewijk & Were, 2003)

<b>Basic Stages of Organisational Sustainability</b>	
Post-post-conventional stages of sustainability	7. Sustaining organisation (global): Sustainability is embedded within all aspects of organisation and is seen in global and intergenerational terms. Promotes and actively creates sustainable communities of organisations. Sustainability refers to numerous layers of purpose including physical, economic, environmental, emotional, social and spiritual/deep meaning.
Post-conventional stages of sustainability	6. Sustaining organisation (local): Values sustainability as a way of developing the organisation and its stakeholders on all fronts. Develops transformational strategies for moving the organisation towards triple bottom line goals that support and develop communities whatever the regulatory environment it operates in.
	5. Committed organisation: Values sustainability as balancing social, economic and environmental concerns. Is committed in principle and goes beyond legal compliance. Sees organisations as connected with other communities and social groups within a societal network.
Conventional stages of sustainability	4. Efficient organisation: Values sustainability as a source of cost saving. The “business case” for sustainability. Sees broader sustainability demands as imposing on an individual’s freedom to do business.
	3. Compliant organisation: Sustainability seen as impost. Values conformity and compliance to traditional ethical and legal standards. Supports industry regulation as a way of circumventing more demanding regulations regarding sustainability. Reactively responds to regulatory requirements as they arise.
Pre-conventional stages of sustainability	2. Avoidant organisation: Sustainability seen as attack by oppositional groups. Ignorance of ethical standards and legal responsibilities and apathy towards the negative impact of organisational activities on workforce and community until profits are affected.
	1. Subsistent organisation: Sustainability seen as a matter of survival. The values base is one of working hard and getting by without doing obvious damage to individuals or environments. Survival and maximisation of profit regarded as the sole purpose of organisational activities.

As with many developmental qualities, the stages described in Table 7.1 emerge inclusively in that later stages are built on, and are inclusive, of the core capacities of previous stages. For example, organisations at the post-conventional stage, and which are committed to embedding broad ranging sustainability principles and practices within their culture and systems, will also retain the capacity to function at the conventional stages of “efficiency” and “conforming”. These conventional stages in turn include the pre-conventional requirements to survive and compete as an organisation in a competitive market place. Stage-based capacities build on and support each other and are not exclusive to each other. The inclusive emergence of stages of sustainability means that later stages have a greater capacity for engaging with the complexities of large and intricate environmental and social systems. The more ambitious the type of sustainability aimed for, the more complex will be the organisational culture and structure needed to achieve those ambitions (van Marrewijk & Were, 2003).

The developmental holarchy lens is generally structured according to the pattern of pre- to conventional to post- stages where there is progressive inclusion of formative stages. This structural pattern shows up repeatedly in developmental studies at multiple levels of social organisation. Figure 7.1 shows the inclusive nature of stages of organisational sustainability. The inclusive emergence of these deep structures means that transformation has a general direction towards more complex and more responsive forms of organisational sustainability. However, there can be considerable variation in the developmental pathways undertaken by any particular organisation. Developmentally speaking, organisations have a number of options in navigating through the challenges of environmental crises, regulatory environments and raised community expectations while trying to survive in a competitive global marketplace. Organisations can retain conventional modes of minimal compliance and pursue system efficiencies for cost-saving goals, or they can regress into pre-conventional forms of rejection and avoidance to pursue, what they regard as, the core purpose of wealth maximisation or, lastly, they can create their own particular path towards more inclusive and just forms of sustainability. The latter choice is frequently referred to in management and change literature but, because true transformation always involves considerable organisational disruption and “pain”, it is less frequently undertaken and remains the exception rather than the rule (Anderson, 2003; Colombo & Delmastro, 2002).

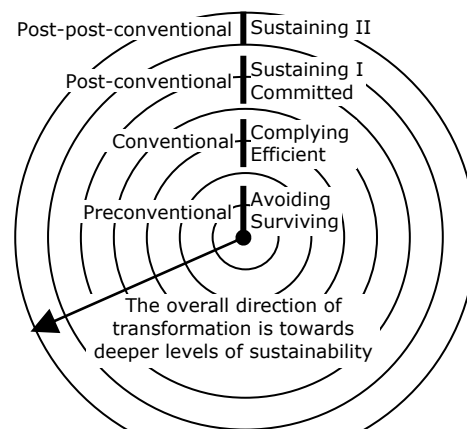


Figure 7.1 A holonic model of stages of organisational sustainability

The holonic model of organisational sustainability described in Figure 7.1 shows that the spectrum of stages can be divided in different ways. In a recent paper on the conceptual framing of sustainability, Marshal and Toffler (2005) define sustainability as a hierarchy of actions that map closely onto these stages of sustainable organising. The authors define sustainability in the context of actions that, i) endanger the survival of humans and the ecosystems that support them (level 1), ii) reduce community health levels and life expectancies (level 2), iii) violate human rights (level 3), and iv) reduce quality-of-life and impact negatively on values, beliefs and anaesthetic preferences (level 4) (see Figure 7.2). Actions that might be considered as sustainable at one level may not be considered so at another. Sustainability at level 1 provides a baseline understanding of sustainability as a question of survival and maps onto the rejecting and avoidant organisational sustainability

stages. Sustainability at level 2 concerns communal well-being and involves legislative regulations that require compliance to a minimum set of health standards. The concern here is for the well-being of the human community as something over and above that of physical and biological environments. This level of understanding sustainability maps onto the compliance stage. Level 3 sustainability is concerned with more universal human and community rights over the long term, with intergenerational justice and the safeguarding of social freedoms as they relate to the viability of natural and communal environments. These are a focus for organisations at the committed stage of organisational sustainability. Finally, level 4 involves the transformation of both personal and collective values and aesthetic preferences and it is at this level that truly sustaining organisations begin to emerge. Once again, we see the inclusive nature of these definitional levels. For example, organisations that are aware of the relationship between sustainability and threats to human rights and social freedoms will also be cognisant of the need to ensure the physical survival of ecosystems and the basic health needs of the communities that live within those ecosystems.

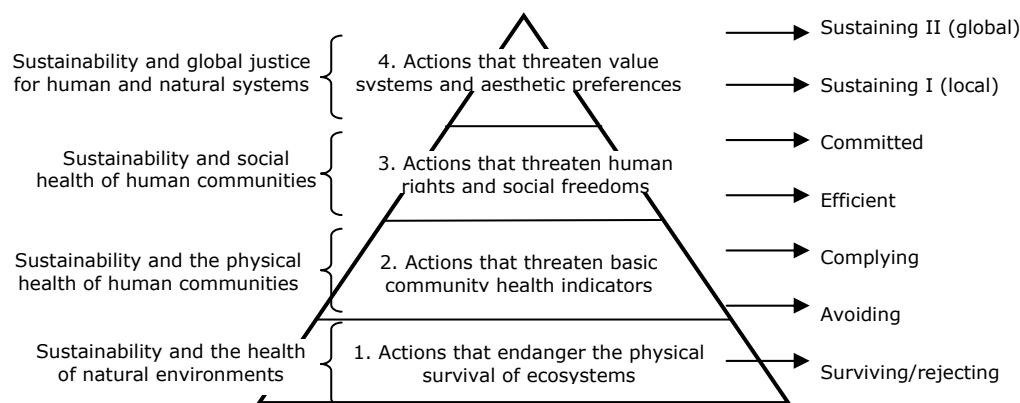


Figure 7.2: Understandings of sustainability and stages of organizational sustainability

A comprehensive understanding of what constitutes a sustainable organisation, society or global system will need to integrate the many levels of sustainability. The developmental holarchy lens is sensitive to these issues. The lens can be used to provide a basic template for assessing the general level of sustainability from which an organisation operates. There are, however, many other factors that can qualify this assessment and several other lenses are sensitive to these qualifications.

### 3.2 Ecological holarchy lens

Organisations are made up of an ecology of subsystems and exist themselves within an inter-organisational, social and global environment. The ecological holarchy lens delves into this complex ecology of systems both within the organisational boundary<sup>6</sup> and beyond it (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005). The focus here is not on qualitatively different forms of sustainability (which is

<sup>6</sup> Organization boundaries are becoming ever more flexible and “virtual”. However tenuous the nature of these boundaries, there remain definitive lines of demarcation between organizations and environments which designate internal and external aspects of organizations (see Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005).

the focus of the developmental holarchy lens) but on the ecological levels at which those forms of sustainability are manifested, that is, at the micro-, meso- or macro levels.<sup>7</sup>

Building on Starik and Rands' (1995) multilevel model of ecologically sustainable organisations, the various levels of organisational life can be described as a web of relationships that involves individuals, groups, organisational subunits, the organisation, inter-organisational levels, political-economic levels and sociocultural levels. Sustainability issues can be considered at each of these levels. Each level draws inputs in from its external environment, uses throughput processes to change those inputs into products and exports those products as outputs into its external environment. These outputs include products, services and by-products. Of particular importance to sustainability issues in this multilevel organisational holarchy are the decision-making process and the influence that decisions have on the power of organisations to impact on natural and social environments.

Table 7.2: Organisational sustainability as a function of organisational level

<b>Organisational level</b>	<b>Sustainability issues</b>
the individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inclusion of sustainability issues in job design, duties and responsibilities</li> <li>• support for innovative individual actions by systems and structures</li> <li>• support for maintenance of sustainability values through training and performance appraisal</li> </ul>
the group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• team culture is aware of sustainability impact in decision-making</li> <li>• committees and teams include sustainability indicators in success criteria</li> <li>• terms of reference for groups includes sustainability factors</li> </ul>
the subunit (e.g. dept.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• departmental reporting includes accountability measures for sustainability</li> <li>• sustainability systems are integrated at all departmental levels</li> <li>• line management system has routinised sustainability practices and systems</li> </ul>
the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organisational policies and practices regarding sustainability measures</li> <li>• leadership enunciates sustainability values on a regular basis</li> <li>• the organisation's sustainability reputation, public support of sustainability regulations</li> </ul>
the industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• participation in inter-organisational sustainability programs</li> <li>• allocation of resources to industry-based projects on sustainability matters</li> <li>• leadership of inter-organisational networks for addressing sustainability issues</li> </ul>
political-economic level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encouragement of pro sustainability legislation</li> <li>• promotional market-based environmental policy approaches</li> <li>• encouragement and development of national accounting and accreditation mechanisms</li> <li>• participation in peak industry groups to advance sustainability policy, awareness and practices</li> </ul>
social-cultural level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• involvement with customers, members, and communities to support sustainability values</li> <li>• projects with educational &amp; scientific institutions to further awareness &amp; technological innovation</li> <li>• input into the public debate and media awareness</li> </ul>

Table 7.2 describes some multilevel relationships that are relevant to an organisation's sustainability. At the individual level, we have issues of job design, workplace duties and responsibilities and the training, supports and technologies available to individuals to develop and maintain sustainability values and practices in their work situation. At the group and subunit levels, sustainability issues become a question of formal systems and practices that have become established within the

<sup>7</sup> The definition of "micro", "meso" or "macro" levels is an arbitrary process that depends on the researcher's frame of reference in comparing different levels. The general convention is, however, that the sphere of individual interaction is referred to as the microlevel, group activity is the mesolevel and the organisation as a whole is referred to as the macrolevel (and sometimes larger human ecologies as the macro-macrolevel).

accepted standards of performance. At the organisational level, explicit policies and public positions on issues of sustainability become critical. Leadership at this organisational level is also a fundamental indicator of the quality or otherwise of an organisation's sustainability stance. All these levels relate to the internal levels of the ecology of an organisation. Turning to the external environment, we find inter-organisational, industry, political-economic and social-cultural levels of sustainability involvement. These external levels of organisational involvement are often neglected in theories of organisational sustainability. This is unfortunate because an organisation's involvement at the industry, community and political levels may be the most indicative of its true attitude towards sustainability and the most important for proactive social action in meeting the challenging demands of sustainability (Senge, Lichtenstein, Kaeufer, Bradbury & Carroll, 2007). Some theorists believe that it is from this inter-organisational level that the most powerful levers for transformational change are effected (Boje, 2002; Grubs, 2000).

### *3.3 Governance holarchy lens*

The governance holarchy lens opens up the organising, decision-making and administrative relationships that exist within and between the various entities and their positions in a social structure. The term "governance" here is used in a general sense to refer to the multilevel "method or system of government or management of the organisation" (Department of Family and Community Services, 2004) and by which an organisation governs or regulates itself through decision-making, organising, and managing structures and processes.

The governance lens offers explanations of organisational identity and behaviour that are based on the levels of regulatory and decision-making power that exist within an organisation. Most commonly for corporations and commercial organisations these levels follow a hierarchical order that goes from general employee, to supervisor, line manager, senior manager, executive officer, chief executive officer and, finally, to the chair of the board or owner. There can, of course, be fewer levels than these but it is not uncommon for organisations to have several levels of decision-making in their governance hierarchy. Although some organisations have attempted to reduce these levels to develop a more heterarchical structure, organisations will always possess some hierarchical decision-making structure that organises, regulates and controls its activities (Osborn & Hunt, 2007).

As with ecological holarchies, the focus of the governance lens can be on the organisational system itself or it can be on the organisation as it exists within the broader sociocultural environment. Because the governance lens is concerned with regulatory power, it is sensitive to issues of political and social authority and influence, coercive power, and with an entities capacity to marginalise and oppress other players within its sphere of operations. Hence, the governance holarchy lens is often used by postmodern theorists to uncover the assumed structures of control and their sociocultural



foundations. This deconstructive activity can be a first step towards a more constructive critical attitude towards organisations and their internal and external power relations. Consequently, when power and administrative control is exercised in an inclusive manner, through such means as democratic representation, reciprocal leadership, bottom-up, consultative and participative processes, then the governance holarchy lens can shine a light on those types of governance that promote workplace participation, servant leadership, and community and stakeholder involvement.

The analysis of power relations and various forms of private and public control has much to contribute to the study of organisational sustainability. The issue of sustainability cannot be adequately addressed without reference to issues of social justice and to the reality of economic, social and cultural power that accompany such issues. Organisations are among the most powerful social entities in the world and many have larger economies than the poorer nation states (Luke, 2006). Organisations have increasing power and influence on the general direction and specific goals of global economic development. Consequently, they have an increasing responsibility to be aware of the outcomes of their operations and to consider issues of environmental and social justice. Sustainability is not something that can be adequately explored at the microlevel of personal consciousness and/or behaviour. Issues of social justice must also be part of the process of developing new views and community practices for achieving sustainability. The recent emergence of the “just sustainability” and “environmental justice” movements suggest that there is no sustainability without social justice and care for hosting communities. For example, the environmental justice movement speaks of the need for,

... equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits. (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, cited in Agyeman & Evans, 2004, p. 156)

The concept of a governance holarchy is relevant to the discussion of sustainability and transformation for several reasons. First, because organisations must involve some degree of hierarchical regulation, there is an inherent paradox built into the decision-making domain of the organisation that sets its strategic direction. That paradox centres on issues of securing the survival of the organisation while also meeting the challenges that come with adopting sustainability principles and practices. In meeting these challenges, organisational management must balance transformational goals with those of integration, stability and economic growth. This paradox creates a tension between short-term goals that emphasise economic benefits and long-term goals that are more open to an organisation’s transformative potentials.

Second, connecting issues of sustainability with those of position in a governance structure opens up such topics as social privilege and identity politics. Where an organisational member sits in the

decision-making and management hierarchy is strongly associated with their political, environmental and social views (Bernstein, 2005). The association between positions of organisational power and sustainability policies is an area that has been largely neglected in studies of organisational sustainability. The governance lens opens up perspectives that are sensitive to the issues of power, privilege and the radical policies that are needed for transformation towards a just sustainability.

Third, the governance holarchy of decision-making and power relations within organisation can give an insight into why an organisation's governance structures can be strongly associated with particular developmental levels of organisational sustainability. For example, bureaucratic organisations are more likely to function out of conventional levels such as "compliant" and "effective" sustainability. On the other hand, high-tech companies with highly skilled workforces, which are based on more open, team-based structures, are more likely to operate from postconventional forms of organisational sustainability such as the "committed" stage. Such considerations lie behind transformational theories that call for the "flattening" or "delaying" in organisational management structures (Littler, Wiesner & Dunford, 2003). While some delaying theories focus on improving organisational effectiveness and efficiency through the downsizing of management layers and numbers (Birkinshaw, 1994), others advise the move to more heterarchical structures on the grounds of organisational democracy, workplace justice, and the need for management to be closer to operations levels of the organisation (Saitta & McGuire, 1998). The rationale here is that management that is in touch with local realities of employees, customers and community members will make decisions that are more connected and grounded in commercial, social and economic realities.

As organisations become larger and more complex, the mechanisms by which organisational hierarchies and management systems can retain this connection with local issues becomes more problematic. At the extreme end of this holarchy we have the need for some system of global governance that can still allow for a participatory form of involvement in decision-making from all levels. This problem of grounding governance and decision-making at all organisational levels has been called "the democratic anchorage of governance" (Sorensen & Torfing, 2005) and this issue is immensely relevant to the topic of a just sustainability. For example, the more levels in a governance holarchy the more chance there is of, i) dissociation between the upper and lower levels of decision-making (Bang, 2004), ii) alienation of lower levels (Sarros, Tanewski, Winter, Santora & Densten, 2002), iii) antagonism towards upper levels (Leavitt, 2005), and iv) institutionalisation of systems of power and control (Badham & Garrety, 2003). Each of these problems means that the interconnectedness that needs to be present between stakeholders and organisational sources of control will be more difficult to attain. The resulting distrust and fragmentation stymies support for substantive change both among the members of the organisation and its potential partnerships with various stakeholder communities. Theories which look into the relationship between new

forms of governance (Amin, 2004; Winter, 2006) and important aspects of sustainability can be usefully investigated through the governance holarchy lens. The preceding sections have described the relevance of holarchical lenses for sustainability theories. The next section looks at some bipolar lenses.

### 3.4 Internal-external lens

Sustainability is not simply a characteristic of the isolated organisation but a complex mix that emerges out of the myriad exchanges that exist between an organisation and its external environment. The internal-external lens is sensitive to the connections that exist across an organisation's boundaries. Both internal and external environments are intimately involved in the transformation equation and when either pole of the internal-external lens is omitted from a theory's explanatory ambit some form of reductionism will ensue.

Many different theories of organisational transformation can be located with regard to these distinctions (see Table 7.3). At the microlevel there are internal theories of transformations in individual staff members' behavioural and psychological approaches to sustainability. At the mesolevel there are theories of group change for the internal (organisational teams) and community levels (activist groups). Moving on the macrolevel of the organisation there are internal theories of whole-of system change and external theories of environmental selection of organisations. At the macro-macrolevel level of societal transformation we have internal theories of industry and community sustainability and external theories of global change.

Table 7.3: Theories of sustainability and internal and external change factors

Sustainability through the Internal-External Lens			
		Internal pole	External pole
Ecological holarchy lens	Microlevel (individual)	Sustainability via theories of employee behaviour and consciousness	Sustainability via theories of external leaders, stakeholders and activists
	Mesolevel (group/team)	Sustainability via theories of group development, and team-based models of transformation	Sustainability via theories of local community involvement in organizational change
	Macrolevel (organization)	Sustainability via theories of organizational evolution & structural contingency	Sustainability via theories of organizational ecology and environmental selection
	Macro-macrolevel (regional/national)	Sustainability via theories of economic change at industry, regional and national levels	Sustainability via theories of international social movements and global change

Table 7.3 maps out a metatheoretical framework for linking theories of sustainability. Among other things, the framework gives some idea about the scope of current theory development in the area.

### *3.5 Transformation-translation lens*

The transformation-translation lens focuses on the relationship between distinctive types of organisational change and sustainability. Transformation in this context is about a qualitative growth to a new mode of sustainable organising and new identity structures and ways of functioning that support sustainable communities. The translation pole of this lens is concerned with transactions that legitimise and bolster the current level of sustainability of the organisation. Translation is concerned with everyday, transactional change, that is, with change as it relates to the dynamic equilibrium of a system through the maintenance of its ongoing structural integrity and unique identity. Both transformation and translation are needed for any form of successful organising.

The sustainability challenges facing organisations require transformational responses so that qualitative shifts to new patterns of functioning can be undertaken. However, these radical shifts also require translational dynamics to ensure that large-scale changes do not overwhelm the integrity and cultural identity of the organisation. When either of these aspects of change dominates the other, problems can arise. Where translational dynamics are in the ascendancy the organisational response to crises is dominated by a transactional management approach that is conservative<sup>8</sup>, reactive and merely compliant to enforced regulatory requirements (Hitchcock & Willard, 2006). Translational dynamics naturally tend to resist sudden change and are comparable to negative feedback systems. Contrastingly, transformational dynamics initiate sudden and radical change and can be regarded as following positive feedback mechanisms. Transformational theories of organisational sustainability emphasise the importance of radical organisational change, the necessity of transformational leadership and the need for routinising change (Buchanan, Fitzgerald, Ketley, Gollop, Jones, Lamont, Neath & Whitby, 2005).

All organisations must deal with transformational and translational imperatives. From a metatheoretical perspective however, there is deep confusion and lack of awareness over the role of these two forms of change. Transformational change is largely identified with a radical increase in economic indicators rather than with qualitatively new forms or goals of organising. Authentic transformation of the kind described in the stage-based models of organisational sustainability is supplanted by a concern for ongoing economic growth. Social researcher Clive Hamilton (2003) in his book “The Growth Fetish” has described this obsession with endless cycles of production and consumption leading to ever-increasing growth. The transformational instinct is sublimated into a one-sided concern for quantitative increase rather than qualitative development. Organisations and their leaders see the importance of change, but are unaware of, or avoiding authentic transformational growth and focusing instead on “the malfunctioning source code” of pure

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<sup>8</sup> The term ‘conservative’ here refers to organisational structures and cultural values that maintain the current paradigm of thinking and acting rather than any specifically political position.

financial increase and the profit motive (Henderson, 2006). The result is a global concern for economic growth and the degradation and devaluation of the natural world in both developing and developed countries.

There is also another imbalance at play here. Translational dynamics are rightfully ongoing and never-ending because they continuously stabilise identity structures and behavioural systems. These day-to-day transactions and exchanges create and recreate the organisational system moment by moment. However, they can never result in qualitative transformations of the kind that can meet the challenges posed by radically changing ecological and social environments. No amount of translation results in transformation. The danger here is that, in pursuing largely translational change strategies to address problems that require authentic transformation, organisations are locking themselves and their communities into ways of thinking and acting that exacerbate the problem. They look to growth and the creation of even more economic “wealth” as a solution to the sustainability dilemma. Luke (2006) calls this approach “sustainable degradation”. He argues that the “strategies of sustainable degradation” offer justifications for ongoing translational growth so that the deep cultural and structural changes that environmental sustainability actually calls for can be evaded. There is an appearance of ecological issues being represented in managerial, commercial and judicial decision-making, but, as Luke contests (2006, p, 112),

... in reality, the system of sustainable degradation enables capital to extract even more value by maintaining the appearances of creating ecological sustainability while exploiting the realities of environmental degradation.

And so we have the vicious circle of increased economic activity being seen as the solution to problems caused by increasing levels of production and consumption (Sonntag, 2000). In other words, organisations are ramping up their translational growth goals and activities to address problems largely caused by excessive translational growth. The demands and benefits of true interior and exterior transformation are being eschewed in favour of translational cycles of change that do not question the basic issues of excessive production and consumption (Kimerling, 2001). This is essentially a conservative approach to change; one that is suspicious of transformative change and is reluctant to admit to the need for radically new ways of dealing with pressing environmental and social problems.

One reason for organisations choosing strategies for translational growth over those for transformational growth lies in the very difficult nature of achieving transformation itself. Transformation inherently involves phases where old identities and behaviours are transcended and replaced by and integrated into new identities, behaviours and structural systems. As we have seen in the discussion on the transition process lens, these transitions will necessarily involve, at least to some degree, the experience of loss, confusion and emotional and social turmoil at all

organisational levels. In contrast to this, the path of translational growth simply requires more of the same - more productive capacity, more investment, productivity and consumption. One result of increasing translational activities is an ever-increasing need for inputs and the commensurate production of greater volumes of both intended and unintended outputs. Greater throughput efficiencies in such a system often result in even greater volumes of outputs being produced rather than any fundamental change in processes that are driving the system. The lack of consciousness around valid transformational goals and the ubiquitous pursuit of translational efficiencies and productivities mean that the sustainability crisis is being exacerbated by the very processes that are promoted as its solution.

The metatheoretical approach taken in this study sees a greater understanding of the transformation-translation lens as fundamental to a more realistic view of sustainability. The application of this lens sees the continued drive to improve and increase translational growth as a distraction from the main task of transformational growth. In many ways, translational growth masquerades as transformation. “Sustainability” is reframed as “sustainable growth”, “sustainable profit margins” and “sustainable levels of production and consumption”. These types of “weak” sustainability (Pennington, 2006) reframe concepts of transformation and radical change into a discourse based on incremental adaptation and more efficient wealth creation. They dilute the transformational imperative into a transactional imperative. The environmental and social challenges of radical development to new forms of organisation are placed within a context of maintaining profits, preserving the hegemony of economic values over other types of values and defending material wealth creation over other forms of well-being. The rapid changes we see occurring in the world of organisations can be considered as a complex mix of both transformational and translational dynamics. It is critical, however that they not be confused. Without including both in our explanations of sustainable development, we run the risk of producing inadequate understandings of both.

### *3.6 Health-pathology lens*

A final explanatory lens to be considered in the bipolar group is that of health-pathology. This lens can be used to consider how the overall health (balance) or pathology (imbalance) of an organisational system. For example, the developmental holarchy can be combined with the health-pathology lens to explore pathological forms of each stage of sustainability. Ford and Backoff (1988) have discussed the developmental complexities that occur when pathologies form and which then negatively influence subsequent growth. Consequently, the emergence of new developmental capacities is a double-edged sword. As development proceeds, new integrative powers are attained but the organising system also becomes much more complex and vulnerable to developmental disorders of many varieties. Emergence through lower levels can have significant consequences. Because lower-levels are developmentally included within more complex levels of organising, they

can influence those greater capacities and predispose them towards reproducing distortions and unhealthy forms of organising. This is particularly true during times of crisis.

Table 7.4 describes some of these pathological forms of organisational sustainability as applied to stages of sustainability (developmental holarchy lens). The preconventional stages of rejecting and avoiding are generally regarded as unhealthy stages in that they contribute to the unsustainable development of current economic systems. There are, however pathological forms of all stages and they can reappear at a point in an organisations life given the right internal and external environments. The conventional stages of compliance and efficiency are no longer adequate given the current crisis in global atmospheric and biospheric conditions. Movement into the postconventional stages has its own difficulties. Committed and sustaining organisations need to ensure that their principles and practices are not pursued as platforms for proselytising or simply criticising others. Organisations and organisational networks working at the global stage need to balance their holistic embrace of sustainable values and operations with a sensitivity to the local demands of developing communities.

Table 7.4 Pathological forms for stages of organisational sustainability

Stage	Pathological Forms for Each Stage of Organisational Sustainability
7. Sustaining organisation (global)	universalising organisation (global): the globalisation of sustainability values and systems overrides local concerns for wealth creation and development.
6. Sustaining organisation (local):	proselytising organisation (local): transformation towards sustainability is treated as a platform for converting others and as the only goal for driving change.
5. Committed organisation	over-committed organisation: values sustainability to the detriment of its capacity to survive or can't align espoused sustainability values with its behaviour.
4. Efficient organisation	pragmatic organisation: values sustainability only as cost saving, i.e. the "business case" for sustainability, sustainability interferes with the freedom to do business.
3. Compliant organisation	circumventing organisation: values compliance to traditional ethical/legal standards, sustainability seen as impost, supports self-regulation to circumvent outside regulation.
2. Avoidant organisation	ignorant organisation: sustainability is seen as attack on commercial freedom. ignorant of ethical standards, legal responsibilities and negative impact of unsustainable practices.
1. Rejecting organisation	exploitative organisation: sustainability seen as survival through the exploitation of human, environmental and social resources, maximisation of profit is the legitimate goal.

Table 7.4 is an example of how the health-pathology lens can be combined with any of the other integral lenses to develop metatheoretical frameworks for evaluating other theories of sustainability the identifying balanced and unbalanced forms of theories of sustainability.

### 3.7 Learning lens

Sustainable organising requires the adoption of innovative behaviours and new forms of consciousness. These changes do not emerge without some form of learning taking place. The strong connections between organisational learning and organisational sustainability have been pointed out by many theorists (Molnar & Mulvihill, 2003; Senge, 2003; Tilbury, 2004).

Organisational learning has been shown to enhance corporate transformation towards systems of sustainable organising:

Our research has shown that for those business corporations that make the commitment to sustainable development, the understanding and practice of the organisational learning disciplines will be the indispensable prerequisite of a successful transformation to sustainability. (Nattrass & Altomare, 1999, p. 5)

Theories that provide learning-based explanations of sustainable development emphasise the need for multilevel adoption of learning initiatives. At the individual level, we have the notion of “personal mastery” where there is an investment in the “mental, physical and spiritual potential” of individuals within organisation (Molnar & Mulvihill, 2003). The team level “allows groups of employees to grasp and understanding of sustainability concepts into focus on specific problems” (Molnar & Mulvihill, 2003, p. 172). At the organisational level adopting a sustainability framework, such as *The Natural Step* (Nattrass & Altomare, 1998), provides a shared focus for reordering priorities and restructuring systems towards new organisational goals. Hence, sustainability can be seen as a reciprocating system supported by individual and collective levels of learning. Such a system has both interior and exterior dimensions in that learning involves behavioural and psychological learning in both individual and social spheres of activity.

Figure 7.3 depicts the integral cycle of learning in which the individual and the collective reinforce some novel change in activity, thinking, social structure and cultural meaning making. This is single-loop learning in that individual insights and collective innovations reinforce one another in their current paradigm of thinking and acting. Single-loop learning is translational not transformational. An example of this is when an organisation at the efficiency level of sustainability, implements some new technological innovation to incrementally improve existing waste management procedures. The cost savings flowing from such innovations affirm and legitimise the efficiency stage of sustainability that the organisation identifies with and acts from. The organisation and its members learn that cost saving and efficiency goals can be achieved through reinforcing sustainability practices.

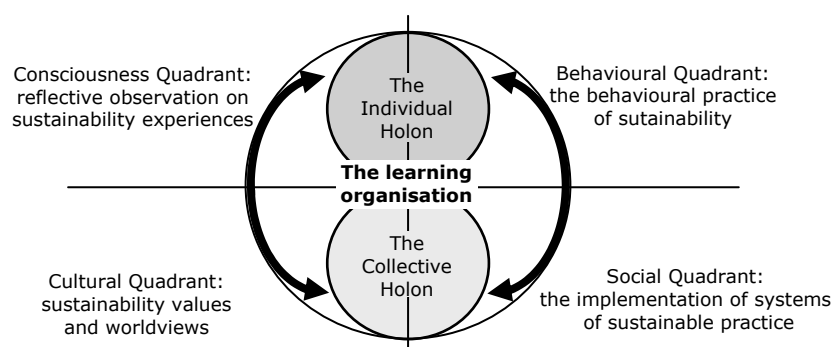


Figure 7.3: The learning organisation and the integral cycle of learning



Both individuals and groups learn through an iterative learning cycle of i) hands-on activities that embed the learning process in physical involvements, ii) reflective experience that develops subjective understanding and insight, iii) sense-making and interpretation that develops values and shared worldviews, and iv) social validation and systemic implementation that tests what has been learned.

### *3.8 Personal perspectives lens*

Perhaps the most significant contribution from post-modern theorists to explanations of organisational transformation is the inclusion of “standpoint” theories that include voices and perspectives that have previously been neglected in organisational research. These lenses systematically introduce multiperspectival capacities and can be crossed with other lenses to provide insights from all the key individuals and groups involved in the transformation experience. A particularly important lens from the standpoint category is that of personal perspective. As described previously, this lens uncovers different forms of inquiry emanating from multiple perspectives, including first, second, and third person perspectives in their singular and plural forms.

Until recent years, the third person inquiry method has dominated the organisational literature on sustainability. More recently, however, the postmodern concern for first- and second-person inquiry has led to a reappraisal of un/sustainability by giving voice to the lived experiences of individuals and communities. Whereas a modernist inquiry method assumes the value of third-person objective accounts, the postmodern use of the perspectives lens, focuses on the first-person voice of those who are not usually heard, on the second-person relationship of “the other”, and on the assumptions that underlie the objective study of the third-person. Hence, we have first-person stories from individuals and collectives who personally experience the unsustainability of destructive industrial and commercial practices. Such stories often come from community members of the developing world and they give voice to the impact of unsustainable activities on natural and human ecologies. Worthy of particular mention here is the views of indigenous peoples and how their perspective can contribute to a deeper understanding of a truly global sustainability (Spittles, 2004).

### *3.9 Stakeholder Lens*

The stakeholder lens offers explanations for transformation that focus on the roles of the various people and groups involved. This lens opens up the issue of power and influence and the inclusion and/or exclusion of different interest groups within the purpose, decision-making, and goal-setting processes of an organisation. Stakeholder theory is juxtaposed with models that see the purpose of organisations as the maximization of shareholder wealth or, more generally, as the pursuit of

shareholder interests. In contrast, stakeholder theory is concerned with the interests not only of shareholders but also of employees, customers, suppliers, and local and global communities and ecological systems. The aim of this approach is to achieve a “more equitable distribution of the benefits of corporate activity for non-shareholders relative to stakeholders” (Kaler, 2003, p. 71). Contemporary stakeholder theory now includes natural environments and the succeeding generations of people and natural ecosystems in what is called “extended stakeholder theory” (Zsolnai, 2006). Zsolnai proposes that this enlarged, normative restatement of the stakeholder calls for a radical transformation of commercial organisations and global business system in that business should be (2006, p. 43): i) “sustainable, i.e. should contribute to the conservation and restoration of the natural world;” ii) “pro-social, i.e. should contribute to development of capabilities of the members of society”; and iii) “future respecting, i.e. should contribute to the enhancement of the freedom of future generations”.

Zsolnai proposes a view of transformation that redefines who the stakeholder is. When we define stakeholders as members of traditional interest groups, such as shareholders, there is no need for the transformation of conventional business goals. In broadening our circle of definition to include communities, the natural world and future generations we are opening up an understanding of transformation that is driven by “world-centric values” and a more inclusive and global vision of organisational life as it is connected to the natural and social world. The key concept here is that different stakeholder theories can be differentiated based on their level of stakeholder inclusiveness and the extent to which their definition of “a stakeholder” includes non-traditional groups. As the circle of inclusion grows the responsibility of business to consider the broader community and environmental impact of its actions also grows (Steurer, Langer, Konrad & Martinuzzi, 2005). Stakeholder-based theories provide a way of seeing how different levels of stakeholder interest can drive different conceptualizations of sustainability. The stakeholder lens opens the researcher to the boundaries of self-interest and the ways in which the values and goals of organisations are connected to people and communities who have a stake in their functioning. The inclusion of non-traditional groups such as community members and ecological environments opens up broader explanations of how sustainability might be achieved and has significant implications for organisational governance and decision-making processes.

In a later section in this chapter, the stakeholder lens will can be combined with the personal perspectives lens to provide an example of how sustainability might be studied from a range of different standpoints.

### *3.10 Social mediation lens*

Transformational change towards sustainability is not only about the internal capacities of the organisations. Sustainability theorists have pointed out repeatedly that organisations do not exist in

isolation from their social environment (Marshall & Toffel, 2005). But more than this, the social environment is as much the source of transformation as any internal organisational resource. The structures and cultures that together constitute new sociocultural forms of sustainability lie as much in the social depth of the organisation's surrounds as they do within its own boundaries. Institutionalising the changes that will lead to authentic sustainability will require the mediation of new types of social consciousness, moral sensitivity, and economic practices from the outside to the inside of the organisation. Consequently, theories of sustainability are beginning to include "the institutional and cultural mediation of individual and collective responses to environmental concerns" (Hobson, 2006, p. 292). Change research from this perspective recognises the impact of social and institutional contexts rather than assuming that choices are made by isolated rational agents. Hobson has argued that mediational theories of sustainability need to be seen as foundational to the development of sound environmental policy and the change programmes that flow from that policy. She states that mediational approaches bring,

... considerable critique to bear on the models of behaviour change that underpin prevailing sustainable development strategies. For example, reliance upon the public consumption of environmental information as a strategy for affecting widespread behaviour change has been questioned: a situation where reasoned human agency is viewed as the key determinant of action, and where social and institutional constraints, if included at all, are considered only for their effects on individual attitudes. According to some human geographers, such a perspective, which dominates both academic and policy circles, advances impoverished and simplistic representations of the subject and of society. Here cultural, institutional and political issues – if considered at all – are factored into models of rational decision-making, not taken as foundational to human responses to the environmental problematic. (Hobson, 2006, p. 292)

A less impoverished view of "the subject and of society" is aware of the channels by which individual and groups communicate and interact in a complex networks of co-creating identities and realities. Societies change not only because each individual comes to a rational decision to change their behaviour but also because of public expectations, cultural worldviews expressed in the media, and the views and actions of community, business and political leaders (Margolis & Hansen, 2002).

The lens of social mediation opens up new ways of understanding the determinants of transformation. For example, organisations need support in their transitions by mediating factors such as leading edge public expectations, innovative inter-organisational networks, community visions, informed media and internet communities, social activists, consumer advocates and progressive government regulation (Senge et al., 2007). Left to their own innate capabilities, single organisations, even those with sympathetic views towards sustainability, will not be able to

transform in the radical ways necessary for the establishment and maintenance of advanced forms of sustainability (Laszlo & Seidel, 2006). The transformative depth that lies in the inter-organisational and sociocultural environment needs to be recognised so that it can be utilised to effect change. It is through the mediation of these networks of exchange relations that new archetypes of organisational identity and behaviour can be established.

A simple model of the mediation lens involves the transforming entity, its social environment and the mediating agent, means or “artefact” that conveys the social reality to that entity. Agents of social mediation convey the norms, practices, values and worldviews that feed into and shape an organisation’s own norms, practices and values. When transformational motivations are engaged, new modes of thinking and acting are sought out and experimented with so that the organisation and its people, tasks, culture and systems are exposed to sustaining attitudes and practices. Social mediation is, of course, a two-way process and the plurality of opinions that exist within and between organisations will feed into community attitudes and behaviours through such means as marketing campaigns, advertising, corporate public relations and the representation of organisational views in the media.

Figure 7.4 shows an organisation and its community environment in a mediated relationship. The concentric circles represent the multiple levels of sustainability values and practices that are present within both organisations and their communities. Different forms of sustainability either reinforce or challenge each other through intercessory agents of social mediation. Social mediations flow between and influence, at the microlevel, personal consciousness and attitudes, behavioural tasks and performances and, at the macrolevel, cultural beliefs, worldviews, regulating structures and social systems.

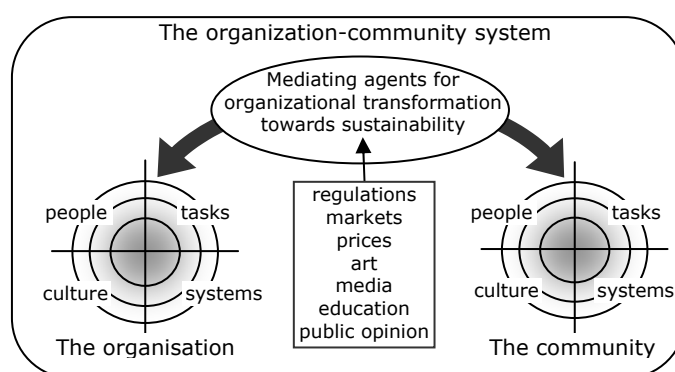


Figure 7.4: The social mediation of organizational sustainability

Some of the key means for the social mediation of sustainable development are public education and awareness of sustainability issues, government legislation and regulation, scientific research, the press and electronic media, inter-organisational bodies that support sustainability initiatives, non-governmental bodies that report on organisational behaviour and international networks that encourage organisational change towards sustainability. Each of these areas plays a fundamental

role in shaping a society's expectations and requirements of organisations regarding their stance towards sustainability (Edwards, 2008). And for each of these agents of social mediation communication is the crux. An extensive body of literature sees radical organisational change primarily as the transformation of its communicative interactions (Giddens, 1993; Luhman, 1990) and that interactions that form communications and conversations are the essential modality by which the capacity to organise emerges (Taylor & Every, 2000).

### *3.11 Alignment lens*

Many different theoretical approaches to sustainability make use of the concept of alignment (Cartwright & Craig, 2006; Freeman, 2006; Hobson, 2006). There are two central aspects to this lens. The first relates to the level of compatibility, concordance or attunement within and between the organisation and its natural and social environment. The second has to do with the resulting level of motivation or drive for change that results from the actual degree of alignment or misalignment. The basic principle guiding the explanations for transformational change offered by alignment theories is that close alignment between two entities leads to greater efficiency and effectiveness but is not conducive to transformational change; whereas misalignment leads to either ongoing inefficiency and effectiveness or to a growing motivation for radical change.

The alignment lens can be focused on the organisation's internal structure or it can be used to consider the degree of (mis)matching between the organisation and its environment. The range of sustainability issues considered through the alignment lens includes values (Boxelaar, Warner, Beilin & Shaw, 2003), corporate governance (Cartwright & Craig, 2006), research and development (Scott, 2001), consumer behaviour (Weber, 2003), social justice (Schwing, 2002), competitive advantage (Gottschalg & Zollo, 2007) and corporate reputation (Freeman, 2006).

### *3.12 Organisational streams lens*

The streams lens focuses on particular domains of organisational identity or functioning. In effect, this whole exemplar topic of organisational sustainability is a demonstration of an integral metatheory for transformation as it applies to the organisational stream of sustainability. All the lenses that have been identified here can be applied to other organisational streams, for example, they can be applied to the streams of technology, organisational knowledge, leadership, productivity, innovation, finance, community relations and human resources (see, for example, Porras, 1987). The key point here is that sustainability needs to be recognised as one stream among many others but also as being connected to them in significant ways. The transformation required for reaching advanced levels of sustainability involves radical shifts in all the core organisational domains. This is why sustainability is not simply a matter of transformation in either technological innovation or culture or waste management systems.

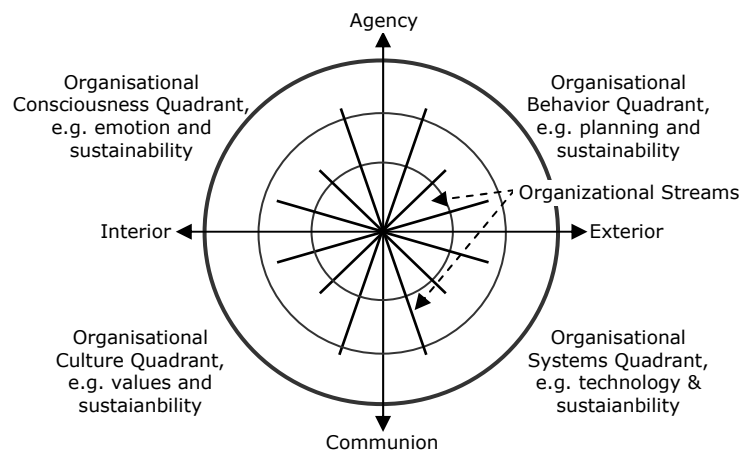


Figure 7.5: Holarchic and bipolar lenses applied at an intra-holonic order

A narrow application the streams lens becomes reductionist when it explains all change through one particular domain of organisational activity. Regarding all solutions to sustainability problems as dependent on technological innovation is an example of this type of conceptual myopia. This type of stream reductionism or, as Wilber (2006) calls it, “line absolutism” can be seen, for example, in the focus on technological solutions to global warming through such as means carbon sequestration, clean coal technology and nuclear power. In contrast, the subjective mindsets and beliefs systems that underlie the problem are considered as peripheral issues (Reidy, 2005). An integral approach sees sustainability as a multidimensional characteristic that involves many stream of organisational life, including its consciousness, behavioural, cultural and social systems aspects (see Figure 7.5).

#### 4. Combinations of Integral Lenses - Metatheoretical Frameworks for Sustainability

The preceding discussion has described the relevance of some specific integral lenses for the exemplar topic of organisational sustainability. This has provided a starting point for describing the integral metatheory for organisational transformation. The following section further explicates the metatheory by showing how lenses can be combined to develop metatheoretical frameworks for exploring sustainability issues.

##### 4.1 Developmental and ecological holarchy lenses

Combining the developmental and ecological holarchy lenses provides a model for exploring types of sustainability present within each ecological level of the organisation and/or its environment. This means that pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional stages of sustainability can be seen at the individual, group, organisational and societal levels. Table 7.5 shows this combination of ecological and developmental holarchies. This sort of detailed mapping of stages of sustainability at the micro, meso and macrolevels provides a big picture framework for

understanding the complex terrain of interactions between individuals, groups and larger collectives.

Table 7.5: Sustainability mapping using ecological and developmental holarchy lenses

Organisational Levels for Ecological Holarchy Lens		Sustainability Stages for the Developmental Holarchy Lens					
		Pre-conventional stages		Conventional stages		Post-conventional Stages	
		Stage 1 Rejecting	Stage 2 Avoiding	Stage 3 Complying	Stage 4 Efficiency	Stage 5 Committed	Post-post-conventional Stage 6 Local Sustaining Stage 7 Global Sustaining
Micro	Individual	rejecting individual(s)	avoidant individual(s)	compliant individual(s)	efficient individual(s)	committed individual(s)	sustaining individual(s)
	Dyad						
Meso	Group	rejecting group	avoidant group	compliant group	efficient group	committed group	sustaining group
	Sub-Unit						
Macro	Organisation	rejecting organisation	avoidant organisation	compliant organisation	efficient organisation	committed organisation	sustaining organisation
Macro-macro	Industry	rejecting industry	avoidant industry	compliant industry	efficient industry	committed industry	sustaining industry
	Political/Economy	rejecting economy	avoidant economy	compliant economy	efficient economy	committed economy	sustaining economy
	Social-cultural	rejecting society	avoidant society	compliant society	efficient society	committed society	sustaining society
	Global	rejecting world	avoidant world	compliant world	efficient world	committed world	sustaining world

When organisations set out on the path of radical transformation, there will be key individuals, groups and organisational units that either enthusiastically support or energetically resist the take-up of new values and practices. The conflicts that arise from these misalignments are important areas to be dealt with in the pursuit of whole-system approaches to sustainability. Such conflicts are to be expected because transformation to new forms of sustainable organising will necessarily involve a qualitative shift in values, worldviews and embedded organisational practices. Recognising that there will be differences in sustainability values and behaviours within and between different levels of the organisation can provide a basis for understanding why, where and how conflicts emerge. For example, individuals and groups that still function from a compliant or efficiency stage will have difficulty in moving to a committed stage of sustainable organising and, as such, they will come into conflict with other individuals and groups who are supportive of more adventurous levels of transformation. This mosaic of varying values, worldviews, behaviours and embedded practices can be usefully considered using the mapping approach set out in Table 7.5. Such mappings also can be used to categorise theories of sustainability as they pertain to different ecological levels and stages of sustainability.

One benefit of combining ecological and developmental holarchy lenses to form a multilevel framework for organisational sustainability is that it can provide a means for disclosing the emergent interactions that occur between individual, groups, organisational structures and social entities. This framework could also be used to track the aetiology of transformations in attitudes, behaviours, policies, practices, and cultures as they emerge at multiple sites, both within and outside the organisation. Several theorists have pointed to be connections between sustainability and the micro-macro issue (Griffiths & Petrick, 2001; Kinlaw, 1993). In their paper entitled “Weaving an Integral Web” authors Starik and Rands state that (1995, p. 909):

Sustainability and sustainable development have multilevel and multisystem characteristics ... and the achievement of sustainability requires an effective integration of these multiple levels and systems. For us, integration involves the assumptions that (a) an ecologically sustainable world requires ecologically sustainable societies, cultures, political and economic systems, organisations, and individuals and that (b) achievement of sustainability by an entity at any one of these levels require simultaneously recognising and addressing the actions of and interactions with entities at each of these levels.

A comprehensive picture of how sustainability emerges from the interaction of “entities at each of these levels” will also need to include the developmental stages of sustainability awareness and behaviour that each of these entities displays in their interactions. Combining the ecological and developmental holarchy lenses provides a basis for developing this comprehensive picture. Viewing the micro, meso and macro worlds through a developmental lens makes it possible to follow the transformational currents that are propagated through these levels via such processes as structuration (Giddens, 2000), co-evolution (Bleischwitz, 2007) and relationism (Ritzer & Gindoff, 1992). This capacity to combine lenses and apply the resulting frameworks to extant sustainability theory is one of significant contributions that integral metatheorising offers to researchers.

#### *4.2 AQAL and sustainable development*

AQAL has been used to develop an “All Quadrants” approach to sustainable development (Brown, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c). This integral approach describes sustainability primarily in terms of the stage-based development of the individual domains of personal consciousness and behaviour and the collective domains of culture and social systems. The AQAL sustainability model stresses that (Brown, 2005a, p. 17):

... mindfulness of individual consciousness (belief system, mental model, motivations, etc.) is vital when attempting to address all the major influences on a sustainable development initiative.

The assumption is that a healthy transformation towards behavioural and structural sustainability is not possible without a concomitant transformation in consciousness and culture. Brown (2005a, p. 27) describes one of the core tenets of Integral Sustainable Development as “the recognition that we are part of this grand territory, not simply observers or analysts of its flows and patterns”.

Figure 7.6 is an application of the quadrants framework to the topic of organisational sustainability. It shows the four domains of sustainability that result from combining the interior-exterior and individual-collective lenses. The framework encapsulates the significant elements of each moment or occasion of experience as they relate to sustainability in all its forms. If any of these domains are



neglected, the result will be an impoverish view of the lived experience of individuals and of the organisations and communities they work in. If this neglect continues unabated, that impoverishment will contribute to the unsustainable forms of growth that are currently accepted as the norm. Sustainability, then, is the balanced, long-term “co-evolution” of these four quadrants.

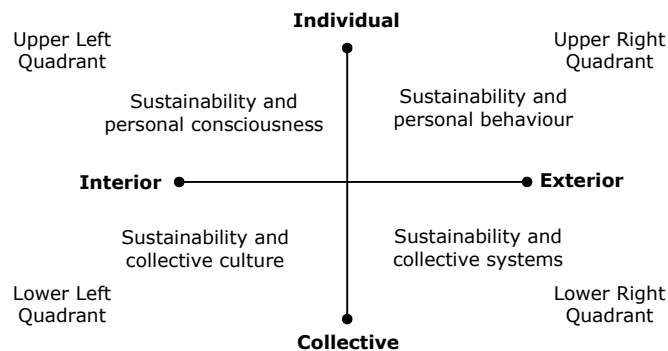


Figure 7.6 The four quadrants of sustainability

The consciousness quadrant is the subjective domain of personal consciousness and awareness of sustainability issues. Organisational sustainability is influenced by the presence or lack of consciousness, knowledge, positive/negative attitudes, feelings of efficacy/helplessness, and motivations to care for the environment and others or for one's self. The behavioural quadrant is where are located actions that promote or hinder sustainable lifestyles, work practices that encourage or discourage compliance, behavioural goals that assist or work against sustainability. The cultural quadrant is the inter-subjective domain of meaning making, worldviews and values as they relate to sustainability. This quadrant is exemplified in the clash of values where we have, on the one hand, the maximisation of shareholder wealth as the core value of organisational members, and, on the other hand, the opposing value system of the optimisation of stakeholder well-being is seen as the chief purpose of organisational activity. Sustainability can also be explained as a function of collective exteriors. This is the inter-objective quadrant of social systems, administrative functions, and organisational structures. In this context explanations of sustainability revolve around changes in the organisations functional systems, its organising structures and economic environments.

AQAL has also been applied to the field of environmental ecology (Brown, 2005a; Esbjörn-Hargens, 2004). Esbjörn-Hargens (2004) has shown that ecological theories can be usefully categorised into one or other of the four quadrants. The same applies to sustainability where theories often focus exclusively on either consciousness and subjectivity (Elgin, 1994) or culture and intersubjectivity (Lewis, 2003) or behaviour and objective measures of sustainability (Sonntag, 2000) or organisational systems and interobjectivity (Stowell, 1997). Leaning too heavily on any one of these quadrants results in a reductionist approach to sustainability. Interventions that rely only on changes in individual consciousness will neglect the power of change in systems, structures and behaviours to transform sustainability practices. Similarly, if we assume that sustainability will

flow from changes in organisational systems we are overlooking the necessary involvement of individual consciousness and behaviour. Transformation will only flow from a four quadrants involvement that creates and supports radical change in consciousness and behaviour at both the microlevel of individual activity and the macrolevel of organisational and inter-organisational systems.

#### *4.3 The interior-exterior lens and the ecological holarchy lens – An ecological framework for sustainability*

The AQAL framework employs a reduced two-level version of the ecological holarchy lens. A more detailed framework can be proposed when a more comprehensive form of the lens is used. There are several reasons for introducing these additional levels of organisational ecology. First, multiple levels help to avoid the conflation<sup>9</sup> between ecological levels and other valid bipolar lenses. The ecological holarchy is not a bipolar variable with individuals at one pole and collectives at the other. It is a scalar variable with numerous possible gradations. Second, because of the crucial role that small groups, teams and committees play in organisations, it is important that a mesolevel of group-focused phenomena be introduced between the microlevel of the individual and the macrolevel of the organisation. Third, an ecological holarchy does not stop at an organisation's boundary but includes inter-organisational, industry-level, environmental, societal and global levels (Starik & Rands, 1995). Hence, it is useful to include ecological levels beyond the organisational boundary so that external levels of social ecology can be entered into the analytical mix. All these distinctions are lost when we think of an organisation's multilevel ecology simply as an individual-collective polarity<sup>10</sup>.

A detailed form of the ecological holarchy lens has been applied to the area of commercial business by Paulson (2002). His integral business model crosses the levels of individual, team, company, industry and world environment with the quadrants and developmental holarchy lens. The resulting model incorporates the subjective and objective aspects of individual and collective life at each of these ecological levels. A feature of the model is that it includes both internal and external ecological levels.

Figure 7.7 includes these additional levels of organisational ecology and constitutes a more detailed extension of the AQAL framework. Instead of the simplified individual-collective bipole, the figure crosses multiple levels of organisational ecology with the interior-exterior lens to form a multilevel scalar approach to "inner and outer" forms of sustainability. As with the basic quadrants framework, there exist subjective and intangible realities as well as objective and tangible realities for each of these ecological levels. Sustainability can be conceptualised in terms of "inner and outer worlds" (Bradbury, 2003) for each ecological level that we might wish to include. This means that

<sup>9</sup> (see Chapter 6, Section 4.6)

<sup>10</sup> AQAL currently suffers from this lack of analytical specificity and this issue will be taken up in the following chapter where a brief critique of AQAL metatheory will be presented.

both subjective and objective realities at a variety of points in the ecological holarchy can be included in formulations for a more comprehensive and multilevel explanations of sustainability. In particular, the introduction of the mesolevel of the ecological holarchy in Figure 7.7 highlights the role of groups, teams, and committees in explanations for the emergence of new forms of sustainable organising. It is at this group level that innovative and experimental forms of behaviour and culture can be trialled and evaluated. Indeed, the growth of the organisational development movement in the 1960's and 70's was largely based on mesolevel interventions through such programmes T-group and teamwork training (Schein & Bennis, 1965).

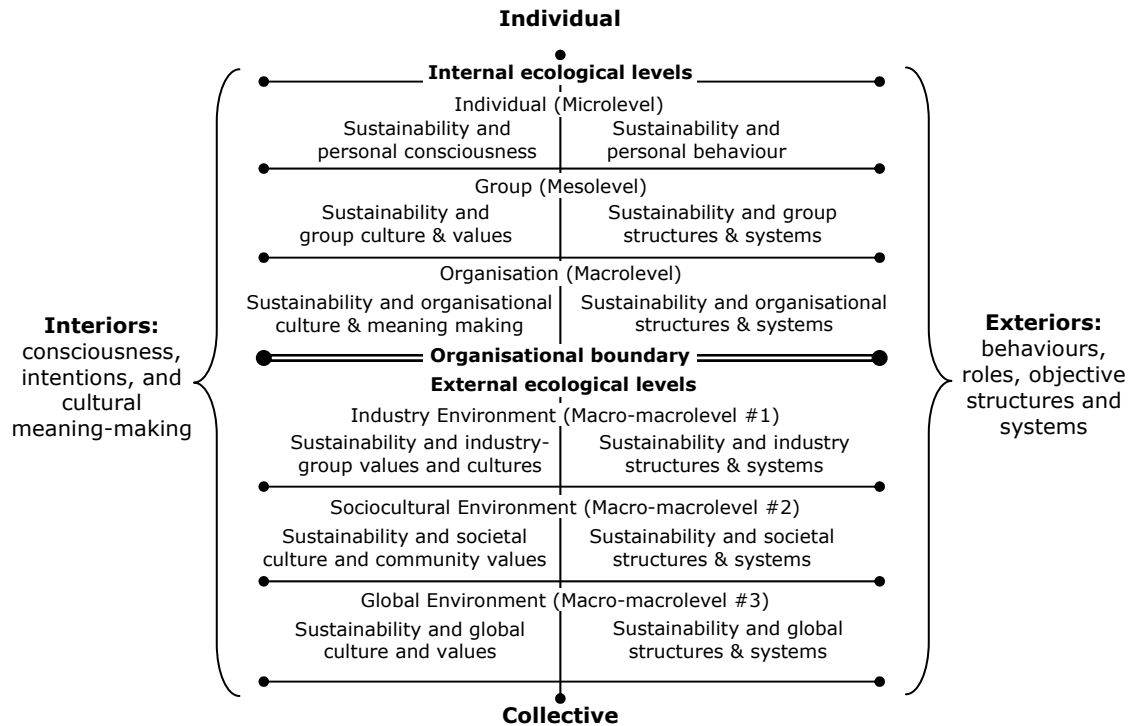


Figure 7.7 Interior & exterior forms of sustainability for multiple internal and external levels of organisational ecology

While the emergence of new values and ways of working can be more easily established with small group settings, the mesolevel is, as is the case with microlevel innovation, dependent on support from management and control structures of the organisation. This brings into the picture the governance holarchy lens which, as we have already seen, considers levels of management, decision-making, and strategic and political power and how these affect transformative potential. Sustainability initiatives and experiments, like all transformative practices, need flexible environments that allow for trial-and-error testing in order to prosper. Experimentation with individual and group-level initiatives needs a supportive climate in which innovative ways of meeting sustainability objectives can be initiated, even if they might potentially fail or not prove successful in the short-term. Material support, emotional encouragement and proactive leadership by management is crucial for the creative generation of new ideas and methods (Hart, 2005; Placet, Anderson & Fowler, 2005). Their emergence in institutionalised and organised settings is typically a fragile and tremulous thing. The mesolevel of the groups might metaphorically be regarded as a midwife for the emergence of sustainability initiatives for the transformation of personal intentions

and behaviours and collective cultures and systems. Theories that focus on these local, mesolevel efforts offer an important perspective that needs to be recognised in any integral approach to organisational sustainability.

#### 4.4 The agency-communion and ecological holarchy lenses

The agency-communion lens looks at the task or goal-focused or nature of organisational life and the complementary aspect of its communal or relationship-focused nature. While these two aspects of organising are complementary and mutually enhancing, it is often the case that agentic and task-focused forms of organising take precedence over more relational styles. Although the power of relationships has been recognised in organisational development as a fundamental tool for change (Joyce, 2003), it remains highly underutilised as an avenue for guiding substantive change (Gergen, McNamee & Barrett, 2001).

One useful way of considering the agency-communion lens within a sustainability context is to combine it with the ecological holarchy and internal-external lenses. This combination of lenses generates a framework for considering the balance between tasks and relationships as they apply inside the organisation as well as outside the organisation (see Figure 7.8).

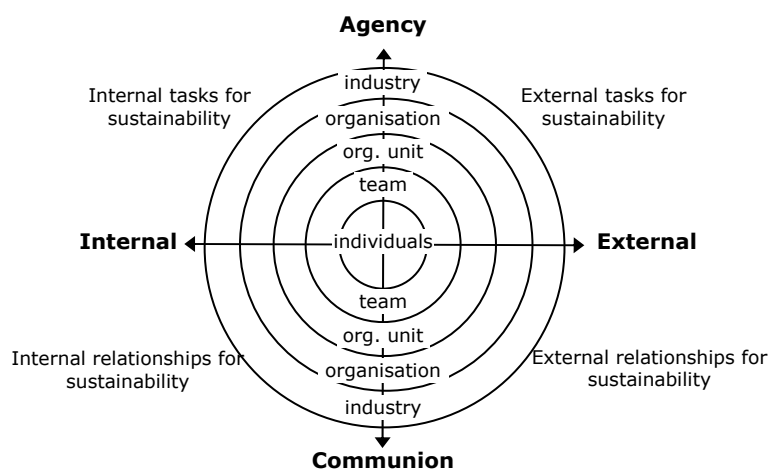


Figure 7.8 The ecological holarchy, agency-communion and internal-external lenses applied to organisational sustainability

The framework suggests that transformation towards sustainable organising requires both sustaining tasks and sustaining relationships within the organisation and with the organisation's community stakeholders. It shows the importance of relationships in the sustainability equation and that a single-minded focus on tasks, to the exclusion of communal and relational processes, may alienate individuals and groups who might otherwise be collaborators. This has implications for the relation between gender and leadership style (Kark, 2004). Masculine styles of leadership are overwhelmingly associated with the agency wing and feminine styles of leadership with the communion wing. This "gendered" connotation arises because,

The stereotypical feminine style (consideration or people-orientedness) is characterized by nurturing of interpersonal relationships. In a stereotypical masculine leadership style (initiating structure or task-orientedness), task performance and achievement of organizational goals is emphasized. (van Engen, van der Leeden & Willemsen, 2001, p. 582)

These styles are stereotypes and may be influenced by different mediating variables such as industry type and work place situation and, consequently, both male and female managers may exhibit mixed forms of these leadership styles. The key issue here is not so much the association between leadership styles and genders but that these ways of construing leadership/management and their hybrid forms can play important roles in explaining how change towards greater sustainability can be implemented. Both task- and relationship-oriented methods are needed. And these tasks relate to the internal and external aspects of all organisational levels.

As Figure 7.8 shows, both people-oriented (communal) and task-oriented (agentic) goals need to be pursued for sustainability to be a truly transformational process. This is why the technical and economic sides of sustainability cannot be dealt with in isolation from the human side of social justice and relationship. These goals can be pursued at the individual and group levels where organisational members engage in work tasks with sustainability goals in mind and communicate their attitudes towards sustainability to others. They can also be pursued at the organisational levels where it is particularly important that organisations form industry-based relationships and networks and pursue sustainability tasks that focus on broad-ranging sustainability initiatives. It is at the inter-organisational level, where industry environments that support transformation towards sustainability can be created, that the real potential for rapid societal responses to international and global challenges in this area can be realised.

#### *4.5 Learning and developmental holarchy lenses*

The learning and developmental holarchy lenses can be combined to form a framework for showing qualitatively different levels of transformational learning. In the context of sustainability, Molnar and Mulvihill (2003) have called this kind of learning “Sustainability-Focused Organisational Learning” (SFOL). The pursuit of SFOL requires the questioning of “core business values and basic assumptions” and the opportunity for employees to have import into the organisation’s core values and long-term vision is “a crucial part of SFOL”. SFOL combines the idea of organisational learning with the transformation of core values to propose a model of radical change that includes multiple levels of learning. Similarly, Halme (2001) has described two different types of learning that can occur in inter-organisational sustainability networks. “Lower-level learning” produces “transactional outcomes” and provides support and improvement in sustainability principles and practices but does not challenge the underlying systems and

philosophies of the network members. The second type of learning Halme refers to as “higher-level learning”. High-level learning produces “transformational outcomes” which fundamentally change the way the organisation and its members think and act with regard to sustainability issues.

Transactional learning cannot produce the types of shifts necessary for movement to occur through the basic stages of organisational sustainability described, for example, by Griffiths, Benn and Dunphy (2007). This concurs with the multiple learning models which propose that “one cannot engage in ‘double-loop learning’ (the type that re-evaluates basic assumptions) with single-loop models” (Daneke, 2001, p. 518). Solutions to sustainability problems that are caused by deeply held values and which are performed through institutionalised systems of practice cannot be found via single-loop or incremental learning. Only “generative learning” approaches such as double- and triple-loop learning, which require frame-breaking insights and behaviours to be experienced and institutionally implemented, can result in such transformations. This is not, however, a simple process of linear progression. In Figure 7.9 the learning lens is combined with the developmental holarchy lens to show the variability that can occur over time as an organisation struggles to balance translational with transformational modes of learning in a sustainability context. Translational learning maintains the organisation’s current stage of sustainability while transformational learning enables a shift to a new level of identity. Regressive shifts can also occur as when an organisation responds to internal and external pressures to abandon sustainability initiatives to resume its former focus on, for example, mere compliance.

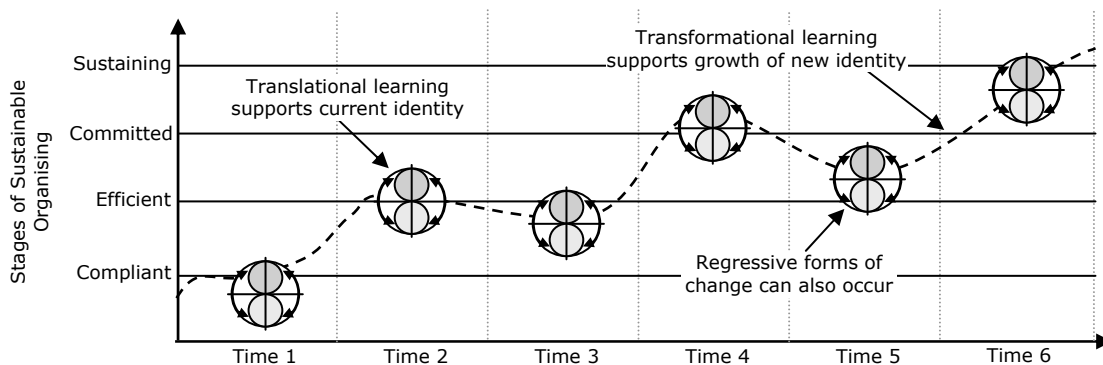


Figure 7.9: The ups and downs of organisational learning and sustainable development

The learning lens engages with many of the elements that have been identified and described as fundamental to the transformational task of sustainable organising. The learning lens can be combined with: i) the internal-external lens to see how theories treat the interplay between new forms of knowledge and technology in the broader community and those within organisations; ii) the developmental holarchy lens to uncover the multi-loop nature of learning (as shown in Figure 7.9); iii) the ecological holarchy lens to consider multilevel theories of sustainability at many different scales within the organisation; iv) the transformation-translation lens to see how translational learning and transformational learning interact and reinforce each other; v) the

interior-exterior lens to investigate the relationship between behavioural, reflective and social forms of learning and transformation towards sustainability.

#### 4.6 The social mediation, developmental holarchy and organisational streams lenses

An informative way of theorising about sustainability is to see how relational and communicative processes mediate transformation through the stages of organisational sustainability. This is a very different focus to the developmental approach where internal organisational capacities are seen as the progenitors of qualitative change. In fact, these two approaches - developmental and mediated theories of change - can be seen as complementary to each other.

Figure 7.10 shows how the explanatory lenses of developmental holarchy and social mediation can be combined to provide a mediational model of organisational sustainability. The first column maps out the major developmental/transformational stages of organisational sustainability, as they exist for a particular organisation. The second column offers a brief description of mediating agents of transformation that exist in the organisation's environment. The third column identifies the core values that are being mediated between the organisation and its ecological and sociocultural environment.

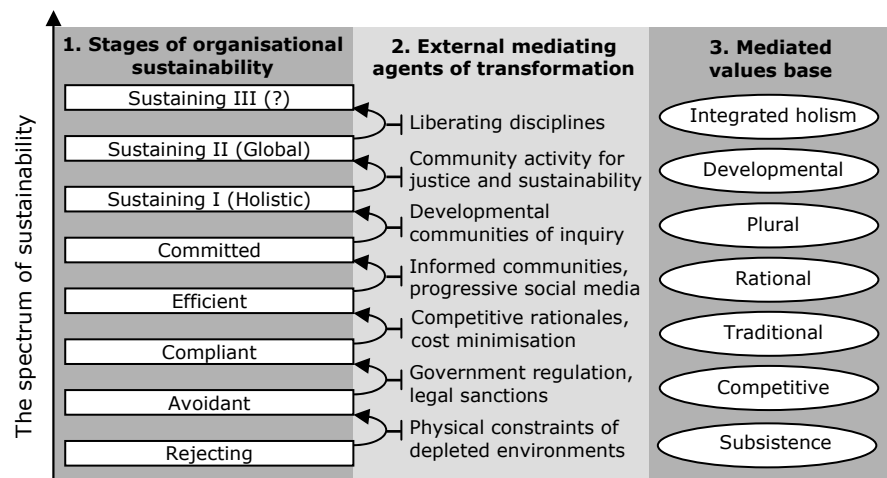


Figure 7.10: Mediating means for transformation towards sustainability

Mediating agents communicate transformational depth from the environment to the organisation's internal culture and structure. For example, organisations at the compliant stage of sustainability will eventually be faced with external signals, exemplars, ideas and models – from stakeholders, markets and public media - calling for greater efficiency, cost minimisation and competitive rationales for adopting sustainability initiatives. These mediations support internal innovations that challenge the old forms of compliance thinking and stimulate the adoption of efficiency-related values, behaviours, systems and ways of thinking throughout the organisation. Hence, transformation can come about not only through internal motivations but through the mediation of exterior structures (Nardi, 1996).

The application of the mediation lens introduces a more critical analysis of organisational responses to sustainability. Utilising this lens to study and build theory shifts the explanatory focus onto the inter-organisational environment and to how transformation can be viewed within the competitive and interdependent environment of contemporary sociocultural life. Because it focuses on the exchanges between an organisation and its social milieu the mediation lens is well suited for analysing the theoretical treatment of issues such as relationality, power and social influence. These types of mediational analyses are sorely lacking among current explanations of transformational processes in general and the theories of sustainability in particular could benefit from the use of the mediation lens<sup>11</sup>.

#### 4.7 Metatheoretical frameworks using the alignment lens

One way of considering the many different types of alignment is to view them in the context of other lenses described in this study (see Table 7.6).

Table 7.6: Integral lenses and forms of alignment

Integral lenses	Forms of alignment	Options for the development of sustainable organisations
Internal-external	organisational values and community values, e.g.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lobby other organisations to adopt sustainability practices &amp; principles</li> <li>• organisation to adopt progressive community values</li> <li>• align organisational reputation with actual policies and behaviour</li> </ul>
Interior-exterior	espoused values and behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• align espoused values to behavioural realities</li> <li>• implement staff development to align behaviours with values</li> <li>• use the resulting values-behaviour dissonance as motivation for change</li> </ul>
Ecological holarchy	organisational policies and individual members' beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff selection procedures to incorporate alignment of personal and organisational factors</li> <li>• institute emergent leadership practices to allow bottom-up innovations to impact at the organisational strategy level</li> </ul>
Stakeholders	the interests and concerns of different stakeholder groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• allow a wider range of decision-making contributions from major stakeholders, e.g. customers, suppliers, community stakeholders</li> <li>• develop conflict resolution processes to negotiate between varying sustainability values and goals</li> <li>• undertake a review of stakeholder attitudes towards sustainability</li> </ul>
Developmental holarchy	alignment between different transformational stages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leaders to "lead" in transformational values, culture and behaviour</li> <li>• identify sustainability practices and attitudes and take steps to implement those through changes in structure and culture</li> </ul>
Organisational streams	technological initiatives and corresponding cultural capacities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure that organisational technologies and systems streams (e.g. monitoring, accounting, manufacturing, training) are aligned with cultural streams, e.g. mission, values and communications</li> </ul>

So, for example, we can look at the alignment between interior values and cognitive mindsets and exterior organisational structures and behaviours. Where these interior and exterior qualities are closely aligned, the social and behavioural coherence of the organisation is likely to be high as will be the commitment to the current stage of organisational sustainability. Where there are significant misalignments, there will be high motivation to change either interior values and mindsets or exterior behaviours and systems of work. Actual behaviours and operations can often lag behind espoused values and intentions simply because it is easier to verbally commit to principles than to

<sup>11</sup> For an example of the use of the mediation lens in the critical examination of social change process see Edwards, 2008a.



operationally apply them. In such cases, organisations can continue with the ongoing dissonance and tensions caused by such disjoints and reactively cope with the systemic problems of low morale, diminished team spirit and cohesiveness. Alternatively, moves can be made to align values and visions with activities and operations. The organisation may choose to change its espoused values to be more in line with its behavioural realities, it might implement staff development programmes to align behaviours with values or it can decide to use the resulting values-behaviour dissonance as motivating energy for whole-scale transformation.

The alignment lens can also be usefully employed to consider the disconnections between the organisation's internal and external environments. The degree of alignment between organisational values and community values can have serious implications for an organisation's approach to issues of sustainability and change. For example, the current community interest in issues of global warming is placing significant pressure on organisations to change. There are several options available to organisations and their leaders to meet this challenge. One type of response, seen in the behaviour of some multinational corporations, is to influence private and public attitudes and values so that they fit more conveniently with the values and goals of those organisations. The use of lobbyists, privately funded research programs, advertising and public relations campaigns have proven to be very successful in shaping community values and individual attitudes. A current example of this type of "reframing" of values can be seen in the nuclear industry's current attempt to be seen as a "green" energy producer that is meeting concerns over global warming. These types of responses are also associated with organisational attempts to align their reputations more closely with values and principles that are highly regarded in the broader community. Image advertising is an example of this type of strategy. The approach here is to align the organisation at a superficial level so that the transformational change can be avoided (informally called "greenwash"). Elements of this can be seen in the response of oil companies to concerns over greenhouse gas emissions.

The opposite response is, of course, to change organisational values so that they conform more closely with community expectations. Many companies are moving to adopt sustainable energy principles and practices in response to community values. And, in some instances, organisations are acting as leaders in adopting transformational values and practices that provide leading edge examples of sustainability to the rest of the community (Anderson, 2003; Esbensen, 2006). Many organisations from the non-government and not-for-profit sector are at the leading edge of community and national attempts to meet transformational challenges in the environmental, social and economic challenges associated with sustainability (Courville & Piper, 2004).

Mismatches can also occur between organisation levels, that is, between the individual, group, and organisational levels. The gap between organisational goals and individual members' personal attitudes and beliefs are often the site of much contention and efforts to promote change (Boswell, 2006). It is here that the phenomenon of whistle blowing can arise. When there is a serious

misalignment between the organisational activities and the beliefs of individual members then individuals can act to inform the community of the real situation. Where organisations have been flagrantly flouting their responsibilities, individuals can be motivated to inform authorities, the press or community members of the transgressions. The protection of whistleblowers may, in fact, be one of the most important signs that an organisation is serious about moving to a new values base.

The use of the alignment lens can unlock many new perspectives on how transformation to sustainable organising can be achieved. It can aid in understanding the complex dynamics that currently exist within organisations as they deal with the dissociations and dislocations that exist internally and externally. The alignment lens can be used at multiple scales of focus, from the very microlevel of individual values and concerns to the macrolevel of global development. At the broader level of global sustainability, the most obvious source of misalignment that feeds into the unsustainability of current economic and social organising are the gaps between the developed, developing and underdeveloped nations and between rich and poor within those nations. These misalignments may lie at the heart of many of the seemingly intractable problems associated with global sustainability. Theories of organisational sustainability have their part to play in analysing these problems and the use of the alignment lens can open up many fruitful insights into understanding and addressing the fault lines and misalignments that characterise global sustainability issues.

#### *4.8 The spirituality lens combined with other integral lenses*

The spirituality lens, because of its multiparadigm nature, can be used to consider sustainability from a number of conceptual orientations. These include: i) spirituality as an advanced stage of sustainability; ii) spirituality as a ubiquitous process that underlies all sustainable relationships; iii) spirituality as an integrative rather than merely growth-focused endeavour; and iv) spiritual leadership as expressed through many of the lenses identified from the multiparadigm review of organisational transformation.

i) Spirituality as advanced stage: In his book entitled “Sustainability and Spirituality”, Carroll (2004) writes, “‘Sustainability’ is an all too common word describing a condition which these days seems to hardly exist”. The scientific literature on sustainability grows daily while, at the same time, the unsustainable belief systems practices that drive economic development seem to be, if anything, accelerating in their intensity. However, while many innovative theories and encouraging practical initiatives have been made, the pathway to that future is more elusive than ever. There is a growing uncertainty over whether humanity as a whole can achieve the level of transformation required (Sachs, 2006). Sustainability advocates and researchers are reassessing the feasibility of such radical and widespread transformational change. For such a transformation to take place, a fundamental reorientation of organisations and societies will need to occur at the global level (Lowe, 2007). The

reason why organisational sustainability and transformation are so closely associated is that nothing short of a dramatic reorganisation of organisational life is required for an authentic sustainability to be achieved. Radical transformation of this order comes to the very heart of our personal and collective understanding of core purpose and ultimate meaning. Evaluating these issues immediately brings in questions of spirituality. Consequently, some sustainability theorists emphasise the connection between spirituality and transforming towards sustainable societies.

In the previous chapter we considered different usages of the spirituality lens and these included spirituality as a post-conventional developmental stage, as a special aspect of every developmental stage (i.e. a specific stream of development), and as a temporary state or peak experience. These different applications can be expressed through many of the different lenses that have been identified in multiparadigm review. From the point of view of spirituality as a stage-based transformation, we can see that spirituality and deep transformation have much in common. Both are revolutionary in nature and anti-establishment in appearance in that they challenge the institutionalised behaviours and moral bases of the mainstream. Carroll goes so far as to say that, “Spirituality, deeply held spiritual beliefs, religion, religious faith, however we might define these things, are all necessary to achieve real sustainability” (2004, p. 166). This perspective looks to the leading edge of concepts of sustainable development. It looks to the most ambitious understandings of sustainability as a profound shift in individual and collective orders of being and doing. It is here that notions of “cosmocentric consciousness, or spiritual intelligence” become highly relevant (Dunphy, Griffith & Benn, 2003). A spiritual sustainability looks to a movement away from economies based on production and consumption and towards economies based on “reverence” (Tudge, 1995) and “integrity” (Elgin, 1994). The models for these types of transformational economies often come from communities with an explicit spiritual, and often religious, base (Carroll, 2004; Findhorn-Community, 2003). The spirituality lens here enables us to conceptualised, perceive and research forms of sustainability that are deeply spiritual in a developmental sense. Stages of individual and collective sustainability can, because of this way of thinking, be described using spiritual and contemplative vocabularies, metaphors and narratives.

ii) Spirituality as a ubiquitous process: While spirituality and sustainability can be associated with a revolutionary reorientation to our relationships with the natural and social worlds, there is also a more mundane but no less authentic application of the spirituality lens. This understanding of spirituality has to do with a relationally grounded sense of spirituality as an inherent aspect of *every* worker’s experience and of the dynamics of *every* organisational workplace (Chile & Simpson, 2004). This is an understanding of spirituality as process, as a way of energising and enthusing the life that contributes to human organising. Here spirituality is connected to relationality and to interpersonal process. Buber (1947) described this form of spirituality as arising from “the sphere of the between” and “the space between”. The idea here is one of ongoing opportunity for deepening dialogue and encounter with the other and that this opportunity continually arises out of “the space

between” people in the process of relating to one another. This dialogue occurs not only between people, but also between people and their natural environments. Encountering “the other” in this context also includes being with environments in both their pristine and degraded forms, in wilderness and in urban environments and in the harshness and splendour of nature and the ugliness and beauty of built environments.

In explaining sustainability through the lens of spirituality it is important to remember that different views of “the spiritual” can themselves be appropriated within organisations to merely reinforce established practices of control and conformity (Boyle & Healy, 2003). There exist many different forms of spirituality and many of these act to maintain and legitimate conventional organisational practices (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). These forms of spirituality offer anything but a transformational challenge to the unsustainable practices that organisations currently engage in. In fact, a process-based understanding of spirituality, while enlivening and providing inspiration for everyday work, can easily be co-opted to legitimate conformist organisational cultures and their associated systems of operating. This is particularly true when the transformational aspect of spirituality is not acknowledged or overtly included within theories of sustainability and spirituality. Transformation is inherently challenging. It involves a step into the unknown “where one wrestles with one’s own contradictions” (Inayatullah, 2005, p. 578). Without stage-based understandings of transformation, the spirituality of process can become a tool for merely reinforcing dominant modes of convention.

iii) Spirituality as integrative rather than growth-focused: To integrate means to make whole, to complete, to retain balance and to bring together what was previously fragmented. The word religion also means to reconnect and to unite things that were previously separate. Spirituality is sometimes regarded as a basic human instinct for wholeness and completion (Wilber, 2006). In this sense, the lens of spirituality brings together those fragmented theoretical and conceptual elements to form a more holistic understanding. The topic of sustainability is ripe territory for integrative and reunifying endeavours (Mudacumura, Mebratu & Haque, 2006; Singh, 1995). A spirituality lens that is more concerned with integration moves our attention away from the growth-based explanations of change and technological innovation towards integrative conceptualisations of sustainability. Hence the particular interest in agricultural sustainability, simpler lifestyles, developing a more spiritual connection with land and a more nature-based understanding of economy that is characteristic of spiritual approaches to sustainability (Carroll, 2004; Hawken, Lovins & Lovins, 1999). To use some concepts from Wilber, the lens of spirituality offers “descending”, earth-centred understandings of how sustainability is to be conceived and practiced in contrast to the “ascending” orientation of growth-based and technological perspectives.

Integrative theories of sustainability tend to employ the spirituality lens to uncover the feminine and nurturing aspects of development as opposed to the more masculine and growth-based sides

(Frenier, 1997). Such approaches are really calling for the development of an integrative future rather than a purely growth-based future. Where an integrative future seeks to develop and rediscover nature-based technologies and economies, and simpler lifestyles, a growth-based vision of the future looks to “solve” sustainability through the development of hyper-technologies and systems of knowledge that do not necessarily challenge the production-consumption cycles that currently drive economic growth.

iv) Spiritual leadership: Leadership-based theories of transformation are among the most common explanatory approaches. Leadership is a common theme among theorists who apply the spirituality lens. However, their analysis of leadership styles is very different to the mainstream approaches, which tend to focus on either top-down or bottom-up forms of leadership. The spirituality lens sees leadership as more aligned with theories of reciprocal leadership which integrate both executive and participative understandings. This inclusive approach can be generalised across many of the lenses identified in the multiparadigm review. For example, Edwards (2004) has considered the various spirituality-informed models of leadership from an integral perspective. He found that theorists who applied the spirituality lens did so across the following conceptual lenses: interior-exterior lens, transformation-translation lens, developmental and ecological holarchy lenses. Consequently, when viewed through the lens of spirituality, the leader (as an ideal) is seen as post-conventional consciousness-raiser *and* model for exemplary behaviour; seer of new worldviews *and* social revolutionary; servant leader and charismatic manager, participant in the micro-world of the individual and the macro-world of social forces.

Table 7.7 extends this application of the spirituality lens to each of the other conceptual lenses identified in the multiparadigm review and describes their relevance to the exemplar topic of organisational sustainability. For example, explanations of leadership in terms of the concept of spirituality can be expressed through the agency-communion lens. Here the leader is seen as both autonomous director/leader (agency) and relational communicator/follower (communion) who, in the context of sustainability, makes bold and visionary decisions that enable new forms of sustainable organising *as well as* identifies and communicates with and listens to organisational members as they participate in the transformative process.

#### 4.9 Summary

The foregoing sections in this chapter have presented: i) a detailed description of specific lenses as applied to the exemplar topic of organisational sustainability and ii) combinations of those lenses that form metatheoretical frameworks for investigating organisational sustainability. Table 7.8 presents each of the explanatory lenses and their unique contribution to explaining transformation within the context of sustainability. Some theorists (and their theories) who have utilised a particular lens for their sustainability research and/or theory building are also provided. For

Table 7.7 The multiparadigm lens of spirituality and forms of leadership for organisational sustainability

Integral Lenses		The forms of spiritual leadership "The leader as ..."	Relevance of for organisational sustainability leader ...	"The
Holarchical lenses	1. Developmental holarchy 2. Deep structure	post-conventional authority or figurehead	rejuvenates the organisation and leads it to post-conventional levels of organisational sustainability	
	3. Ecological holarchy	participant in the micro, meso and macro worlds	helps to transform individuals, groups, and the organisation towards higher stages of sustainability	
	4. Governance holarchy	leader-follower, servant leadership	is present at every organisational level and supports sustainability in all decision-making roles	
	5. Interior-exterior	consciousness-raiser & behavioural model	motivates interior transformation and behavioural transformation	
Bipolar lenses	6. Transform-translate	transformer to the new and translator of the old	encourages both transformative shift to new level of sustainability and maintains stable sense of identity	
	7. Internal-external	compassionate preacher to "unconverted" & inspiring prophet to the converted.	supports internal change and encourages inter-organisational networks that support initiatives for sustainable development	
Cyclical lenses	8. Agency-community	autonomous director & relational communicator	makes bold and visionary decisions as well as listening to the ideas and concerns of organisational members	
	9. Health-pathology (whole-fragmented)	exemplar for holistic excellence & participant in the fragmented nature of reality	promotes a healthy identification with new forms of sustainability but is also aware of conflicts and participates in negotiations and resolutions	
	10. System dynamics	agent for bringing order out of chaos	is a dynamic change agent within the chaotic system that transforms towards sustainable complexity	
	11. Learning	ultimate teacher, guide and educator	supports transformational and translations learning that supports sustainable organising at all levels	
Standpoint lenses	12. Transition Process	primary initiator & supporter of change process	initiates and supports the transition process particularly through the "dark night" phases of transformation	
	13. Inclusive emergence	inclusive of all levels of experience	ensures that formative modes of organising are integrated within each new stage of sustainability	
	14. Evolutionary	embodiment of evolutionary leader/follower	supports experimentation, selects promising initiatives, retains and reproduces innovations	
	15. Stakeholder	seeking to include all stakeholders	attempts to include all stakeholders in the journey towards sustainability	
Relational lenses	16. Personal perspective	able to take on multiple perspectives	is able to take the perspective of "the other" particularly those marginalised by change/no change	
	17. Postmodern	critic to those at the centre and advocate for those at the margins	is sensitive to the situation of the marginalised, to those without power or representation including both human and biological communities	
	18. States of consciousness	possessing transformed state of awareness	conscious of new potentials and orientations towards sustainable futures	
	19. Mediation	"go between", as carrier of transformation	mediates the process of transformation to sustainable organising	
Multi- morphic lenses	20. Alignment	peacemaker, high negotiator & facilitator	supports the alignment of the organisation with transformational values & behaviours from the community	
	21. Relational exchange	source of all relationships	provides for the exchanges which support the sustainable development of the organisation	
	22. Spirituality	sage, seer, prophet	acts as a source of wisdom & insight to the organisation and its members on the pathway to sustainability	
	23. Organisational streams	multidimensional change agent	can meet the multiple challenges that transformation towards sustainability demands	
	24. Types	archetype, e.g. hero-heroine, leader-servant	acts as an exemplar, model and archetype for other organisational members	

Table 7.8: Summary of integral lenses and their contribution to explanations of organisational sustainability

<b>Integral Lenses</b>		<b>Conceptual contribution to organisational sustainability</b>	<b>Representative theories &amp; theorists of sustainability</b>
Holarchical lenses	1. Developmental holarchy	the different deep structures and organisational archetypes that describe a spectrum of transformational stages for organisational sustainability	corporate sustainability (Dunphy, Griffiths & Benn, 2003)
	2. Deep structure		
	3. Ecological holarchy	sustainability is a multilevel phenomena that involves micro, meso and macrolevels	integrated web (Starik & Rands, 1995)
	4. Governance holarchy	sustainability is related to the form of governance and decision-making	multilevel governance (Bulkeley & Betsill, 2005)
Bipolar lenses	5. Interior-exterior	sustainability involves interior intentions/ meaning-and external systems/ behaviours	inner & outer worlds (Bradbury, 2003)
	6. Transformation-translation	sustainability involves transformative processes that encourage inclusive development and translational or incremental processes that encourage stability and continuity	pathways to sustainability (Dunphy et al. 2003)
	7. Internal-external	the sources of sustainability can be found inside and outside the organisational boundary	trans-organisation growth (Boje, 2002)
	8. Agency-communion	sustainability depend on both agentic autonomy and its communal relations	sustainability paradigms (van Marrewijk, 2003a)
Cyclical lenses	9. Health-pathology	all sustainability theories can be used to assess healthy and pathological forms of organising	sustainability and learning (Scott & Gough, 2003)
	10. System dynamics	sustainability is a system of feedbacks, equilibrium dynamics & chaordic systems.	collaborative change (Senge, et al. 2007)
	11. Learning	sustainability and learning are mutually co-creating and inherently part of all human systems	sustainability & learning (Scott & Gough, 2003)
	12. Transition Process	transitional pathways consist of many phases needing to be negotiated in the transformation process	corporate sustainability (Dunphy et al., 2003)
Standpoint lenses	13. Inclusive emergence	new stages of organisational sustainability include an integrate the capacities of former stages	corporate transformation: (van Marrewijk, 2003b)
	14. Evolutionary	transformation occurs via innovative variation, selection & reproduction throughout the organisation	evolutionary theories (Mulder & van den Bergh, 2001)
	15. Stakeholder	including multiple levels of stakeholder input provides a mechanism for transformational motivation	differentiating stakeholder theory (Kaler, 2003)
	16. Personal perspective	explaining sustainability requires understanding of multiple perspectives	general theory of sustainability (Mudacumura, 2002)
Relational lenses	17. Postmodern	"sustainability" is socially constructed and needs to include an analysis of power to be transforming	postmodern sustainability (Prakash, 1995)
	18. States of consciousness	there is a spectrum of sustainability related to levels of consciousness	integral sustainab. (Esbjörn-Hargens & Brown, 2005)
	19. Mediation	transformation to sustainability requires mediation of externals to internal processes and structures	mediation and social learning (Blackmore, 2007)
	20. Alignment	organisations need to align sustainability principles and practices with those of its community	corporate alignment (Cartwright & Craig, 2006)
Multimorphic lenses	21. Relational exchange	the compound nature of organisations means that they have many levels of exchange with their natural and social environments and each levels need to be sustainable	integral business model (Paulson, 2002)
	22. Spirituality	the spirituality lens considers the mystery of sustainability, its ultimate purpose and deep meaning	sustainability and spiritual renewal (Christie, 2002)
	23. Streams	sustainability is multidimensional and requires transformation in different domains of organising	CSR and management (Jonker & Witte, 2006)
	24. Types	organisational sustainability can be analysed in terms of typologies of leaders, teams, organisations, environments, systems, processes and other many other factors	For example - CSR typologies (Garriga & Melé, 2004)

example, the developmental holarchy lens (stage-based transformation), has been used by Dunphy, Griffith and Benn (2003) to develop a spectrum model of organisational sustainability. That model provides unique insights into explanations of the structural transformations required for individuals and organisations to shift from one paradigm of sustainability to another. A second example comes from the work of Starik and Rands (1995) who use a combination of the ecological holarchy lens, the interior-exterior lens and the systems dynamics lens to develop a “multilevel and multi-system framework” for “ecologically sustainable organisations”.

Any of the lenses shown in Table 7.8 can be combined to develop new metatheoretical frameworks. Such conceptual flexibility has been a feature of the metatheoretical discussions and propositions presented in this chapter. Each lens offers its own unique window into complex social phenomena and can be combined with others to develop many different metatheoretical frameworks. The relatively large number of lenses means that considerable theoretical fecundity is available to researchers who might wish to draw on these lenses and multi-lens frameworks for developing specific theories. However, this flexibility is also constrained by the need to retain the relationships within and between lenses that have been described in the previous chapter. For example, irrespective of what lenses are combined, they each still need to retain their defining characteristics – that holarchical lenses retain their definitive levels, bipolar lenses retain both poles, cyclical lenses their key phases, relational lenses their mediating focus, standpoint lenses their range of perspectives, systems lenses their key dynamics and multimorphic lenses their multidimensionality and multi-lens capacity. It is crucial that these defining characteristics are retained when lenses are combined.

Having described specific lenses and metatheoretical frameworks for the exemplar topic of organisational sustainability, the next section goes on to describe a general outline for an integral metatheory for organisational transformation.

## **5. An Integral Metatheory for Organisational Transformation**

Sustainable development is, by its very nature, a transformational endeavour and the detailed discussions above have shown how the various lenses, and their combinatorial frameworks, provide unique insights into the transformational process. In this final section, a generalisable form of the metatheory will be presented. This presentation will be informed by the work of management theorist John Mathews (1996) and his discussion of “holonic organisational architectures”.

### *5.1 Four orders of holonic relations*

The holarchical group of lenses performs a pivotal role in metatheorising, particularly when such research attempts to bring together so many different conceptual orientations to a topic. This



category of lenses performs a crucial function in developing non-reductive research frameworks. Using the holon construct as a type of scaffold for including other lenses offers a flexible and non-reductive system for developing conceptually rich theory in complex fields of social activity such as organisational transformation. For this reason, the integral metatheory for transformation will be presented within a holonic context. In an article entitled “Holonc Organisational Architectures”, Mathews (1996) provides a detailed analysis of the various descriptive levels at which a holonic analysis of change can be presented. Introducing his framework, Mathews points out that organisational holarchies and their constituent holons can be regarded as layered systems and subsystems of agents that possess their own identity and intelligence (1996, p.39).

The basic conceptual core of holonics systems is the holon, which is an autonomous, independent, intelligent operating unity that is both a system in itself, possibly containing subsystems that can also be characterised as holons, and at the same time a subsystem of a broader systemic entity – as described in such telling clarity by Koestler. The holon is endowed with its own identity, processing intelligence, and the capacity for self-activity and reflection.

Mathews proposes a model of “three faces” or “three orders of description” that can be applied to any holonic system. First, there is the order of description that pertains to the characteristics of a single, autonomous holon with its “own identity” and “self-activity”. This is the “intra-holonic order” of description and its domain is all those qualities that relate to single holons. Second, there is the order of description that refers to relationships between holons, that is, those relational, communicative and mediating processes and “subsystems” that arise when two holons engage in some shared event. This is the “inter-holonic order” of description. Third, when theorists focus on “holonic systems”, that is, on holarchical systems, they are considering a more general “systemic order” of analysis. Although Mathews’ approach stops at these three, a more comprehensive model might add a fourth order of analysis. This is the inter-systemic order which applies to relationships between holonic systems. The following is a detailed outline of these four orders of description.

## *5.2 The intra-holonic order*

In the intra-holonic order the focus is on the dimensional characteristics that pertain to the activity of a single holon<sup>12</sup>. What a theorist, model builder or researcher decides to represent intra-holonically (i.e., within that holon’s boundaries) is up to them. For present purposes, this amounts to describing the relationships between lenses as they pertain to one holon. Any number of relevant variables or qualities can be placed onto the holon. For example, the leadership theorist

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<sup>12</sup> Intra-holonic order does *not* mean within an individual. The prefix intra- can refer to any holon, be it an individual, a team, an organisation or a community.

Volckmann (2005) uses the holon for holding together multiple factors in his theory of executive leadership. He juxtaposes different dimensions relating to purpose, commitment, resources, competence, innovation, and entrepreneurial capacity and assesses how these dimensions play out within “the executive leader”. Working within the intra-holonic order of description, theorists can confer any number of defining qualities on the holons of interest. As the ecologists Allen and Starr put it, “What a holon shall contain is determined by the observer” (cited in Checkland, 1988, p. 237). The intra-holonic order of description allows theorists to move down into the details of how one holon will behave according to the particular lenses they employ in their analysis. A more complete analysis will, however, always involve the discussion of the inter-, systemic and inter-systemic orders.

### *5.3 The inter-holonic order*

At the inter-holonic order of description the point of focus is the interaction between holons, for example, the inter-personal, inter-group and inter-organisational relationships that create the social environment of organisational life. The inter-holonic order of analysis is interested in the mediational and communicative processes that flow between holons so that transformation is seen as arising from mutualising activities between holons rather than from the innate qualities that exist within the individual holon. Describing transformation from the inter-holonic order of interaction, communication and relationship is associated with the use of the governance holarchy lens. Governance and decision-making provide a context for describing interholonic relations through expressions of power, authority, influence and social relationships that inform organisational structures which are based on function, role, and formal position.

The classic example of a holarchy built on these types of relationships is the standard organisational chart that denotes the structural relations between various centres of management. Theories of transformation that employ some notion of organising hierarchy are sensitive to the mediating mechanisms and “messages” that form the fabric of communications between organisational members and which undergird the organising structures and process they create.

An example of this inter-holonic approach is seen in Taylor and Van Emery’s (2000) theory of “the emergent organisation”. In this approach communication is not about the transmission of “one person’s knowledge to others” rather it is a mutualising process that permits all parties “together to construct interactively the basis of knowledge” (2000, p. 3). And so communication creates the world of organising or rather, as the authors put it, “organisation emerges in communication”. From this perspective, organisational transformation comes about due to new forms of interactive meaning-making rather than from the development of some pre-existing structure located within the organisation or its members. The organisation and its process and structures are continually being renegotiated and recreated through the media of language and texts as situated in

interpersonal settings. From these negotiations, relationships of decision-making, control, power and authority are created and reshaped in various forms of organising hierarchies and heterarchies, i.e., forms of organising holarchies. This is why mediational (inter-holonic) forms of descriptive analysis are often employed in theories of transformation that come from a postmodernist or social constructionist perspective (see for example, Deetz, 1995). Such approaches analyse organisational change through language, communication and message transmission and are sensitive to the relationships that define organising holarchies through these means of social mediation.

#### 5.4 The systemic holonic order

The systemic order of description focuses on the relationship between holons and the holarchy or whole system in which they are embedded. This brings into focus conceptual lenses that deal with systems of relationships (which are more than the sum of their constituent intra- and inter-relationships). Questions concerning transformation move from the intra-level of single holons and inter-level of two holons to the systemic level of the holarchy and its relations with its constituent holons and/or the (holarchic) environment in which it operates. Examples of this order of description include Sarason's (1995) adaption of structuration theory to organisational transformation and Boje's (2002) inter-organisational application of holon theory to transorganisational development.

#### 5.5 The inter-systemic order

Mathews' model of first, second and third order characteristics of holonic systems can be amended with a fourth order of description. This is the inter-systemic order that moves beyond the relationships that exist within a holonic system, i.e. a holarchy, to also consider multiple systems of holons and holarchies in dynamic environments. At this order of description, holarchic systems can be represented as multi-lens frameworks that combine lenses from each of the holon categories described in Table 6.1.

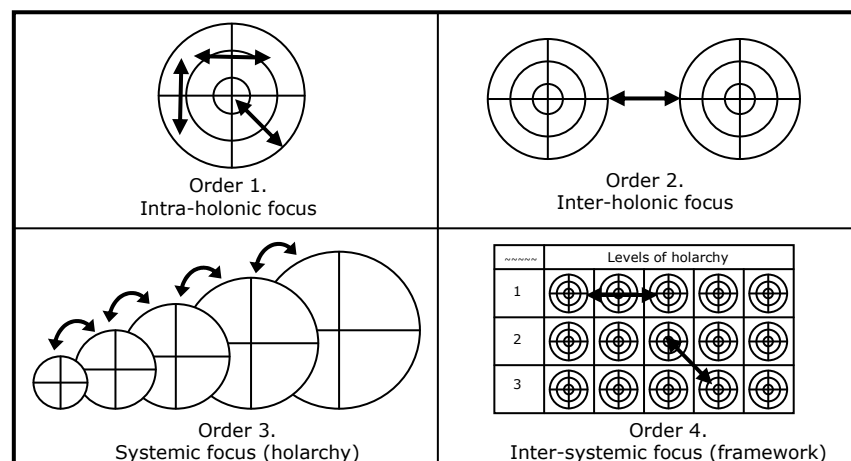


Figure 7.11: Four orders of holonic description

Figure 7.11 provides a graphical representation of Mathews' orders of holonic description (plus the newly propose fourth order of inter-systemic focus) using stylised holons. In each of these orders of application, the holon construct holds together concepts in non-reductive relationship. That is, it provides a window into conceptualising complexity without reducing that complexity either to some unfathomable whole or to some aggregate of parts. Mathews' model shows the flexibility of the holon construct for dealing with social events at multiple orders of complexity. As he notes, "The principal virtue of holonic systems lies in their flexibility and adaptability" (Matthews, 1996, p. 42) and it is also these qualities that provide holons with the capacity to marry lenses at very different orders of scope (simple and complex systems) and scales of focus (micro and macro levels).

Change theorists tend to emphasise one order of description to the exclusion of others. This results in a type of restricted explanatory range that supports the parochial nature of the debates often seen between proponents of different research paradigms (De Cock & Jeanes, 2006; Payne, 2000). Developmentalists, who typically focus their explanations of change at intra-holonic orders of description (e.g. on the unfolding structures of personal consciousness), find that the inter-holonic and systemic orders lack an understanding of the "interiors" and of the intrinsically human qualities of consciousness, intention, culture, meaning-making, emotion, and creativity. Such topics are characteristic areas of developmental research. Alternatively, postmodern theorists who emphasised the inter-holonic domain of communication, social mediation, language and "the text" see developmental explanations as either individualist or universalist. Consequently, postmodernists regard developmental approaches as inadequate for explaining the emergent properties of social interaction, the processual nature of organising and the impact of power in organisational relationships. Systems theorists, who are interested in system dynamics and structural patterns, neglect both the experiential and the inter-relational qualities of holons. Instead, they concentrate on system-level dynamics. All orders of description, and their associated paradigms of developmentalism, mediational and systems approaches, are in a position to benefit from a broader awareness of these different orders of description and their application in building theories of change.

### *5.6 An Integral Metatheory for Organisational Transformation*

Mathews' model of holonic orders of description (plus the newly proposed inter-systemic order) can be used to present a general summary of the integral metatheory for organisational transformation. This general model for transformation will be represented in a number of diagrams showing each of the 24 integral lenses and their relationships. The first two diagrams show the intra-holonic order where bipolar and cyclical lenses are commonly applied. The third diagram presents the inter-holonic order and the interactive and standpoint lenses that are often utilised at this level of description. The holonic category of lenses is usually described at the systemic order.

Finally, in a fourth diagram, combinations of holonic and other lenses can be created to build conceptual frameworks and typologies. This is the inter-systemic order of holonic description. A final figure will presents a number of lenses in combination to show the range of intra-holonic, inter-holonic, systemic (holarchic) and inter-systemic orders of description.

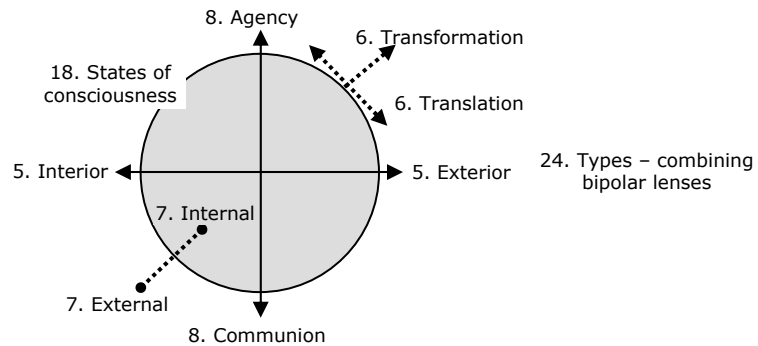


Figure 7.12: Bipolar lenses applied at an intra-holonic order

Figure 7.12 presents bipolar lenses as well as the states of consciousness lens for a single holon (individual or collective). The idea here is that any combination of these lenses can be used to develop metatheoretical frameworks for the study of this one holon at the intra-holonic level, i.e. within the context of that holon's specific qualities. For example, a researcher may be interested in the team-level dynamics (mesolevel of ecological holarchy lens) of transformational change (transformation-translation lens) and want to consider the impact of within-boundary and cross-boundary communications (internal and external lens) and how the team responds through its group culture and collective behaviour (interior-exterior lens). The types lens uses combinations of these bipolar lenses to develop categorical models and typologies. Consciousness is an interior quality of a holon and so the states of consciousness lens has been shown here because of its relevance to the intra-holonic order of description. Figure 7.12 also includes the types lens because of the tendency for type theories to be developed from the combination of two bipolar lenses, as, for example, the multiparadigm model of Burrell and Morgan (1979) and the grid typology of organisational cultures (Phillip & McKeown, 2004). The highly abstract presentation shown in Figure 7.12 (and Figures 7.13-7.16 following) can be regarded as a general template for the application of integral lenses to transformational issues such as those involved in sustainability.

Figure 7.13 presents the cyclical group of lenses within a holarchic framework. The figure shows the systems, transition process, evolutionary and learning cycle lenses applied to a particular holon, in this case an organisation<sup>13</sup>. An example here would be of a researcher investigating how hands-on, reflective and social learning (learning cycle lens) interact with the crisis, transformation, and integration phases of organisational change (transition process lens) to produce innovations that can be selected and reproduced throughout an organisation (evolutionary lens).

<sup>13</sup> While this example has applied cyclical lenses at the intra-holonic level they could also be demonstrated by showing their relevance to the inter-holonic level.

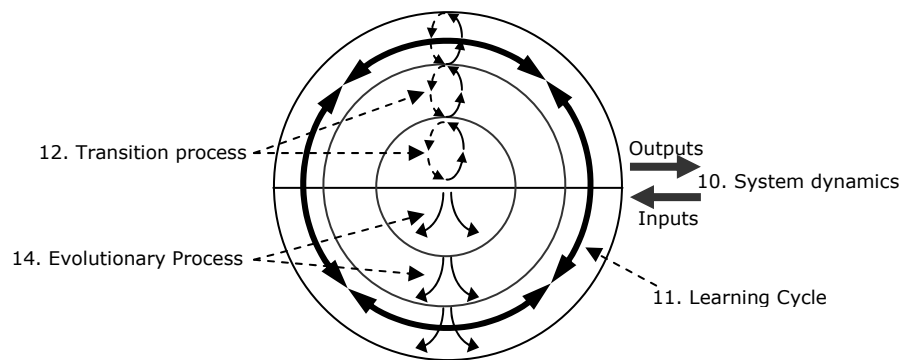


Figure 7.13: Cyclical lenses applied at an intra-holonic order of description

The relational category of lenses is usefully represented at the inter-holonic order of description. The inter-holonic order describes the relationships between lenses as they apply to holons encountering each other in situational contexts and environments. Figure 7.14 shows the interactive group of lenses applied to holons as they engage with each other in mediated relationship (social mediation lens) as they make exchanges at different holonic levels (exchange relations lens) and as they move in and out of alignment with each other (alignment lens). Relationships, interaction and connection are thematic characteristics of the spirituality lens and, although it has relevance to other orders, the inter-holonic order is an appropriate domain for placing conceptual approaches based on the spirituality lens. The postmodern lens is also relevant to inter-holonic relations in that the postmodern concerns with communication, relationality and power are all interactive in nature (see Figure 7.14).

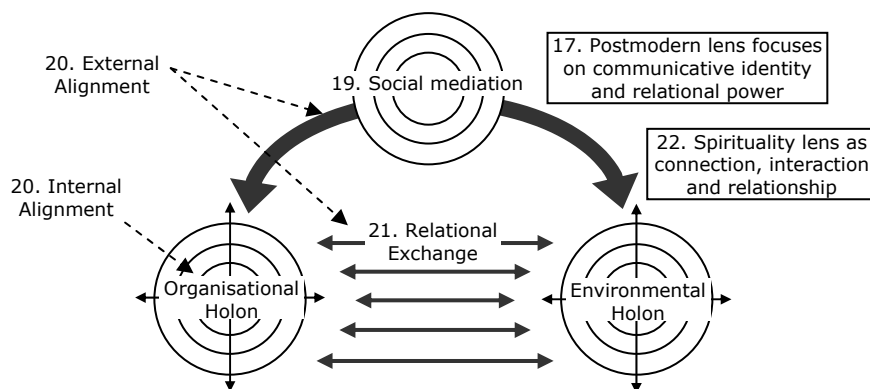


Figure 7.14: Interactive lenses applied at the inter-holonic order of description

Holarchies can be defined by developmental, ecological or regulatory criteria. The systemic order of description portrays holons in a holarchical context. In the case of the developmental holarchy, the deep structures of each holon are integrated in some way within the deep structures of successive holons. Figure 7.15 shows the three forms of holarchy found in theories of organisational transformation. Also represented here are the lenses of deep structure and inclusive emergence which, combined with the developmental lens, form a powerful set of lenses for investigating discontinuous change in organisations. This figure also depicts the stream lens within

a developmental context. Perhaps the most important capacity of the systemic order of description is that it is here that holarchies can be used as scaffolds for combining lenses. Holarchies, i.e. holons in systemic relationship, enable the investigation of organisational characteristics from both analytic and a holistic orientations. Because metatheory attempts to connect both particularistic and systemic approaches, it is this non-reductive capacity that makes the holarchical lenses so useful in metatheory building.

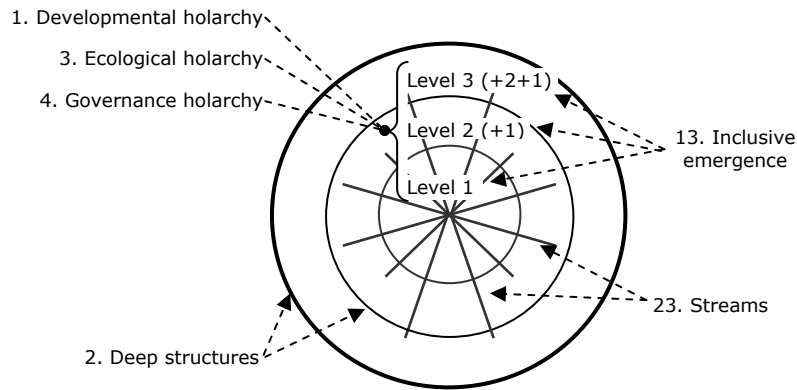


Figure 7.15: Holarchic lenses applied at the systemic order of description

At the inter-systemic order multiple systems of lenses can be represented and described. Figure 7.16 shows the relationships between stakeholders (seen through the lens of the ecological holarchy) and the perspectives lens.

15. Stakeholders (through ecological holarchy lens)	16. Perspectival Lens			9. Health
	1st Person Inquiry	2nd Person Inquiry	3rd Person Inquiry	
Ownership circle of stakeholders: The inner circle of owners, executive management, major shareholders	 Experiential study of primary stakeholders	 Relational study of primary stakeholders	 Objective study of primary stakeholders	Balanced/ Unbalanced
Business circle of stakeholders: The middle circle of small shareholders, employees, suppliers and customers	 Experiential study of staff, customers, etc.	 Relational study of staff, customers, etc.	 Objective study of staff, customers, etc.	Balanced/ Unbalanced
Community circle stakeholders: The outer circle of local and communities and environments	 Experiential study of community stakeholders	 Relational study of community stakeholders	 Objective study of community stakeholders	Balanced/ Unbalanced
Inter-generational circle of stakeholders: The global circle of present and future communities	 Experiential study of global stakeholders	 Relational study of global stakeholders	 Objective study of global stakeholders	Balanced/ Unbalanced

Figure 7.16: Standpoint lenses applied at the inter-systemic order of analysis

The framework describes how the personal perspectives of various stakeholder groups might be studied according to an ecological holarchy of individual owner/CEO, organisational stakeholders

(staff, customers, suppliers), community stakeholders (local communities), and global stakeholders (biosphere, next generations). Each level of stakeholder from the “inner circle” of owners and executive management to the community to the inter-generational and environmental circles has their own perspective on, and experience of, transformational endeavours like sustainable development. An inter-systematic inquiry into these perspectives is required for a comprehensive approach to transformation. Each cell in this inter-systemic framework can be regarded as a holon and so can be studied via intra-, inter- and systemic holonic orders of analysis. The full range of bipolar, cyclical, interactive and standpoint lenses can be subsequently brought into the picture depending on the research questions of interest. The health-pathology lens can be used to consider balanced and unbalanced forms of the contents of these cells.

The diagrams representing intra-, inter-, systemic and inter-systemic orders of holonic description are examples only and many of the integral lenses can be applied to several levels of analysis. The diagrams do, however, provide a general picture of the flexibility of the integral metatheory for transformation and some general indications for combining lenses within holonic contexts.

## **6. Summary**

In this chapter, sustainability has been used as an exemplar topic for describing an integral framework for organisational transformation. First, a rationale for choosing sustainability was presented. Following this, an outline was provided of the relevance of several important integral lenses to the exemplar topic of sustainability. A number of metatheoretical frameworks were then derived from combinations of these lenses and their implications for exploring theories of organisational sustainability were presented. Lastly, Mathews’ model of holonic orders of description was used to represent graphically all of the integral lenses and the relationships between them in general frameworks. In the next chapter, some of the implications of the metatheory for the study of organisational transformation will be considered. An evaluation will also be undertaken as a core part of the metatheory building process.



## Chapter 8: Conclusion - Implications and Evaluation

Metatheorising is in an enviable intellectual position to adjudicate between rival traditions' competing and theoretically pertinent discursive and empirical claims. By clarifying the analytical standards often implicit in intra- and inter-tradition disputes and devising more ecumenical and persuasive criteria of its own, metatheorising can establish a foundation for reasoned evaluations of work associated with a host of competing paradigms. (Colomy, 1991, p. 282-3)

### 1. Objectives

Having described an integral approach to organisational transformation, this final chapter will focus on three tasks: i) drawing out some of the implications of the metatheory for transformational studies, ii) evaluating the integral metatheory for organisational transformation, iii) evaluating the AQAL framework, and iv) outlining some areas for further research.

Rather than discussing a number of general implications of the metatheory, this concluding chapter will concentrate instead on one of the major uses of metatheorising – the adjudication of other theory (Colomy, 1991). Metatheory building has implications for the critique of extant theory (Whetten, 1989). Depending on its conceptual scope, metatheory can be used to compare and contrast the way highly abstract concepts are dealt with across many different theories and research paradigms. This adjudicative capacity will be discussed with reference to the integral lenses identified in this study.

The evaluation of the metatheory for organisational transformation will be based on established criteria for “good” theory building (Wacker, 1998; Whetten, 1989). Although these criteria were developed for evaluating middle-range theory (Merton, 1957), they are also relevant to metatheory building in that the steps involved in theory development are similar across different levels of conceptual abstraction (Meredith, 1993). As Wacker says: “a basic underpinning of all theory building is that theory is built on existing theory” (2004, p. 645). Consequently, evaluative criteria for the qualities of theory building will continue to have relevance at the metatheoretical level. What will change is the relative importance of these criteria. For example, criteria that are concerned with level of comprehensiveness and abstraction become critically important in metatheory building whereas parsimony is less crucial. Wacker's view is that too many explanatory concepts are better than too few (1998). In other words, comprehensiveness needs to be weighted more heavily than parsimony in metatheory building.

Particular attention will be paid to a critique of the AQAL framework. AQAL has acted as a metatheoretical resource for this study and it is appropriate that it be assessed in the light of

findings from the multiparadigm review and theory-building phases. For example, having derived a set of conceptual lenses from the multiparadigm review and analysed their various relationships, it is now possible to review AQAL in the number and scope of its core conceptual elements and their internal relationships.

Finally, a number of concluding remarks will be made regarding the limitations of this study and possible avenues for further research.

## 2. Implications - “Metatheorising for Adjudication”

As previously pointed out, metatheorising can be used to i) become familiar with multiple theoretical perspectives on a topic (multiparadigm review), ii) to develop new theory and iii) to build overarching metatheory (Ritzer, 1991a). This study has been concerned with the first and third of these aims – to become familiar with and analyse extant theory so that an overarching metatheory could be constructed. A fourth aim of developing metatheory is to critically assess the theoretical assumptions, conceptual scope and construct validity of other theory (Colomy, 1991). In the following section, the adjudicative implications of an integral metatheory for organisational transformation will be discussed.

### 2.1 *Evaluating theories of organisational transformation*

Ritzer (2001) has noted that many of the most important contributions to theory building in the social sciences have been based on the evaluation of other theories<sup>14</sup>. He sees metatheoretical frameworks as not only useful for developing insight into the range of theoretical perspectives within a field but also that “systematic metatheorising allows us to more adequately evaluate and critically analyse extant theories” (1991a, p. 302). As previously noted, Paul Colomy (1991) calls this form of metatheorising “M<sub>A</sub>”, or “metatheorising for adjudication”, to delineate it from Ritzer’s other forms of multiparadigm research. Colomy says that, “a primary task of metatheorising involves not only understanding extant theories but evaluating them” (1991, p. 281). Colomy describes M<sub>A</sub> as (1991, p. 269) “oriented towards devising and applying explicit, universalistic criteria to adjudicate the competing claims issued by rival social scientific traditions”.

As indicated in a previous chapter, it is precisely within this evaluative context that the health-pathology lens can be applied. An integral metatheory can take the shortcomings of particular theories into account and make diagnoses and adjudications based on such things as the lenses that they neglect or the conceptual partialities to which they might be prone. There are several forms of

<sup>14</sup> Ritzer refers to Karl Marx’s reappraisal of Hegel and Talcott Parsons’ metatheorising in his book “The Structure of Social Action” as preminent examples of this evaluative form of metatheorising.

partiality that integral metatheorising can draw attention to and these can be described according to the main groups of explanatory lenses found in this study (see Table 8.1).

Table 8.1: Healthy and pathological forms of conceptual lenses

<b>Lens Categories</b>	<b>Healthy Form</b>	<b>Pathological Form</b>	<b>Type of partiality</b>	<b>Examples of partiality</b>
<b>Holarchy</b>	full spectrum: all relevant levels of the holarchy are included	partial spectrum: only some holarchical levels are included	holarchical reduction	omission of post-conventional stages of development
<b>Bipolar</b>	balanced: both poles included	imbalanced: only one pole included	bipolar reduction	methodological individualism which assumes individuals create social reality
<b>Cyclical</b>	entire cycle: all phases of the cycle are included	incomplete cycle: only some phases of the cycle are included	process reduction	transformational cycle with “no pain”, i.e. omits chaos/grief phases
<b>Standpoint</b>	multiple standpoints: all major perspectives and standpoints included	select standpoints: only dominant perspectives included	viewpoint reduction	top-down management theories - all organising power comes from the top echelons
<b>Interactive</b>	mediated and unmediated interactions are included	only un/mediated interactions are included	nature-nurture reduction	developmentalism which assumes that transformation is unmediated i.e. results from interior change
<b>Multiparadigm</b>	multiparadigm system: multiple lenses in a relational system	disconnected pluralism: unrelated multiple lenses	system reduction	methodological pluralism which assumes no way of connecting multiple views

- Holarchy category: Partiality is commonly seen in the omission of certain levels of a holarchy. For the developmental holarchy lens it is usually post-conventional levels that are omitted; for the ecological holarchy it is the meso or group level; and for the organising or governance holarchy is often the “lower” levels which are assumed to not possess any organising potential. There can also be great variation in the number of levels described as Table 5.2 shows some theorists delineate only 3-4 levels while others describe 8-9 levels in some detail.
- Bipolar category: The most common form of reductionism here is to assume that social realities can be explained through only one pole of a particular lens. For example, that social phenomena can only be explained by individual agency *or* collective structure. Another prominent example is the dominance of the exterior (functional/behavioural) pole over the interior (interpretive/consciousness) pole in explanations of change.
- Cyclical category: In the cyclical group of lenses, some phases of the transition cycle or learning cycle can be neglected to result in a type of process reductionism. For example, in the transition cycle, some theories leave out the “dark night” phase of chaos, confusion and inactivity. The learning cycle can also be reduced to an incomplete number of phases as when the more abstract and conceptual phases of learning are emphasised to the detriment of the “hands-on”, behavioural phases.
- Standpoint category: These lenses emphasises the multi-perspective nature of social life. These “decentering” lenses take a critical standpoint towards dominant modes of explanation. The most common forms of pathology here are the neglect of marginalised perspectives that come from the periphery. Theorists often assume that a particular voice or perspective, often one that is politically, economically or managerially dominant, is the only significant voice in explanations of sustainable organising. For example, it has only recently been acknowledged that

unsustainable organisational and economic practices have impacted most heavily on the poor and on those without a political voice or democratic representation. Such perspectival partialities also make their presence felt in scientific communities where there can be an overemphasis on third-person perspectives and methods and a neglect of first-person subjective and second-person relational methods of research.

- **Relational category:** The interactive lenses provide explanations about change that involve reflexive exchanges between internal and external environments. Partiality here takes the form of relying on either unmediated (developmentalist) explanations or mediated explanations. Developmentalist approaches to organisational sustainability place causal emphasis on the interior structures of the organisation through, for example, seeing capacity to change purely in terms of the cultural values of organisational members. Mediational explanations are partial when they ignore the developmental level of the organisation and its members, and rely on such things as the impact of the prevailing socio-political climate to explain change.
- **Multiparadigm lenses:** Where multiparadigms sets of lenses are employed to develop “big picture” explanations it is essential that they not simply be presented either as completely comprehensive in themselves or as a bag of unrelated options. Metatheorising can become universalist when it stops relying on its data to critically examine the range, type and validity of the lenses it uses to build its metatheories. On the other hand, simply acknowledging the multiplicity of lenses without seeing the relationships and connections between them falls into a relativist position. This relativist approach to explanation lacks the capacity to not only discuss the boundaries and limitations of each form of explanation (or explanatory lens) but also identify their points of focus and strength.

To demonstrate these types of partiality, and the implications they can have on theory development, the following section will discuss some common types of reductionisms that occur for the holarchical and the bipolar groups of lenses. Once again, organisational sustainability will be used as an exemplary topic for this discussion.

## *2.2 Reductionist forms of holarchical lenses*

Although there is growing interest in the holon construct, holons and holarchic lenses are not identified as formal elements in the great majority of theories of organisational change. However, all theories of change and transformation will make assumptions about the multilevel nature of discontinuous change (developmental holarchy), organisational levels (ecological holarchy) and decision-making structure (governance holarchy). Many of these assumptions will involve very particular views of these qualities and restricted versions of the conceptual the lenses used by theorists to investigate them.

Partiality and imbalance are seen most commonly in holarchies where a curtailed range of levels is employed. For example, in the case of the developmental holarchy the full range of post-conventional levels of development are frequently not included. This results in explanations of sustainability that leave out the postconventional stages. Unfortunately, it is precisely these stages where deep purpose, profound meaning-making, moral transformation and post-rational forms of consciousness are involved. Most discussions of organisational sustainability, for instance, are concerned with conventional levels of development, with compliance, efficiency, technological innovation and commitment. The connections between justice, sustainability and post-conventional forms of spirituality are neglected and, even when acknowledged, are often regarded as peripheral concerns. However, more comprehensive conceptualisations of the developmental holarchy for organisational sustainability show that these post-conventional levels are an important feature that must be included in any comprehensive explanation.

The work of such writers as Thomas Berry (1999), John Carroll (2004) and Matthew Fox (2000) are evidence of the strong connections between post-conventional forms of individual and collective development and sustainability. One of the most thorough treatments of organisational sustainability from a developmental holarchy perspective is the corporate sustainability model of Dunphy, Griffiths and Benn (2003). Towards the end of their book the authors introduce the idea of “cosmocentric consciousness” which they regard as a quality of both the individual member as well as the organisation (2003, p. 272).

Cosmocentric consciousness, or spiritual intelligence, helps us connect to the emerging forms of the future. Without this kind of consciousness it is hard to find the future – with it, the future seems inescapable. The future is within us and around us. Its shape is already coalescing in our dreams, emerging from our play, emerging in the hasty decisions we make as we face overload at work. The future is forming here in our minds, already shaping the actions of their hands and moving our feet forwards. The world about us is also changing and we are connected with powerful forces that are already moving our world, and us, towards sustainability. The clues to a sustainable future are already there for us to find: in the next office, the factory up the street, the children’s project at home, our own imagination. The future is a living presence now if we are prepared to respond to it.

Dunphy and his colleagues propose that seeking this “cosmocentric consciousness” or “spiritual intelligence” is a necessary element for transformation towards the truly sustaining organisation. This does not deny that conventional theories of sustainability contribute significantly to our knowledge. However, without including the full range of developmental potentials, including postconventional levels that involve capacities such as cosmocentric consciousness or spiritual intelligence, our understandings will remain at best partial and incomplete, and at worst unbalanced and stunted.

As with the developmental holarchy, explanations of sustainability that involve the ecological holarchy often suffer from an undue abbreviation of levels. The most common form of this abbreviation is the simple micro-macro (or individual-collective) form of the ecological holarchy. Explanations that rely on this abbreviated bipolar model fall readily into reductionisms such as methodological individualism, which is the view that change is achieved through individual agency, and methodological collectivism, which is the view that sustainability can only be achieved through changes in social systems and collective structures. Strong forms of methodological individualism still dominate much of economic theory (Zwirn, 2007) and, by association, strongly influence functionalist approaches to organisational theory. A bias towards one or other of these poles can still be seen in contemporary theorising on organisational change (Cao, Clarke & Lehaney, 1999).

These biases have a significant impact on theories of sustainability. Where individuals are seen as the explanatory source of change there is a tendency to neglect the social forms of influence such as peer groups, cultural norms, social conventions, government regulation, and community values. Alternatively, where change is pursued purely through collective means, the part of the individual is undervalued. Such approaches can lead to a focus on legislative mechanisms and social coercion as seen in the policies of totalitarian governments. Approaches to change that come from the collective pole can also induce forms of unwilling compliance and passive resistance that, in the long-term, can actually be counter-productive for achieving sustainability objectives (Maxwell, 2007). Focusing purely on collective interventions also misses the role of individual consciousness and behaviour and the creative capacities of individuals to introduce innovation and novelty.

Both these reductionisms treat the ecological holarchy lens as a bipolar variable with individual agents at one end and collective wholes at the other. In fact, the “individual” and the “collective” occupy arbitrary levels on a social scale that consists, as we have seen, of multiple levels. One level that is systematically omitted is the mesolevel of the group. This group is likely to have particular significance in transforming towards a sustaining organisation. It has been argued here that it is at the group level that sustainability initiatives and experiments can be trialled and given life within a supportive meso-environment that is more flexible and open to change. While mesolevel studies of transformation for sustainability are becoming increasingly common (Bleichwitz, 2007; Brunetti, Petrell & Sawada, 2003; Welsh & Murray, 2003) there is still a significant gap in the theoretical literature on this topic.

The reduction of the multilevel holarchy of organisational ecologies into a simple micro-macro bipole also feeds into the neglect of multiple levels of social ecology that lie outside the organisation’s boundary. Consequently, only those levels that lie within the organisation are seen as relevant to the transformational process. Using multiple levels to conceptualise organisational structure, means that it is more likely theorists will include inter-organisational, sociocultural and

ecological levels in their explications. While these levels lie outside of formal organisational boundaries, they nonetheless play a major role in all aspects of the transformation equation (Boje, 2002).

Reductive forms of the governance holarchy lens also distort our understandings of how organisations can initiate transformation towards greater sustainability. One of the most common forms of these distortions is the assumption that organisations are organised from the top-down and that leadership flows from the upper echelons to lower. Distortions like this reinforce Taylorist forms of management evidenced in mass sackings, coercive labour management strategies, excessively controlling and abusive styles of management (Richardson, 1996). They also support views of change that attribute the chief responsibility and power for change to executive levels of management. Such understandings drive the phenomenon of CEO turnover where organisational renewal is equated with obtaining a new CEO who imposes top-down transformation (Billiger & Hallock, 2005). At the other end of this spectrum of governance distortions, there are bottom-up perspectives that equate transformation with the flattening of the governance structure. Theorists that look into delayering transformations reason that fewer layers of decision-making and managerial intervention will create more participative and responsive organisational forms (Egelhoff, 1999). While most of these delayering strategies are actually more centred on removing middle management layers for efficiency rather than transformational reasons, the move to flatter governance structures has its merits. Nevertheless, it is also true that “relayering” of the organisation often takes place (Littler et al., 2003) and that some form of hierarchy is a fundamental aspect of all social organising, decision-making and strategic action. This point is made by organisational behaviour theorist, Harold Leavitt (2005, p. 55),

Despite persistent (and perhaps, hopeful) rumors to the contrary, hierarchy is alive and well—and it’s not going away anytime soon. ... For better or for worse, the pyramid remains the dominant design of organizations in today’s world, just as it was in yesterday’s. To be sure, hierarchies have changed in important ways. Many have flattened, teamed, and otherwise modernized. And their inevitable authoritarianism has been veiled and perfumed to obscure its unattractiveness. Yet beneath the veils, almost all large human organizations are still top-down, authority-driven structures. Bosses are still piled on bosses. People lower down still report to those higher up. Those organizations are still loaded with control systems, performance evaluations, and a host of other constraints on their people’s behaviour. And large hierarchies are still plagued by a variety of human and productive flaws.

The organising holarchy is a dynamic and multileveled aspect of organisations that involves bottom-up, top-down and reciprocal dynamics (Chakravarthy & Gargiulo, 1998). To rely on any one of these to the exclusion of the other in explaining change necessarily results in a reductive and

unbalanced understanding of how organisations organise, how they possess and maintain autopoietic qualities, and how they can transform towards goals such as sustainability.

### 2.3 Bipolar group

The major form of partiality associated with bipolar lenses involves an overemphasis on one pole and the neglect, or even total omission, of the opposite pole. Taking the agency-communion lens as an example, the leadership and management literature places a major focus is on the agentic end of the spectrum. A relative dearth of theory has been developed for explaining the communal and relational aspects of leadership. This theorising focus on agency and autonomy is not only visible at the microlevel of individual action and decision-making but also applies to other organisational levels. Research into the goal-focused behaviour and strategic agency of the meso and macrolevels of group and organisational activity has also been the predominant concern. This is evident in the relatively small number of articles concerned with inter-organisational theory development, i.e. organisational communities. This point has been taken up by Gladwin, Kenelly and Krause (1995) in an article on the shift in conceptual paradigms that has occurred in sustainability studies. Under the heading “Agency to Communion”, the authors ask the questions (1995, p. 898):

Has the body of management theory inadvertently encouraged this diminishment of communion and enlargement of hyper-agency (i.e., excessive concern with autonomy and self-preservation)? Do theories emphasise organisational freedom over union, rights over responsibilities, independence over interdependence, and what works (efficiency) over what is worth pursuing? Have management theories, when implemented, pushed organisations into a pathological agency, where severance from communities (both human and ecological) sets forces in motion that eventually destroy the communities upon which organisations ultimately depend?

The polls of the agency-communion dimension are often associated with the gender dimension of male/masculine and female/feminine respectively. The predominance of male and masculine approaches to leadership, management and workplace theory and practice also supports this view. Sensitised to the theorising bias that comes from this partiality, one can see in organisational theory a concerted emphasis on the masculine and its agentic values, worldviews and forms of activity and a neglect of the feminine and the world of relationality and interdependence. Several authors have made a clear connection between this issue and the part organisational life has played in sustainable development. Gladwin and his colleagues once again ask a pertinent question here (1995, p. 898): “Are positive contributions to sustainability more likely to arise from organisations that are more female versus male in their value spheres?” In other words, how do we redress the balance between communal and agentic forms of organising and managing?



Agency and communion are essential aspects of organisational life and need to be specifically and overtly included in theory building research. Theories of organisational life that are systematically blind to concepts of communality, relationality, mutuality and interdependence will continue to produce inadequate explanations and reinforce understandings that lead to reductionist and research and unduly narrow pedagogical practices on a broad social scale (Ghoshal, 2005).

The interior-exterior lens is another bipolar dimension where shortcomings in theory can be usefully discussed in terms of lens reductionism. Bradbury's observation that sustainability is about both "inner and outer worlds" deals specifically with this issue. As far back as 1979 Burrell and Morgan noted that the large majority of theories in organisational studies focus on the objective aspect of social life and this, they pointed out, was reflected in the predominance of functionalist approaches to theorising. While interpretive theories play a greater role in organisational studies, the majority of theorists continue to rely on functionalist modes of explanation. This "exterior" approach to theorising is also present within the field of organisational sustainability where technological and systems-based research dominates "interior" approaches concerned with cultural and psychological realities. One result of this bias has been a lack of awareness about the role of values, consciousness and cultural awareness in driving unsustainable practices and systems. Gladwin and his colleagues ask an insightful question regarding this issue. Under the heading of "Exterior to Interior", they ask (1995, p. 898):

Sustainability, like human medicine, mixes both descriptive and normative or action-guiding content. Has our domain become devoid of ideas dangerous to greed, short-sightedness, indulgence, exploitation, apathy, narrowness, and other values inconsistent with sustainability (Orr, 1994)? In short, the study of sustainability must shift from objectivity to subjectivity, from exterior nuts and bolts to interior hearts and minds.

A theoretical partiality for the exteriors, which is evident in most conceptualisations of sustainability, is also reflected in our predilections for technological rather than psychological or ethical solutions to the problems caused by unsustainable practices. An integral approach embraces both behaviour and consciousness, culture and social structure as arenas for developing more sustainable forms of organising.

A final example of lens reduction in the bipolar group comes from the application of the transformation-translation lens. The defining poles of this dimension refer, on the one hand, to qualitative and discontinuous transformation and, on the other hand, to incremental and continuous translation. Focusing one-sidedly on either end of this dimension can result in the significant conceptual misunderstandings about the change process. For example, in not recognising the ongoing process of incremental change and continuous transaction, theorists, consultants and managers can rely too heavily on dramatic and radical restructuring. Karl Weick

(2000) has warned against a reliance on transformational approaches in solving the challenges facing contemporary organisations, particularly when such solutions come at the expense of supporting an emergent and evolutionary approach that appears through localised initiatives and everyday transactions. Translational change includes things like everyday decision-making, informal negotiations, interpersonal communications, and the coordination and facilitation of mundane activities. These are all crucial for the healthy maintenance of social cohesion and organisational productivity. However, translational change is not sufficient to meet the challenges of a transforming social environment. When the necessity for radical change is not recognised, an organisation can gradually become out of touch with the realities of its market, its customers, its social and ethical responsibilities and with the needs of its host communities.

An organisation that possesses the capacity to balance both transformational and translational requirements has been called an “ambidextrous organisation” (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2004). Such an organisation can respond to the need for both stability and for significant reorganisation and development. The transformation–translation dialectic can also be applied at the level of management. The transformational manager/leader knows when a paradigm shift in culture, structure, behaviour and consciousness is required to deal with a major challenge. The transactional manager/leader has the skills to facilitate the ongoing functions and human management issues that make up the majority of organisational life. Both sides of this dimension are needed in theory development and in the practical work of developing successful organisations which provide healthy and challenging working environments. Yet many researchers continue to develop theory about one side of this polarity and exclude the other to the detriment of a more inclusive understanding of transformation (see, for example, the debates between Theory E and Theory O supporters in Beer and Nohria, 2000).

The preceding section has concentrated on the adjudicative capacity of integral metatheory. As discussed, these capacities have important implications for the development of theory for organisational transformation. First, theories of change stand to gain from a greater awareness of the range of conceptual lenses that can be used in researching change. Second, the research application of lenses can be improved when non-reductive forms are used. Third, the discussion of reductionist forms of holarchic and bipolar lens categories shows that metatheorising has direct implications for applied research, public policy and organisational intervention in important areas such as organisational sustainability.

The foregoing has discussed the implications of the integral metatheory for adjudicating on the conceptual adequacy of some core lenses used in the study of organisational transformation and sustainability. The next section evaluates the metatheory using commonly applied criteria for assessing the contributions of (meta)theory building research.

### 3. An Evaluation of the Integral Metatheory for Organisational Transformation

Ritzer has made the point that metatheory needs to be evaluated by “standards indigenous to metatheorising” (1991, p.310). By this, he means that metatheory cannot be evaluated empirically or by theory-testing criteria. Ritzer suggests three criteria for assessing the quality of metatheorising projects and several of these have much in common with mainstream theory building criteria. Ritzer’s criteria are (1991, p. 312): i) Nesting: All metatheory should include the study of relationship between a theory and other paradigms or research orientations in which it is “embedded”; ii) Linkage: This is the study of those elements that connect one theory to another or distinguish one theory from another iii) Comparative character: This is the use of comparison across different theories and paradigms to identify “theoretical tools” that search “the theoretical landscape” and permit us to “see things that otherwise might remain hidden from us”. These criteria have much in common with the standard theory building criteria discussed previously (Wacker, 1998).

David Whetten (1989) has also proposed a number of factors for judging whether the results of a theory building endeavour constitute a significant theoretical contribution. Whetten offers these criteria for assessing “what is a legitimate, value-added contribution to theory development” (1989, p. 492). The criteria are: i) What factors have been added or subtracted to existing models? ii) How have the relationships between factors been altered? iii) Why is the proposed (meta)theory more credible than the alternatives? iv) Does the theory generalise across the many different situations that people participate in? These questions can also be answered empirically through theory testing but in theory building the evaluation focuses on the logical arguments involved in answering these four questions. As Whetten (1989, p. 491) notes: “During the theory development process, logic replaces data as the basis for evaluation”. All three sets of criteria, that is, those of Ritzer, Wacker and Whetten, will be used to evaluate the integral metatheory developed here.

#### 3.1 Nesting

Ritzer’s criterion of “nesting” is important because it ensures that metatheoretical propositions are grounded on theory and on the core assumptions that characterise different paradigms. For example, the method developed for this study grouped, or in Ritzer’s terms nested, theories according to their dominant explanatory themes for transformation. While many theories included themes that cut across paradigms, this nesting process at least insured that definitive paradigm perspectives were included in the development of conceptual lenses. The bracketing technique used to identify lenses within paradigm categories provided a methodological means for ensuring the nesting criterion was included in the study.

By “nesting” Ritzer is also referring to the historical relationship between one theory and another. Although some historical aspects of the development of theories of organisational transformation were described in Chapter 3, a chronological analysis of theories and themes of transformation was beyond the scope of this study. A metatheoretical investigation of how theories of transformation have developed over time could contribute significant detail to the conceptual analysis performed here (see, for example, the work of White, 1973).

### *3.2 Linkage*

Ritzer’s second criterion of “linkage” is closely related to that of nesting. Once the nestedness of theories has been considered, then the linkage between them can be explored. Linkage is the study of those conceptual elements which can be used to connect one theory to another or distinguish one theory from another. Weinstein and Weinstein (1991, p. 140) point out that, “Metatheory treats the multiplicity of theorizations as an opportunity for multiple operations of analysis and synthesis”. The integral lenses identified here can be regarded as the result of these “operations of analysis and synthesis”. The bridging technique, which was used to identify conceptual lenses from the relationships between paradigm categories, was one way that the “linkage” criterion was included in the study. For example, the ecological holarchy lens (micro, meso, macro, macro-macro relationships) was commonly employed by theories from a variety of paradigms but usually in a much reduced form. It is often the case that only one or, at most, two levels are included and, through analysing the “linkages” between these instances, a more complete form of the lens could be developed.

### *3.3 Comparative techniques*

Ritzer sees metatheorising as possessing and “inherently comparative character” (Ritzer, 1991, p. 312). The comparison, contrast and calibration of themes and models have been the most frequent forms of analysis carried out in this study. For example, the developmental holarchy (see Table 5.2) and transition process lenses (see Appendix C) were identified through comparative analyses of many theories. Comparisons such as these not only serve to identify conceptual lenses for understanding and explaining organisational transformation but they can also help to map out the detail of those lenses. For example, in the developmental holarchy lens, comparative analyses have helped to set the full range of transformational potentials that theorists have explored and, in the case of the transition process lens, comparative analyses have resulted in a more detailed description of the phases of transition. Ritzer notes that such comparisons have been a hallmark of metatheoretical studies. To this point metatheorists have relied on simple qualitative methods to perform these comparisons. The lack of application of more rigorous qualitative and quantitative methods to this comparative task has been a significant weakness in the research methodology of

conceptual metastudies<sup>15</sup>. Metatheorising stands to gain considerably from a more rigorous application of both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The forgoing criteria have been specifically proposed by Ritzer as essential aspects of metatheorising. The following criteria have been suggested as useful for judging the value of theory building and have been adapted here to consider the quality of metatheoretical studies.

### *3.4 Conservation in metatheorising*

Conservation refers to the idea of not replacing one theory with another unless “there is good reason to believe all other [extant] theories are lacking in some virtue” (Wacker, 1998, p. 365). This criteria is relevant to metatheorising is that metatheory building seeks to incorporate the strengths and correct the weaknesses of previous overarching frameworks. This is precisely what has been attempted here in building a meta-view of organisational transformation that has utilised the work of other metatheorists as resources in the metatheory construction task.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of integral metatheory is its application of the principle of non-exclusion. In practice this means that scientific theories are regarded as contributing unique insights and that the accumulation of knowledge is not a process of replacing one theory with another but of seeing how multiple theories each contribute to knowledge development. This is fundamentally a conservative position, one that is not focused on what is “lacking” and therefore to be replaced, but on what is contributed and needs to be conserved. The metatheory for organisational transformation proposed here has identified the core conceptual contributions of many theories of organisational change. Their insights have been conserved in the frameworks that can be derived from the metatheory. Displays of the conservative nature of metatheory building are a prominent feature of this current study as exemplified in the in the many tables and figures that situate theories in relationship (as seen also in the work of Burrell and Morgan, Ritzer, Lewis and other metatheorists).

When the conservative nature of metatheorising stops being flexible and creative, it may be possible that the situating of theories and lenses becomes a simple process of typing and categorisation. The AQAL framework may be particularly prone to this problem because of its fixed structure (in that it ways combines the same lenses). However, the approach presented here of combining different conceptual lenses is one of great flexibility and calls on the creative skills of the researcher. While categorisation and the generation of typologies is a worthwhile theoretical task (Doty & Glick, 1994), metatheory building has the potential for much wider application than that.

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<sup>15</sup> There has, of course, been extensive use of quantitative methods in research involving meta-analysis but this is not a methodology suitable for metatheory building.

### *3.5 Uniqueness of the integral metatheory*

The criterion of uniqueness looks at the level of distinctiveness that a conceptual framework possesses. Although it is not often recognised as such, metatheory building occupies a unique position within scientific research disciplines (Ritzer, 1991b). Most importantly, metatheorising builds knowledge at a level of deep abstraction and generalisability. This has its dangers, as the critical analyses of many postmodern thinkers have shown (for example, Lyotard, 1984). Integral metatheory building is distinctive in that it attempts to connect a plethora of very diverse and disparate theories that characterise contemporary social science research paradigms.

The current study has constructed overarching theoretical frameworks at a high level of abstraction while also retaining strong connection with the pool of individual theories that the metatheory draws on. One way that it has done this is through the development of a more detailed metatheory building method (see Chapter 4). This method has uncovered a rich source of “data” for metatheory development. The unique features of the metatheory for organisational transformation presented here include its wide range of conceptual lenses, its unique use of the holon construct as a means for bringing together different explanatory concepts and its capacity to be applied to complex issues like organisational sustainability.

The 24 integral lenses that form the basis of the metatheory were identified from a fine-grained analysis of themes within individual theories rather than the courser level of “paradigm lenses” that has been the conceptual level of previous metatheory building studies (Adriaanse, 2005; Jasperson et al., 2002; Lewis & Grimes, 1999; Saunders et al., 2003). The result of this more detailed method has been the identification of several metatheoretical lenses that have not been previously identified and used in large-scale theory building for organisational studies. These include the governance holarchy, learning, evolution, social mediation and alignment lenses. It is hoped that identifying and describing these explanatory orientations and describing the relationships they have with other lenses will contribute to the development of further middle-range theory.

### *3.6 Comprehensiveness of the integral metatheory*

Comprehensiveness is a fundamental criterion for judging the adequacy of metatheorising. The extent to which a theory or construct includes the range of relevant explanatory variables is a measure of its comprehensiveness (Whetten, 1989). The multiparadigm review phase of this study ensured that the major theoretical themes and orientations towards organisational transformation were identified and included in the theory-building phase. These themes were analysed and, through the multiparadigm techniques of bridging and bracketing, amalgamated into twenty-four different explanatory lenses. All the major elements of AQAL were identified among the lenses used by transformation theorists. Several other lenses that had not previously been identified in

AQAL or any metatheories of organisational change were also identified in the multiparadigm review and incorporated into the integral metatheory.

### *3.7 Parsimony and the integral metatheory*

While parsimony is a desirable aim in metatheory building, it is crucial that this type of research favour the inclusion of multiple concepts as these can always be dropped or integrated into other lenses if they are found to be redundant. Whetten addresses this when he says (1989, p. 490)

When authors begin to map out the conceptual landscape of a topic they should err in favour of including too many factors, recognising that overtime their ideas will be refined. It is generally easier to delete unnecessary or invalid elements then it is to justify additions.

It may be the case that several of the lenses included in the final set may be explained by combinations of some of the other lenses. For example, the stakeholder lens and the decentering lens have some common characteristics which may overlap and require further refinement. The same might also be said for the lenses in the relational group. It may be that the alignment claims can be explained by some combination of the mediation and relational exchange lenses. However, the integral metatheory for transformation benefits from the inclusion of these lenses as separate elements. Due to its inherent reflexivity (a feature of postmodern approaches), the decentering lens offers important general insights about the nature of (meta)theory building itself (Lewis & Kelemen, 2002), insights that the stakeholder lens does not deal with. Further metatheoretical research is required to answer these issues of parsimony more fully and, at this, stage there is more to be gained by retaining as many metatheoretical elements as possible.

### *3.8 Generalisability of the integral metatheory to other disciplines*

Generalisability is a hallmark of good metatheoretical frameworks. It refers to the scope or coverage of a theory and the applicability of findings to other areas of research. The more areas a theory can be usefully and validly applied, the better the metatheory. The literature review chapter provided evidence of the generalisability of the AQAL framework to a very broad range of research contexts. The explication of the metatheory through the exemplar topic of sustainability has shown that it can be gainfully applied to other fields of organisational research. Some of the ideas proposed in this study have already been applied to futures studies (Edwards, 2008), leadership (Küpers & Edwards, 2007) and organisational development (Cacioppe & Edwards, 2005b). However, the level of abstraction, that is definitive of metatheoretical frameworks such as one presented here, is very high and, as Wacker notes (1998, p. 366), “High abstraction level theories (general or grand theories) have an almost unlimited scope”. Consequently, it is likely that the conceptual lenses identified here will be applicable throughout many fields within organisational

studies and other social sciences. On this point, it is not coincidental that the metatheoretical frameworks of Burrell and Morgan (1979), Ritzer (2001), and Wilber (1995) are so similar. The same sense-making conceptual tools arise repeatedly and independently across many different fields of social research and so, following this observation, it is highly likely that the lenses identified here may all be highly relevant to fields beyond that of organisational transformation.

There are, however, some cautionary points on generalisability that need to be made about the application of integral lenses and integral frameworks to different cultural contexts. The integral metatheory for organisational transformation proposed in this study was based primarily the work of theorists working from North American, Europe, and Australia. Although a number of these theories were based on research from other continents and cultures (including one study based an indigenous Australian culture), all theoretical elements were derived from, what might generally be called, Western traditions of doing science. Being conscious of this limitation opens up the opportunity for inter-cultural forms of metatheorising that derive from non-Western and indigenous cultures. Such perspectives are likely to present unique explanatory lenses that can add valuable insights into transformational phenomena. In particular, the viewpoints of indigenous peoples may well have particular relevance to the topic of sustainability and to the social transformations required for achieving sustainability at a collective and community level.

Generalisability in metatheorising assumes that the patterns and systems that can be discerned in one paradigm or theory are also present in other paradigms and theories. Because metatheorising is dealing with such broad concepts and such higher levels of abstraction, there is a danger that patterns and concordances can be too easily read into the complex conceptual systems that it analyses. There is the possibility of invalid generalising across multiple fields of social theorising. In the present instance, this means that invalid conceptual connections are drawn between different theories of organisational transformation.

This issue is particularly relevant when patterns within theories that derive from the physical and natural sciences applied to human, social systems. In her review of punctuated equilibrium models of transformation Gersick calls for caution when,

... applying models from one research domain to another too freely or literally. Human systems, self-aware and goal-directed, have the capacity to 'schedule' their own opportunities for revolutionary change (as with time-triggered transitions), to solicit outside perspectives, and to manage their histories in ways that are inconceivable for unconscious systems. Much as theories from different domains have to offer each other, it would be a mistake to import constructs uncritically, rather than to use them to provoke questions about how they might apply in other settings. The punctuated equilibrium paradigms offers a new lens through which theorists can make fresh discoveries about how managers,



workgroups, organisations, and industries both develop over time and react to changes in their environments. (1991, p. 33)

The danger of developing invalid lenses that are not generalisable across the natural and social sciences is a particular problem when reviewing theories coming out of the systems and new sciences research paradigms. While theories from these paradigms continue to make important contributions to the study of organisational transformation, there needs to be a conservative approach to transferring their explanatory factors from the natural and system sciences across to a complex area of human activity like social transformation.

### *3.9 Level of abstraction in the integral metatheory*

High abstraction is regarded as a virtuous quality of metatheoretical systems. The abstraction level of a construct is its independence from situational and temporal particulars. When a theoretical system has a high abstraction level it has the capacity to “integrate many relationship and variables into a larger theory” (Wacker, 1998, p. 365). Metatheories are intended to do precisely this and so it is vital that overarching approaches should possess a considerable abstractness. One way of demonstrating this capacity is to show how a metatheory accommodates conceptual elements from many other theories. This inclusivity was demonstrated in the application of the integral metatheory to the exemplar topic of sustainability.

Abstractness is a definitive quality of the holon construct. It is the holon’s capacity to be independent of situational/holistic and temporal/analytical explanations, which enables it to provide non-reductive explanations of social happenings. Abstractness can also be a barrier to understanding and applying metatheoretical concepts. Unless the practical implications and applied utility of a conceptual framework can be appreciated, it will not gain acceptance. Perceptions of metatheorising as too abstract and removed from the actual occasions of social life have been an ongoing barrier to the recognition of metatheorising as an important form of social research (Ritzer 2001). This problem is particularly relevant to the present study which has chosen the complex and many-sided issue of organisational transformation as its domain for integrating a large number of abstract change-related concepts into an overarching framework. Of all Ritzer’s forms of metatheorising, the overarching variety,  $M_O$ , is the most abstract in that it attempts, not only to review the multiplicity of theories but also, to integrate them in some systematic fashion. These considerations compound further the difficulties posed by the level of abstractness associated with this form of research. However, Wilber’s work in particular has shown that such metatheorising is possible and that it can result in useful outcomes that have practical use. The application of AQAL to such diverse and down-to-earth issues as combating AIDS/HIV (Brown, 2006), waste reduction (Owens, 2005) and nursing practice (Endo, 2004) is testament to the practical value of AQAL in particular and of metatheorising research in general.

### *3.10 Metatheoretical fecundity of the integral metatheory*

Fecundity, when applied to metatheorising, is the capacity of overarching metatheorising, Mo, to generate new understandings, explanations, models, metatheories and theories. One of the objectives in applying the integral metatheory for organisational transformation to the exemplar topic of sustainability was to demonstrate this virtue of fecundity. The large number of lenses integrated within this framework means that it has a potential for explanatory richness and for generating new insights into organisational issues. The downside to this richness is that the flood of possibilities can overwhelm a concentrated approach to a particular topic. This brings up the question of lens selection and the rational justification for deciding which lenses to include in an analysis and which to leave out. If each of these lenses is actually a core explanatory factor for any organisational phenomenon involving radical change, then the process of selection becomes problematic. The flexibility of integral metatheorising in combining lenses compounds this issue. Two criteria are proposed here to address this dilemma.

One criterion for viewing this issue is that of theoretical relevance. For example, in defining transformation as a qualitative shift in a social entity's deep structure, the lens of stage-based development is immediately identified as an essential explanatory element. If the issue of stability or resistance to change was the topic to be explored, then other lenses would come into consideration. A second criterion for dealing with the rich number of research possibilities that metatheorising presents is the prioritising of lenses. For example, in AQAL's lenses of quadrants, levels, lines, states, and types it is the levels and quadrants lenses that are most frequently used. The same approach might be taken in prioritising the large number of integral lenses proposed here. The problem with this prioritising method however, is that it reduces the creative flexibility of the metatheory and restricts its potential for exploring unusual meta-perspectives.

### *3.11 Internal consistency of the metatheory*

The virtue of internal consistency is particularly crucial for assessing the quality of a theoretical system. It refers to consistency in the definition of concepts and description of relationships between the constructs of a theory. For the present study, the most important definitional tasks were to define clearly each of the explanatory lenses such that they are understood and seen as non-overlapping and unambiguously independent from each other. Definitions are a major area of contention within metatheorising. Because of the abstract nature of the concepts involved and their extensive scope of reference, it can be difficult to see where one concept ends and another begins or how they relate to each other. An example of this is the interior-exterior lens.

The interior pole of the interior-exterior lens has been defined to include individual consciousness and collective culture. The exterior pole includes both individual behaviour and collective

structure. Subsuming such vague and notoriously difficult to define concepts such as “structure” and “culture” within other, even broader, concepts exemplifies the difficulty faced by metatheorists working at this level of abstraction. While these concerns are valid, they should not be used as arguments against attempting to define such high-level and abstracted concepts in the first place.

These issues make it even more important for metatheorising to follow the basic requirements for good definitional practice. The necessity for clear definitions and conceptual independence is crucial when abstract constructs are brought together to form frameworks such as the one proposed here for organisational transformation. The greater the conceptual redundancy between lenses, the less internal consistency is possessed by the resulting framework. The reduction of conceptual redundancy between lenses was one of the main tasks performed in the chapter dealing with the relationships between lenses. That these lenses were combined to form an integral framework that could be meaningfully applied to the topic of organisational sustainability suggests that there is a significant level of logical consistency in both the definitions and relationships described between these explanatory factors.

### *3.12 Has the metatheory identified new factors?*

Whetten suggests that one way to contribute to theory building is to bring together disparate or previously unassociated explanatory factors to increase a theory’s conceptual scope (1989, p. 493).

Theoretical insights come from demonstrating how the addition of a new variable significantly alters our understanding of the phenomena by reorganising our causal maps.

The same can be said of metatheory. Accordingly, it can be asked, has the integral metatheory introduced new variables (lenses) and new combinations of variables for the analysis of transformational theories? In this study, numerous factors, identified from the multiparadigm review phase of the research, have been brought together for the first time into one conceptual system. For example, it has been shown here that the organisational ecology lens, the interior-exterior and internal-external lenses can be combined to construct a framework for investigating subjective and objective aspects of multiple levels of organisational sustainability. Most theories of transformation adopt one central lens and develop their explanations based on the distinctions that flow from its application. Even where more integrative attempts are made, only a few of the more important lenses, for example, the developmental and the interior-exterior lenses, are included. For example, Sarason’s (1995) integrative model of organisational transformation includes only the micro-macro and systems dynamics lenses. The exception to this is the developmental action inquiry model of Torbert and his colleagues (Fisher, Rooke & Torbert, 2003; Torbert, 2004). Their approach brings together a number of lenses including the developmental, ecological and

governance holarchies, interior-exterior, mediation, learning, perspectives, and transition process lenses.

In the integral metatheory proposed here 24 lenses are identified for investigating theories of organisational change and they can be flexibly combined to create many different exploratory frameworks. One particularly underutilised lens is that of social mediation. The inclusion of this lens within an integral approach to organisational transformation adds significantly to its capacity for critically analysing theory and the application of theory to such areas as public policy and social change. Such a capacity is crucial for understanding many of the barriers that impede transformational change and, in particular, the movement towards organisational sustainability. When new explanatory factors such as the social mediation lens are used in conjunction with other lenses identified here, powerful conceptual models become available for application to transformational phenomena.

With so many factors at work in integral metatheorising, there can be problems in assessing the conceptual independence and/or redundancy of its constituent lenses. It may be that several of the lenses described here might be reduced to combinations of other lenses. This has implications for further metatheoretical research. Where metatheorising of this kind is carried out in other fields, there is the opportunity for the meta-analysis of the results of these studies so that the further refinement and either expansion or reduction of lenses can be supported. This metatheory building project is feasible given that all of the lenses commonly utilised in AQAL were also found to be present, in some form, in the multiparadigm review of extant theories of transformation. This finding supports the possibility of the comparative analysis of overarching theory building studies.

### *3.13 Relationships between factors*

Whetten (1989) has stated that, “Relationships, not lists [of factors], are the domain of theory”. The integral metatheory for organisational transformation proposed here not only identifies numerous explanatory lenses but also analyses, describes and depicts their relationships to each other. For example, it was described at length how the various lenses can be categorised within certain groups and the relationships between these lens groupings were described so that they could be brought together into a coherent meta-system. Reductionist forms of these lenses were also described. For example, one common reductionism of the developmental holarchy lens omits the higher stages of post-conventional stages of development, thereby restricting the transformational potential of individuals and collectives. It was also argued that reduced versions of the developmental holarchy lens can be mistakenly aligned with valid bipolar lenses to result in pathological models of “ping-pong” transformation.

As discussed in the foregoing section on implications, the study of reduced forms of conceptual lenses is a particularly important function that metatheorising plays (and might play in the future) in the development of organisational theory. There is potential here for further research on how reduced forms of conceptual lenses can distort theory and subsequently impact on more applied analysis, research and interventions.

### *3.14 The credibility of the proposed metatheory*

The credibility a metatheoretical contribution is concerned with the “logic underlying the model” and with “the underlying psychological, economic, or social dynamics that justify the selection of factors and the proposed causal relationships” (Whetten, 1989, p. 491). The underlying assumptions of an integral metatheorising have been described by Wilber in his proposition of an Integral Methodological Pluralism (see Chapter 3). These are nonexclusion, en/unfoldment, and enactment. This principle of “nonexclusion” assumes that all relevant, well articulated and rigorously researched theory will have valid insights that can be included within some overarching framework. This is a positive and inclusive form of scholarship that recognises the plurality of theoretical perspectives of social realities. The impact of this assumption can be seen in the large number of explanatory lenses identified in this study.

En/unfoldment assumes that knowledge unfolds through history and through all cultures and that, to some extent, that emergence is reflected in the development of scientific knowledge. This assumption is seen here in that theories from the past three decades of transformation research have all been represented in the final formulation of an integral metatheory. The third assumption, enactment, assumes that each ontological domain will have its own associated epistemology and methodology. In other words, the “data” of a particular social reality can only be uncovered when an adequate system of knowing and relevant method of practice are in place. This assumption means that the absence of a particular lens will result in a limited encounter with the practical realities of a situation. For example, if a theory focuses purely on internal dynamics and does not include external factors such market forces, inter-organisational networks and community attitudes it will never uncover all the facts needed to develop holistic explanations of change.

The metatheory proposed here draws on these three assumptions while other integrative approaches to transformational change have not. Taking the nonexclusion principle as an example, no other approach to organisational transformation has taken a consistently inclusive stand on incorporating multiple perspectives of change. The multiparadigm framework of Burrell and Morgan included only two explanatory dimensions of lenses – radical-regulatory change and subjective-objective orientation. While this framework has spurred much theoretical discussion and some research, it has not been further developed as a viable metatheory. The underlying lack of a pluralistic assumption and consequential inability to accommodate further lenses may have played

some part in its demise. The integral framework proposed here meets this post-modern challenge of accounting for the plurality perspectives and thereby has the potential for continued growth and ongoing accommodation of new, valid theoretical viewpoints.

### 3.16 Summary

In summary, the evaluative criteria for theory building discussed here suggest that an integral framework of organisational transformation has much to offer the field of organisation studies. Although there are inherent difficulties with overarching theory building of the kind performed here, as, of course, there are for all scientific research, there is considerable potential for generating new insights into the development of organisational theory in such areas as sustainable development. The findings of the study also have broader implications for metatheoretical research and for the balanced, non-reductive treatment of highly abstract concepts within middle-range organisational theory. There are also implications for the further development and refinement of AQAL and of integral metatheorising as a whole. These implications will be discussed in the following section that offers a brief critique of AQAL and offers some recommendations for its revision.

## 4. A Metatheoretical Critique of the AQAL Framework

But I should say that I hold this integral critical theory very lightly. Part of the difficulty is that, at this early stage, all of our attempts at a more integral theory are very preliminary and sketchy. It will take decades of work among hundreds of scholars to truly flesh out an integral theory with any sort of compelling veracity. Until that time, what I try to offer are suggestions for making our existing theories and practices just a little more integral than they are now. (Wilber, 2003f, para. 59)

Metatheory building is an inherently recursive process. It relies on the iterative refinement of its propositions and frameworks through critical analysis and self-reflection. Lynham (2002) states that a theory is always “a theory in progress” is also true of metatheory. Consequently, there is the need for an “ongoing refinement and development” in the theoretical frameworks that provide the conceptual basis for any field of social science (Dubin, 1978). Ongoing reassessment of a theory’s “trustworthiness and substantive quality” (Lynham, 2002) is central to the development of knowledge. This does not only refer to theory testing through the gathering of empirical evidence but also to metatheory building and conceptual research (Meredith, 1993). Conceptual development of a theory ensures that it is kept “current and relevant and that it continues to work and have utility in the practical world” (Lynham, 2002, p. 234). The subsequent critique of AQAL is a step in this process of refinement and development.

One of the objectives of this study has been to offer a critical revision of AQAL in the light of the results from the multiparadigm review. AQAL has acted as an important metatheoretical resource for the development of an integral metatheory for organisational transformation. In the course of performing this role, it has become clear that there are several discrepancies between the list of lenses identified through the multiparadigm review and those described in AQAL. There are other differences also worthy of consideration. In particular, the relationships between the lenses identified in the study and those which function within AQAL differ in substantive ways. The issue of flexibility in combining lenses is another marked difference between AQAL and the integral metatheory proposed here. At a more general level, AQAL also suffers from a lack in the clear identification of its definitive elements. The following looks at each of these points in detail.

#### *4.1 Definitional clarity*

The complete set of conceptual elements that constitute AQAL has still not been fully described and defined. In introducing the framework in Chapter 3, it was proposed that several conceptual elements frequently used in AQAL analyses are not formally included within the five categories of quadrants, levels, lines, states and types. One of the most important tasks in (meta)theory building is to clearly describe and define the core elements. AQAL still seems to be wanting in this regard.

For example, one of the most commonly used lenses in AQAL – first, second and third person perspectives – is not defined as one of its core elements. Wilber (2006, p. 58) has recently stated that his most recent version of AQAL “replaces *perceptions* with *perspectives*, and thus redefines the manifest realm as the realm of perspectives” (emphasis in the original). But perspectives have still not been added to the five core AQAL elements. By not formally including lenses such as perspectives, the relationships between other lenses in the model suffer from a lack of internal consistency. For example, it is not clear whether the relationship between quadrants and perspectives is one of strong association, where certain quadrants are associated with certain perspectives, or independence, where perspectives and quadrants are seen as separate lenses (Edwards & Volckmann, 2007). Improving descriptions of the defining elements of AQAL would help in clarifying issues such as these.

#### *4.2 Discrepancies between AQAL and the integral metatheory*

The number of conceptual lenses derived from multiparadigm review was considerably larger than that which is typically included within AQAL. This is surprising given that the multiparadigm review performed here only surveyed theories from the field of organisational transformation while AQAL purportedly covers a much wider territory. There could be several explanations for this discrepancy between the numbers of lenses. The first is that AQAL is missing some important conceptual viewpoints that should be incorporated into its basic framework. If there are important

lenses are not included, then a revision of AQAL to include these lenses is called for. A second reason could be that the additional lenses identified in this study might not actually provide further explanatory viewpoints and, consequently, could be subsumed within existing AQAL components. A third reason could be that AQAL has not yet been adequately described in that it does not fully account for all of the explanatory lenses it currently uses. This comes back to the issue of definitional clarity previously raised.

Taking this third point first, the following goes through each of the AQAL elements to find where the discrepancies lie. In Chapter 3 it was noted that AQAL can be described as consisting of six explanatory lenses: the interior–exterior and individual–collective lenses which form the quadrants, the stage-based developmental holarchy lens, the multimodal streams lens, the states of consciousness lens, and the types lens. All six of these lenses were found among the conceptual lenses used by organisational theorists in their explanations of transformative change. The multiparadigm review found the interior-exterior, individual-collective, and developmental lenses to be three of the most common theoretical orientations used in explaining transformation. While the lens of multimodal development (organisational streams) is not frequently taken up as an overt approach to explaining transformation, many theories were found to assume that radical change was multimodal in nature and several multiparadigm accounts were critical of approaches that focused too narrowly on one or small number of areas of transformation (Lemak, et al, 2004). Perhaps the most common example of this one-dimensional limitation occurs in information technology approaches where the mere adoption of “cutting-edge” technological systems is expected to result in organisation-wide transformation. Wilber refers to this narrowing of explanatory focus onto only one aspect of a complex social phenomenon “line absolutism” (2003a).<sup>16</sup>

States-of-consciousness approaches to explaining transformation are represented in theories coming from the developmental and spirituality paradigm. These theories utilise the states-of-consciousness lens to explain the phenomenological dimension of how people experience their work and how transformations in those states can be associated with, for example, excellence in behavioural performance. Theories which utilise the spirituality lens also emphasise the phenomenal state of mind of organisational members.

The types lens was found in a number of paradigm groupings including culture, functionalist and environmental. A diverse range of types-based models of organisational transformation have been proposed and they include typologies based on a profit/not-for-profit spectrum (Acar et al., 2001), espoused organisational values (Kabanoff & Daly, 2002), cultural diversity (Philip & McKeown,

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<sup>16</sup> And indeed this reductionist idea of relying on only one type of conceptual lens to explain complexity can take other forms depending on which lens is seen as primary. Hence, we might talk not only of line absolutism but also of level, quadrant, state, and type absolutism. This process might also be extended to include the additional lenses identified in this study.



2004; Richard, 1999), organisational structure (Mintzberg, 1979) forms of management (Blom & Melin, 2003) and a typology of change pathways (Greenwood & Hinings, 1988). Even from this brief list, it is evident that the types lens covers a very diverse range of explanatory approaches to organisational change phenomena. This diversity is not surprising given that there is no consensus among organisational theorists on what constitutes the “basic dimensions for organisations, or how organizations can be classified” (Grendstad & Strand, 1999, p. 389). The types lens might be best regarded as a catch-all category that is based on the typologies derived from the combination of other lenses. For example, Burrell and Morgan’s types of organisational paradigms, that is, functionalist, interpretivist, radical structuralist and radical humanist - were derived from the combination of their subjective-objective and radical-regulatory change lenses. In this sense, the types lens might be best regarded as a derivative of other lenses.

Apart from these six explicitly identified elements of AQAL, there are others that are not formally described by Wilber as part of the AQAL framework. These informal lenses include perspectives, agency-communion, growth-integration, transformation-translation, relational exchange, transition process and internal-external. It is unclear why these concepts are not explicitly included in some way as part of a formal statement of AQAL. It is certainly not because these additional elements play a minor role in the application of integral metatheory. For example, personal perspectives and the agency-communion lens have been among the most commonly used concepts running through integral analyses and explanations over the past ten years. It may be that these additional lenses are mere corollaries that derive their explanatory power from the more fundamental components of quadrants, levels, lines, states and types. The developmental levels lens might be seen as including in some way the growth-integration and transition process lenses. However, the multiparadigm review does not support this understanding of the relationship between these lenses. To give but one instance, many change theorists conceptualise transformational issues through the use of the transitional process lens without any reference to discontinuous change or to stage-based development. Theorists from the developmental schools, on the other hand, describe transformation as whole-system change from one level of organisation to a radically new form of operation without any reference to transitional phases. If two lenses can be used independently by separate research paradigms to explain the same event, then both should be recognised as stand-alone lenses that are each worthy of formal inclusion within a larger meta-theoretical framework.

The reason for the formal inclusion of only a small set of lenses in the AQAL framework may have a more straightforward basis. As explained earlier, the inclusion of each additional lens complexifies the framework considerably. It may well be that Wilber has kept the number of elements in his AQAL framework to a minimum for reasons of parsimony and simplicity. However, the important aim of developing a parsimonious set of lenses should not be confused with the task of formally defining all of the major conceptual components of a metatheory. AQAL still has work to do in this regard in that it formally includes some lenses while informally using

several more. Theory building principles require a level of definitional clarity that AQAL has yet to meet.

Returning to the issue of discrepancy in lenses between AQAL and the integral metatheory proposed here, all of the informal elements of AQAL listed above were found in the lenses used by organisational theorists in their explanations of transformation. Lenses such as perspectives and agency-communion were used by postmodern theorists in their investigation of the individual and the feminine experience of radical change. The transition process lens was perhaps the most common of all theoretical orientations taken towards explaining transformation and the internal-external lens was a common explanatory approach of theorists from the environmental and ecological paradigms. From this comparison, the discrepancies between AQAL lenses and those of the integral metatheory for organisational transformation can now be identified.

Table 8.2: Comparison of AQAL and organisational transformation lenses

<p><b>Conceptual lenses formally included in the AQAL framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>interior-exterior (one of the two quadrant dimensions)</li> <li>individual-collective (also called micro-macro dimension) (one of the two quadrant dimension)</li> <li>developmental levels (the basic structures/stages/waves/orders of transformation)</li> <li>developmental lines (multimodality, includes individual and collective streams)</li> <li>states of consciousness (temporary accessing of a developmental level/structure)</li> <li>types (includes gender, personality types, Myer-Briggs types, types of teams, organisations, etc)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conceptual lenses commonly used but not formally included in the AQAL framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>perspective (first, second, third person perspectives)</li> <li>agency-communion (autonomy-relationality)</li> <li>transformation-translation (first order/incremental change and second order/radical change)</li> <li>inclusive emergence (transcend-and-include)</li> <li>relational exchange (forms of exchange that "feed" each of the basic developmental levels)</li> <li>health-pathology (normative and non-normative patterns of development)</li> <li>transition process (phases that mark the transformation from one developmental level to another)</li> <li>deep structure (the distinction between deep and surface features of a social entity or phenomenon)</li> <li>internal-external (disposition-situational)</li> <li>spirituality (ultimate mystery, inherent meaning, transformative grace)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conceptual lenses neither used nor included in the AQAL framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>social mediation (communication, artefact-in-use, the impact of public and private media)</li> <li>learning (the cycle of learning, learning loops)</li> <li>system dynamics (feedback dynamics, chaordic patterns, bifurcation points, etc)</li> <li>alignment (the concordances between, e.g. internal and external structures/environments)</li> <li>stakeholder (those who are affected or involved)</li> <li>decentering (the postmodern emphasis on the hidden view from the margins)</li> <li>evolutionary process (variation, selection, reproduction, retention)</li> <li>governance/organising holarchy lens (holarchy of decision-making, regulation, management and control)</li> </ul>

Table 8.2 lists lenses currently used in AQAL (including formerly and informally acknowledged) and those which were found in the multiparadigm review of theories of organisational transformation. A number of lenses identified in the multiparadigm review are not included in any way, formally or informally, in any AQAL-informed analyses. These lenses included, among others, social mediation and learning. These lenses and other lenses were identified as core explanatory concepts for many theorists attempting to describe and explain organisational transformation. It is interesting to note that several of these lenses come from the interactive and standpoint lens

groupings. These groups of lenses are based on situational as opposed to dispositional explanations. They typically see events as thoroughly relational and interactive. If these are fundamental ways of explaining social reality, why are they not part of the integral approach in general and AQAL in particular? To address this question, the lens of social mediation will be discussed in detail.

One of the most important explanatory lenses in AQAL is the “levels” lens (what is called here the developmental holarchy lens). From the perspective of this lens, transformation is the unfolding of successive deep features of consciousness. Wilber developed this lens from extensive reviews of many theories of human development including those of Jane Loevinger, Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, Robert Kegan, Clare Graves, numerous theorists of postformal development such as Michael Basseches, Patricia Arlin, Michael Commons as well as Buddhist and Vedantic traditions of spiritual development. It is notable, however, that, in assembling his model of human development, Wilber has neglected one of the most important schools of human development. This is the school that follows from the work of Lev Vygotsky and which has come to be known as the Cultural Historical and Activity Theory (CHAT) school of human development (Cole & Wertsch, 1996). The focus within this tradition is not on development as an unfolding set of internal psychological structures. Rather, it is on the mediation of developmental structures from the social exterior to the individual interior. As Vygotsky expressed it, “The central fact about our psychology is the fact of mediation” (1982, p. 166). The concept of mediation has gone on to become a crucial explanatory factor in organisational theory and has contributed to communications-based and activity theory approaches towards organisational transformation.

The concept of mediation and the explanation of development as an outcome of social mediation are absent from Wilber’s metatheorising. For example, there is no reference to social mediation, Vygotsky, or any theorist from the CHAT school in any of his copious writings. It may be that integral metatheory to this point has not considered social mediation theories of change and development. This needs to be rectified and social mediation needs to be included within the range of metatheory rising tools that are available to integral theorists.

The same can be said for the other lenses not currently used in AQAL’s metatheoretical toolbox. It may not be accidental that other lenses, for example the learning and decentering lens of social constructionism, that are also highly critical of stage-based approaches to human development are also not represented within AQAL. These lenses also look to explanations of transformation that are mediated by changes in social power and systems of communication. This suggests that the notion of transformation as a dispositional unfolding of internal capacities, which currently dominates AQAL-informed explications, needs to be augmented by situational and mediational views that recognise the role of social systems, communications, media and cultural artefacts in mediating radical change. Such a view places great emphasis on communicative processes and on

the influence of those processes through the exercising of social power. Power is a topic that has not been at all prominent within AQAL analyses and once again, this may be due to the lack of mediating, interactive and decentering lenses that are such a definitive aspect of postmodern approaches to organisational life and social transformation.

In summary, the comparison between the AQAL framework and the multiparadigm review found that all of its central elements were used by theorists of organisational transformation. This is a significant finding. It lends considerable support to the notion that AQAL is a metatheoretical system that has relevance to organisational theories of change. Several informal AQAL lenses were also found in the multiparadigm review. These include perspective, agency-communion, transformation-translation, inclusive emergence, exchange relations, health-pathology, transition process, internal-external, and spirituality. More importantly, several lenses were identified which are not recognised at all within AQAL. These lenses include social mediation, learning, system dynamics, decentering, evolutionary process, and the governance holarchy.

#### *4.3 Discrepancies in lens relationships*

The relationships between explanatory factors identified in the multiparadigm review were often not consistent with those that define AQAL. There were three areas where consistent discrepancies were found. These were in the relationship between i) the individual-collective lens and other lenses, ii) the perspectives lens and other lenses, iii) holons/holarchies and other lenses.

The individual-collective lens used in AQAL is a reduced form of the ecological holarchy lens. A more complete description of this lens within organisational settings might involve the holarchical levels of individual, dyad, triad, group, department, organisation, community, society, nation, global community. A minimal representation of this holarchy should include at least three or four levels – individual, group, organisation, and environment. These can also be expressed as microlevel (individual), mesolevel (group), macrolevel (organisational), and macro-macrolevel (environment). Problems arise in lens relationships when the ecological holarchy is reduced to the two levels of individual and collective. For example, in spite of Wilber's clarifications (Wilber & Zimmerman, 2005) it is unclear whether the four quadrants refer to an individual or to the encounter between an individual and its social environment. This confusion arises because the individual-collective lens is a scalar dimension that can apply to micro, meso and macro social levels. In using the reduced version of this multilevel holarchy, the individual-collective lens is represented as a bipolar lens that can be applied to "one holon" when actually, it always refers to a holarchy. One implications of this confusion is that AQAL analyses never show holons in ecological relationship or in a situational space. Consequently, interactive lenses such as mediation and alignment play little or no role in AQAL analyses of social phenomena.

Discrepancies between lens relationships were also found for the perspectives lens. In the AQAL framework perspectives are associated with particular quadrants. The first-person singular, “I”, is associated with the consciousness quadrant (interior-individual), the first-person plural, “We”, is associated with the cultural quadrants (interior-collective), the third-person singular, “It”, is associated with the behavioural quadrant (exterior-individual) and the third-person plural, “Its” is associated with the social systems quadrant (exterior-collective). This clearly leaves out several very important perspectives, not the least being the second-person perspective. Wilber has made attempts at accommodating these stray perspectives (Wilber, 2003c) but the situation remains unresolved. For example, Wilber accommodates the second person singular perspective within the first person plural cell of his perspective matrix.

The heart of the problem lies in associating perspectives with particular quadrants. Given the independence of lenses, there is no need for connecting particular perspectives with particular cells in the quadrant matrix. As shown repeatedly throughout this study, each lens describes unique dimensions of organisational reality and so, can be independently combined with other lenses to form metatheoretical frameworks. Similarly, quadrants and perspectives can be combined to derive a full set of holonic perspectives. Figure 8.1 shows a comprehensive matrix that is derived from a combination of perspectival, interior-exterior and ecological holarchy lenses. This framework includes all interior and exterior aspects of first, second and third person forms of inquiry at the micro, meso and macro levels of organisation. As such, it describes a comprehensive mapping of the combination of perspectival and ecological lenses for both the interiors and exteriors. The AQAL four-cell matrix is a reduced form of this framework.

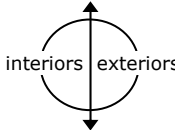
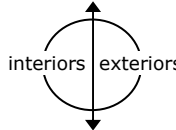
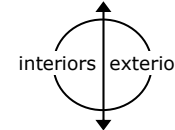
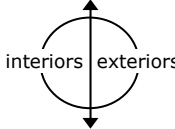
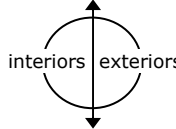
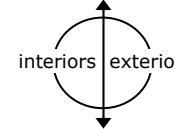
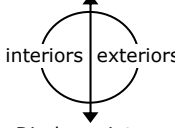
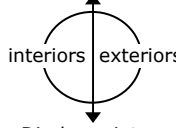
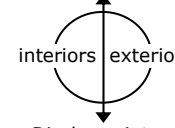
	<b>First person perspective</b>	<b>Second person perspective</b>	<b>Third person perspective</b>
<b>Microlevel (individual - singular)</b>	 Discloses personal data about “I/Me”	 Discloses inter-personal data about “You” (singular)	 Discloses impersonal data about “He/She/It”
<b>Mesolevel (group-plural)</b>	 Discloses intra-group data about “Us/We”	 Discloses inter-group data about “You” (plural)	 Discloses group data about “Them”
<b>Macrolevel (organisation - plural)</b>	 Discloses intra-organisational data about “Us/We”	 Discloses inter-organisational data about “You” plural	 Discloses inter-organisational data about “Them”

Figure 8.1: Combing perspectival, interior-exterior and ecological holarchy lenses

Where the AQAL matrix has no dedicated place for second-person perspectives, the more complete framework shown in Figure 8.1 fully accommodates those important perspectives. What's more, the micro-, meso- and macrolevels of the second person disclose relational data about "the other" that are not accommodated in AQAL. Unlike the reduced AQAL matrix, Figure 8.1 also includes the mesolevel of the group as an important level of organisational ecology. As previously pointed out, it is at this level that innovations and experimentations often emerge before becoming either more widely distributed or recognised as core work within an organisation. At present, AQAL has a limited capacity to include mesolevel theories of organisation.

In missing this intermediate level of organisational ecology, AQAL becomes susceptible to reducing the genesis of transformation either to the microlevel of the individual or the macrolevel of the collective. For example, under the heading, "The Nature of Revolutionary Social Transformation" Wilber (2003a) discusses the emergence of radical social change with reference to the rise of new technology. He states that "what generally happens is that a technological innovation begins in the mind of some creative individual (UL)--James Watt and the steam engine, for example". Wilber sees transformation as generated from individual genius which, in the AQAL system comes out of the Upper Left (UL) quadrant of individual consciousness. This reduction of "social transformation" to the innovative thoughts of one individual is representative of methodological individualist explanations for change (Fernando, 2001) and, consequently, is not an integrated view. In contrast to Wilber's view, other explanations of the development of the steam engine emphasise the collective interactions that occurred over several centuries that culminated in its emergence. In an article on this topic of the emergence of the steam engine, Mimi points out that (2006, p. 10):

History books tend to connect just one person's name with the invention of a remarkable new machine or the discovery of a new technology. But, the reality behind new ideas usually presents a different, and more complicated, picture.

To this point Wilber has chosen the microlevel of the individual as the source of transformative energy and it may be that the inherent developmental focus of AQAL has contributed to this bias. Inclusion of the mesolevel provides a completely new way of seeing the rise of innovation and, more generally, the evolution of emergent capacities.

A third area of discrepancy among lens relationships relates to the holarchy category of lenses. AQAL includes only one form of holarchy – the developmental holarchy. In contrast to this, the multiparadigm review and the subsequent analysis of explanatory themes, found that theories of organisational transformation employ at least three forms of holarchy. These holarchies are built on the criteria of developmental emergence, ecological inclusion and governance (or organising capacity). Each of these is a valid means for describing the nature of holons and holarchic relationships. While Wilber recognises that there are different types of holarchies (Wilber &

Zimmerman, 2005), AQAL employs only the developmental variety in any comprehensive fashion. One reason for this is that the holon construct has mainly been used in AQAL to describe the intraholonic order and for “what happens inside individual holons, according to internal structure” (Matthews, 1996, p. 41). While there is much discussion of inter-subjective and inter-objective relations in Wilber’s writings, these relationships often refer back to the development of individual holons. Edwards (2005), however, has argued that a more relational and interactive usage of the holon construct is called for and the finding of interactive and standpoint categories of integral lenses in this study supports that position.

The omission of a governance holarchy is a particular drawback in AQAL analyses of organisations. Without some dedicated lens for considering the holarchic nature of governance, organising and decision-making structures tend to be seen as either top-down or bottom-up arrangements. Once again, we see that there is little analysis of power relations in AQAL analyses of social events and the omission of a governance holarchy is one contributing factor to that shortcoming.

In summary, this study has found strong evidence to support the metatheory building aims of AQAL. All of its major conceptual elements have been found to be present within the theories of organisational transformation reviewed here. In fact, the multiparadigm review and analysis found that all AQAL lenses (including both formal and informal ones) are used by organisational theorists in their theories and models of radical change in organisations. These findings strongly support the application of AQAL as a metatheory for organisational studies. There are, however, several weaknesses that have also been identified and the following recommendations are proposed to address them.

- i) All core conceptual elements that formally make up the AQAL framework have still not been satisfactorily identified or defined. A clear presentation of the AQAL metatheoretical system needs to include a statement of all its conceptual elements and a detailed description of the relationships between those elements.
- ii) Several lenses were identified that are not represented in AQAL and their omission means that a major review of the core conceptual elements of AQAL is called for.
- iii) In the application of AQAL, particular lenses are always combined in the same way and, while this has benefits for its parsimonious and uniform description and applied use, this inflexibility limits its creative application to the particular needs of the research. Consequently, AQAL theorists should review the way that it combines lenses to increase the flexibility of the model.
- iv) Several of the current relationships between AQAL lenses were not supported by the findings of the multiparadigm analysis carried out here. In particular, it is suggested that the relationships between perspective and quadrants and between the interior-exterior and individual-collective lenses be reviewed to improve the framework’s internal consistency.

v) To this point, the development of AQAL has not been based on a detailed research method and further use of the model could gain from the application of some more rigorous method such as metatriangulation or the more detailed method outlined in this current study.

## 5. Limitations and Avenues for Further Research

### 5.1 Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. They can be separated into two groups – those related to the technical aspects of metatheory building and those concerned with the study's specific findings on organisational transformation and their interpretation. The technical and procedural limitations will be discussed first.

As previously pointed out, the inherent flexibility of integral metatheorising, and the large number of possibilities this approach opens up, creates several problems. Perhaps the most important is that the complexity of the system reduces its interpretability, applicability and usefulness. With 24 lenses available for application, the integral metatheory for organisational transformation possesses considerable capacity for constructing elaborate theoretical structures. As additional explanatory lenses are combined, the complexity of the resulting frameworks increases dramatically. Wilber's strategy in dealing with this inherent complexity in metatheory building is to base his analyses on consistently combining the same limited number of lenses. These are the most important elements of the AQAL framework - the quadrants (the interior-exterior and individual-collective lenses) and levels (developmental holarchy lens). This simplified framework introduces almost all AQAL-informed analyses. The benefit of this approach is that the combination of these particular lenses is seen as fundamental to all social events and so that framework can be applied in the same way to any social phenomenon. As Wilber states, "all occasions have four quadrants" and so the problem of parsimony in lens selection is resolved to the degree that these AQAL lenses are utilised.

The problem with this minimising approach to lens selection is that the flexibility of the metatheory is considerably reduced. As well as this, the potential for the introduction of new lenses is diminished as the orthodoxy of using only certain lenses becomes more established. While this routinisation process is part of every research paradigm, it becomes problematic as a particular application of the model becomes more established and its arbitrary nature less questioned. For these reasons, the integral metatheory proposed here has been presented with a large number of lenses. While this limits the metatheory's ready application and increases problems of parsimony and interpretability, it does allow for great flexibility and for its creative use in researching complex topics such as organisational transformation.



One notable methodological limitation of the study is that the identification of themes and lenses is based on the judgments of the author. This means that personal bias plays a significant role in the identification of themes, lenses and the development of the metatheoretical system. While metatheory building has been traditionally associated with individual scholars working diligently through large bodies of theoretical material (Ritzer, 1992), this type of research needs to take more account of basic issues like bias and reliability. For example, qualitative forms of analysis using computer software programmes such as NUDIST and NVivo may be appropriate for a more systematic identification of core themes. However, as Saunders et al. note (2003, p. 256) such tools do not necessarily “guide the researcher in *what to capture*” but are more useful in manipulating data after it has been captured.

Procedural improvements such as using multiple coders to identify themes might also improve the reliability of the results of the thematic analysis. However, while increasing the number of researchers identifying themes may go some way in addressing the issue of individual bias, it might not actually improve the reliability of identifying core themes. In the only published evaluation of a metatheory building method (metatriangulation) Saunders and her colleagues (2003) found that inter-coder reliability only increased when rule-based coding was introduced. The introduction of rule-based systems for categorising the concepts of interest would not have been practicable in the present study. Metatriangulation codes theories at the paradigm level while in this study lenses were identified from the much finer level of explanatory themes. Rule-based coding would have significantly limited the amount of literature that could have been analysed. The approach taken here was to maximise the variation in theories included in the study so that a very broad set of theories could be sampled rather than to limit the sampling process in some way.

Rather than relying on inter-coder reliability, the reliability issue might be more directly addressed from comparisons of the results of metatheoretical studies across different fields of organisational research. For example, it has been noted in this study that several metatheorists have found similar lenses while working in quite diverse fields. Wilber, Quinn, Levy and Merry, Van de Ven and Poole, Torbert and Ritzer have each independently identified some form of the interior-exterior and micro-macro lenses in their metatheory building. This suggests that there is some degree of reliability in the outcomes of metatheoretical research even where inter-coder procedures were not specifically part of the study. Ritzer (1991a) has suggested that overviews of the results of metatheoretical analyses should occasionally be carried out to compare their findings and this study supports that suggestion.

Other technical limitations relate to the sampling process. The method for gathering “data” involved a maximum variation sampling procedure that drew on the large number of extant theories of organisational transformation present on electronic databases. While an extensive number of theories were included in the sample, no consideration was made for the relative

importance or academic standing of theories within the field of organisation transformation itself. All theories were treated equally in terms of their contribution to the metatheory building process irrespective of how dominant they might be in their field. This egalitarian approach means that less common lenses are included along with lenses that are frequently adopted by theorists. While this may have its drawbacks, it does ensure that innovative lenses and marginalised perspectives are represented in the metatheory for organisational transformation. For example, the spirituality lens may be regarded as having only marginal importance for the scientific investigation of organisational transformation (see, for example, Brown, 2003). The inclusion of a spirituality voice within the metatheory does, however, acknowledge the presence of such views within the community of organisational researchers and theorists. It also recognises the unique perspectives that the spirituality lens makes possible.

The sampling procedure also has implications for the range of lenses identified here. The sample only included extant theory that dealt with organisational transformation. So it is possible that some important explanatory lenses, which may be used in other areas of organisational theory, have not yet been applied in this field. In particular, it is notable that no market-based lens for organisational transformation was identified in the multiparadigm review. While economic theories of change were included, none of them proposed explanations for how market forces could lead to discontinuous and radical organisational change. This seems to be a significant area of neglect in theories of organisational transformation and the metatheoretical framework proposed here will be limited as a result. One possible reason for this neglect is that market-driven models of change define change as a growth, expansion or increase in economic factors such as profit, productivity or shareholder wealth. This type of change is not necessarily transformative because it may not include any change in organisational culture, values, stakeholders, or long-term goals. Whatever the reason for the absence of a market-based lens, the reliance on extant theory means that the multiparadigm review and the resultant metatheory for organisational transformation will also reflect that limitation.

Other limitations relate to the interpretation of the study's findings on organisational transformation. Metatheory is ostensibly concerned with theory and yet, particularly in the chapter dealing with organisational sustainability, implications of the metatheory for social policy, organisational interventions and social transformation were also touched on. The issue here is one of finding boundaries for the implications of metatheorising. By its nature, metatheorising is about the big picture and this brings with it the problem of knowing where to draw the boundaries between speculation and a more balanced interpretation of implications. What is clear is that, while metatheory can be based on theories with substantial empirical support, metatheory itself should not be used to directly interpret empirical events. Its strength lies at the level of interpreting the world of ideas and broadly social phenomena and not at the level of local events and immediate experience.

A second general limitation of this study has to do with the use of the metaphor of the lens. It has been noted that the lens metaphor has been widely used in sociological and organisational literature. The use of this lens metaphor has generally been restricted to the idea of an interpretive filter or sense-making device that enables researchers to derive meaning from some collection of data. In this study, the lens metaphor is meant to represent both the receptive, interpretive processes as well as the active, creative processes involved in research. Accordingly, integral lenses are seen as both interpreting and shaping organisational realities. It was suggested that the metaphors of “voice” or “tool” could just as well be used to communicate the idea that these theoretical elements constitute as much as interpret organisational life. It may be, however, that the lens metaphor is not up to this multifaceted task. While lenses act as both receptive filters and active tools it is probably the case that the lens metaphor supports a view of metatheory as merely a broad brush way of interpreting theory and not as a means for actively imagining how we might develop new theoretical visions of things like the transformative journey.

## *5.2 Further Research*

Ritzer (2006) has argued that metatheory for understanding ( $M_U$ ) and overarching metatheory ( $M_O$ ) can be used as preparatory activities for developing new theory. The flexibility and conceptual richness of the proposed metatheory for organisational transformation means that it is amenable to developing further theory and models. Metatheory can also identify the strengths and weaknesses in a theory through specifying which lenses, and what form of those lenses, it employs and which it omits. For example, in general, theories of organisational sustainability have not focused on that aspect of radical change that requires a transformative shift in the whole organisational system. To this point, sustainability theories have mostly focused on subsystem changes in waste management, energy use and environmental pollutants rather than looking at the structural and cultural transformations needed for whole-of-system change. In other words, current theories lack a developmental holarchy lens. Notable exceptions to this can be seen in the work of Dunphy, Griffiths and Ben (2003) and van Marrewijk and Werre (2003). In conjunction with some of the lenses described here, their theories offer much needed and visionary roadmaps for organisational transformation towards sustaining futures.

Metatheory building in general should be a more common form of research than it is currently. The lack of formalised methods for performing this type of conceptual research may be one factor in this situation. However, this study has shown that metatheoretical research can be preformed in a systematic way and it is hoped that metatheory building of the type conducted here will contribute to the study of organisation theory on a more frequent basis in the future.

## 6. Conclusions

The major aim has been to develop a metatheory for organisational transformation. In the course of achieving this aim, several other objectives have been pursued - to develop a research method for metatheory building in organisational studies, to perform a multiparadigm review and analysis of the theoretical literature on organisational transformation, and to evaluate the AQAL model in the light of this study's finding.

With regard to its central aim, this study has proposed an integrated metatheory for conceptualising transformative change and, therefore, has contributed to the metatheoretical literature on this topic. Van den Ven and Poole, in a seminal article entitled, "Explaining Development and Change in Organizations", make the point that (1995, pp. 515-516),

It is the interplay between different perspectives that helps one gain a more comprehensive understanding of organizational life, because any one theoretical perspective invariably offers only a partial account of a complex phenomenon. Moreover, the juxtaposition of different theoretical perspectives brings into focus contrasting worldviews of social change and development. Working out the relationship between such seemingly divergent views provides opportunities to develop new theory that has stronger and broader explanatory power than the initial perspectives.

It is this creation of knowledge with "stronger and broader explanatory power" through "the interplay between different perspectives" that is the most important contribution of this study. Previous approaches to organisational transformation have lacked a comprehensive and systemic metatheory for integrating the many different perspectives on how organisations transform (Kotnour, 2001; McKinley, Mone & Moon, 1999; Newman, 2000; Sarason, 1995). The current study presents a conceptual framework that builds on such endeavours to advance understandings and conceptualisations of radical change from a metatheoretical standpoint.

In the course of developing the metatheory, this study has also contributed to the store of comparative knowledge about the major paradigms and theories of organisational transformation and, in particular, their core explanatory lenses. Burrell and Morgan (1979) showed, through their work on adapting sociological paradigms to the analysis of organisations, that new understandings and explanations can be generated when metatheoretical frameworks are used to situate and compare "dimensions" from otherwise disparate theories and models. This contextualising function of metatheory building is not simply a categorising exercise but also provides knowledge about the relationships between theories and creates the potential for even broader explanatory frameworks in the process (Felix, 2003; Lewis & Grimes, 1999).

An important contribution of the study has been the development of a more refined method for guiding the metatheory building process. Existing methods of metatheorising have been compared and a more detailed procedure outlined. No comparison of metatheory building procedures has been carried out before and the resulting method contributes to the literature on metamethodology in organisational research (Zhao, 1991, 2001).

Analysing the theoretical literature on organisational transformation has provided an opportunity for evaluating AQAL's conceptual coverage and scope. For example, new conceptual lenses were identified from the multiparadigm review of transformational literature that are not part of the AQAL framework. The findings from this study suggest that a more thorough revision of AQAL is warranted and some recommendations have been provided to direct this revision.

In developing a metatheoretical framework for conceptualising organisational transformation, the study has opened up the possibility for a more encompassing appraisal of other theories and metatheories of transformation. This means, for example, that theories which base their explanations on particular organisational levels, e.g. micro, meso or macrolevels, can be evaluated from a more multilevel perspective, one which is sensitive to the multiple layers of interactions that exist between individuals, groups and larger collectives (Morgeson & Hofmann, 1999).

It is hoped that this study will contribute to the way theorists, researchers practitioners and teachers view organisational transformation. More than twenty years ago, in the first review of theories of transformation in organisational settings, Levy and Merry said that (1986, p. 269), "Progress in the domain of [transformational] change is constrained by a lack of adequate conceptual frameworks". This point is still valid. The number and diversity of theories being proposed, tested and applied has resulted in a highly diverse and even fragmented knowledge base for the study of organisational transformation. As the following quote emphasises, the development of a metatheoretical perspective can, at the least, engender a deeper "understanding" of this diversity.

By uncovering assumptions that have been mostly unexplored in dynamic models of organisational change, a connection between various approaches to organisational development and change will become apparent. Moreover, I argue that identifying this correlation will lead to a paradigm of self-organising that may be useful for understanding transformative change. ... A primary contribution of this new paradigm would be to integrate numerous empirical studies into a single framework, which can then be used by researchers and practitioners to more clearly understand the dynamics of transformation, and launch transformative change in organisations. (Lichtenstein, 2000a, p. 527)

While Lichtenstein is referring here specifically to the integration of empirical studies, the same holds true for the integration of concepts and theories within an accommodating metatheory.

Ultimately, the goal of metatheorising in a field such as organisational transformation is to develop visions, tools and interventions that promote the likelihood of lasting organisational change, both theoretically and practically, at a time when such changes are so desperately needed.

Finally, metatheorising is a form of research that has been neglected and not well understood. It is hoped that this study will raise awareness of the potential benefits of metatheoretical research in organisational studies. The integrative approach pursued in this study has sought to link and situate multiple paradigms of organisational change. The intent has been to find perspectives for connecting theories while, at the same time, honouring their distinctive contributions. Both the “big picture” and the “little picture” are needed in the accumulation and utilisation of knowledge. Integrative knowledge complements and generates specialised science and the proliferation of theories calls for the development of systemic knowledge. At the very least, the development of overarching approaches serves to bring greater conceptual coherence to social disciplines that are often characterised by a plethora of seemingly incommensurate theoretical viewpoints. As Lewis and Kelemen succinctly put it (2002, p. 263):

Multiparadigm research seeks to cultivate diverse representations, detailing the images highlighted by varied lenses. Applying the conventions prescribed by alternative paradigms, researchers develop contrasting or multi-sided accounts that may depict the ambiguity and complexity of organizational life.

This study has proposed “varied lenses” and developed “multi-sided accounts” with the aim of furthering our theoretical visions of what transformation is and what it might be. The ambiguity, complexity and ultimate mystery of transformation will always be there and will continue to provide opportunities for deepening our understanding of organisational life and the transformations that will be required to sustain it into the future.

## APPENDIX A - Relevant Publications

### Refereed Publications

- Edwards, M. G., 2004, 'Good for business: An integral theory perspective on spirituality in organisations', *Spirituality in Leadership and Management Journal*, 2005, 1, [Online].
- Edwards, M. G., 2005a, 'A future in the balance: Integral theory and global developmental pathologies', in *Knowledge Base of Futures Studies Volume Three: Directions and Outlooks*, R. Slaughter (Ed.). Foresight International, Brisbane, pp. CD-ROM.
- Edwards, M. G., 2005b, 'The integral holon: A holonomic approach to organisational change and transformation', *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 18, 3, 269-288.
- Edwards, M. G., 2007, 'Appreciative Inquiry and multiparadigm theory building', *Appreciative Inquiry Practitioner*, November.
- Edwards, M. G., 2008, "Every today was a tomorrow": An integral method for indexing the social mediation of preferred futures", *Futures*, 40, 2, 173-189.
- Cacioppe, R. & Edwards, M. G., 2005a, 'Adjusting blurred visions: A typology of integral approaches to organisations', *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 18, 3, 230-246.
- Cacioppe, R. & Edwards, M. G., 2005b, 'Seeking the Holy Grail of Organisational Development: A Synthesis of Integral Theory, Spiral Dynamics, Corporate Transformation and Developmental Action Inquiry', *The Leadership and Organizational Development Journal*, 26, 2, 86-105.
- Küpers, W. & Edwards, M. G., 2007, 'Integrating Plurality: Towards an Integral Perspective on Leadership and Organisation', in *21st Century Management: A reference Handbook*, C. Wankel (Ed.). Sage, London.

### Unrefereed Online Publications

- Edwards, M. G. & Volckmann, R. 2006, 'Integral Theory into Integral Action: Parts 1-2', *Integral Leadership Review*, vol. VI, no. 3-4.
- Edwards, M. G. & Volckmann, R. 2007, 'Integral Theory into Integral Action: Parts 3-7 ', *Integral Leadership Review*, vol. VII, no. 1-4.

### Conference Papers – Refereed Abstract

- Edwards, M. G., 2004, 'Good for business: An integral theory perspective on spirituality in organisations', SLAM conference, Fremantle, Australia, conference proceedings.
- Edwards, M. G., 2007, "It's just a phase I'm going through": *Integral lenses and phase transitions in organisational transformation*, ECCON, Bergen, Holland, Conference proceedings.

## APPENDIX B - Paradigm Categories and Explanatory Themes

This appendix presents the paradigm groupings into which theories were placed to organising the theme analysis process. Each of the fifteen paradigms is introduced with a summary of its major characteristics. This is followed by a table that lists the theories sampled under each paradigm and the core explanatory themes identified for each theory. In the culture and leadership paradigms the theories were categorised into major sub-themes. For example, in the culture paradigm theories were allocated to anthropological, psychological or sociological approaches to organisational culture.

### *Culture paradigm*

Much has been written about organisational culture and its importance in transformation (Barton, 2003; Breu, 2001; Fitzgibbons, Steingard & Whitty, 2003; Harris & Mossholder, 1996; Rago, 1996). The approaches that come under this paradigm see the cultural dimension of organisations as fundamental to its identity and to its capacity to change in radical ways. The cultural approach draws on theories of organisational culture to explain transformation through utilising such concepts as value systems, myth and ritual, patterns of belief, story and narrative in those explanations. Theorists of organisational culture can be categorised into: i) those that define it as organisational myths, rituals, narrative and story (collective, anthropological factors) (Ingersoll, 1992), ii) those that define it as members affects, beliefs and cognitions (individual, psychological factors) (Ruigrok & Achtenhagen, 1999), and iii) those that define it as norms, power structures and other concepts that link individual and collective expression of cultural life (Philip & McKeown, 2004). All these approaches define organisational culture as the “soft stuff”, “intangibles”, “interiors” and the “software” of organisational life in contrast to an organisation’s “exteriors”, the “hard stuff” “tangibles”, and “hardware”.

Table 1: Explanatory themes for OT in the culture paradigm

<b>A. ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE PARADIGM</b>	
<b>Theories</b>	<b>Explanatory themes for Transformation</b>
1. Culture as organisational myth (anthropological approach)	i) human capacities for transformation; ii) collective agency; iii) myth and story as both sense-making and inspiring vision; iv) archetypes and transformation; v) rituals, ceremony, symbols, and artefacts; vi) shared worldviews and assumptions; vii) collective unconscious viii) interpretive schemes; ix) transition process; x) inertia and momentum
2. Culture as personal affects and cognition (psychological approach)	i) individual-culture congruence, ii) entrepreneurial culture, iii) personal resistance; iv) paradigm shift; v) personal values; vi) shared transformational philosophy
3. Culture as norms and social relations (micro-macro linking approach)	i) conforming pressure (grid control); ii) group commitment; iii) culture within individuals, teams, organisations; iv) a typology of organisational cultures; v) unwritten ground rules, vi) micro-macro link; vii) multilevel nature of transformation

### *Developmental paradigm*

Developmental and life-cycle theories of organisational transformation all employ a stage-based approach to explaining transformation. The focus of developmental approaches is on the unfolding of internal structures of organisations, how they emerge, their characteristics, and the



qualitative transformation that is required to move from one developmental stage to another (Torbert, 1989b). Life-cycle approaches to organisational transformation draw on the analogy of the growth stages of biological organisms to objectively describe of phases of organisational change (Lester et al., 2003). While some developmental and life-cycle theories use additional concepts in explanations of change, all the approaches place their major emphasis on the part that developmental stages play in the transformation process.

Table 2: Explanatory themes for OT in the developmental/life-cycle paradigm

<b>B. DEVELOPMENTAL/LIFE-CYCLE PARADIGM</b>	
<b>Theories</b>	<b>Explanatory themes for Transformation</b>
1. Developmental Action Inquiry	i) stages of individual transformation; ii) stages of organisational transformation iii) territories of experience; iv) its communications theory; v) organisational learning – single, double and triple loop learning; vi) personal perspective – first, second and third person; vii) the transformational process; viii) individual and collective transformation; ix) the role of leadership in organisational transformation; x) time
2. Byrd's Organisational Development Model	i) stages of organisational development; ii) conflict is inherent at each development stage; iii) management tasks associated with each stage; iv) organisational "disability" associated with failure to resolve the conflict inherent in each stage
3. Spiral Dynamics	i) levels of worldview development; ii) development proceeds in response to life circumstances (alignment); iii) normative assessment of organisational health, iv) individual and collective emphasis of levels
4. Corporate Transformation	i) stages of organisational consciousness; ii) stages of personal consciousness; iii) multidimensional dynamics; iv) balance
5. An Integral approach	i) Integrated stages; ii) meta model of stage development; iii) A definition of Integral Organisational Development
6. High performance transformation	i) levels of organisational performance; ii) levels of employee motivation; iii) levels of organisational planning, structure and leadership
7. Integrative management model	i) paradigm change; ii) stages in organisational change
8. Life Cycle Models	i) stages; ii) emergent process; iii) culture; iv) organisational streams within life cycle stages and v) time span

### *Evolutionary paradigm*

The evolutionary paradigm includes all those theories of organisational transformation that are based on biological and social evolution approaches. For example, punctuated equilibrium is an evolutionary theory that is based on the observations of biologists Niles Eldredge and Stephen Jay Gould. This particular biological model has been adopted by organisational theorists to explain the transformational behaviour of organisations (Gersick, 1991; Romanelli & Tushman, 1994). Rather than seeing change as coming from internal factors of managerial choice and planning, the evolutionary perspective emphasises inter-organisational environments and dynamics.

Table 3: Explanatory themes for OT in the Evolution/Ecology paradigm

<b>C. EVOLUTION/ECOLOGY PARADIGM</b>	
<b>Theories</b>	<b>Explanatory themes for Transformation</b>
1. Organisational Ecology	i) organisation-environment interaction; ii) organisational inertia; iii) ecological pressures (selection); iv) evolutionary alignment; v) stages of ecological evolution; vi) ambidextrous organisations
2. Punctuated equilibrium	i) deep structure, ii) equilibrium and revolutionary change, iii) transition, iv) interior/exterior distinctions; v) transformational agents/nucleus, vi) evolution and learning; vii) emotion and insight, viii) multilevel application, and ix) short/long-term
3. Organisational Evolution	i) variation; ii) selection; iii) retention; iv) activity

### Functionalist paradigm

The functionalist paradigm includes theories that focus on the objective study of rational human behaviour and its products in organisational settings (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). The study of managerial regulation of organisational change and the objective measurement of its results have been the hallmarks of this approach.

[The functionalist paradigm] has provided the dominant framework for the conduct of academic sociology and the study of organisations. It represents a perspective which is firmly rooted in the sociology of regulation and approaches its subject matter from an objectivist point of view. (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 25)

Functionalism at the individual level within organisations is particularly concerned with adaptive behaviours, goal attainment, and measurement. At the organisational level, it is most centred on the operations and material exchanges that take place to maintain organisational structures and achieve growth (Smalley & Fraedrich, 1995).

Table 4: Explanatory themes for OT in the Functionalist paradigm

<b>D. FUNCTIONALIST PARADIGM</b>	
<b>Theories</b>	<b>Explanatory themes for Transformation</b>
1. Institutional theory	i) the reproduction of behavioural norms and structural systems; ii) the impact of regulatory, economic and social environments; iii) intra-organisational social interactions; iv) organisational templates
2. Combined Change theory	i) organisational change is the result of dramatic environmental change; ii) incremental and radical change processes; iii) areas of transformation
3. Business process re-engineering	i) functional and productivity dimensions of organisations, ii) work design, iii) information technology redesign, iv) structural redesign, iv) structural redesign, v) structural domains.
4. Information technology	i) IT and whole-system change; ii) IT and organisational hierarchy; iii) self-reinventing versus change avoiding; iv) micro-political and cultural dimensions; v) integration of old operations; vi) stages in ICT use; vii) sustainability; viii) IT and failure to transform; ix) computer based systems and OT
5. Transformative Strategies	i) environmental 'creep'; ii) organisational 'creep'; iii) diversification, acquisition, merger, shutdowns; iv) industry reorganisation; v) major technological breakthroughs; vi) charismatic transformation; vii) dictatorial or forced transformation.
6. Strategic Transformational Change	i) strategic leadership/management; ii) vision, iii) dissonance (issue tensions); v) self-managed work groups i) de-development
7. Organisational Change Response Model	i) change type; ii) leadership and management, iii) communication and readiness
8. Transformational growth	i) levels of growth; ii) transition process; iii) growth drivers; iv) areas of growth, v) resistance
9. Contingency theory	i) alignment/congruence; ii) external environment; iii) management
10. Multilevel theories	i) industry transformation cycle; ii) multilevel nature of transformation
11. Transition economies	i) stages-based development; ii) top-down versus bottom-up change; iii) management; iv) internal-environmental conditions
12. Physical work environment	i) aesthetics, comfort, and utility; ii) design of physical environment; iii) inclusion of members; iv) ergonomics

Although functionalism in social theory has included both “latent and manifest functions” (Merton, 1957, p. 60), functionalism in organisational studies has emphasised the manifest functions of an

organisation, that is, those objective aspects of the organisational behaviour in pursuit of defined goals. Because of this behavioural and instrumental focus, functionalist theories emphasise internal and external alignment, that is the functional fit within and between organisations and environments. While most functionalist approaches are not concerned with the type of transformational or radical change dealt with in this study (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Benefiel, 2005; Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Schultze & Stabell, 2004), some functionalist theories did conceptualise growth as a form of discontinuous development that went well beyond the idea of simple economic expansion.

#### *Interpretive/Postmodern paradigm*

In recent times the field of organisational change has come under extensive criticism from those who take an explicitly interpretive stance (Midgley, 2003). Interpretive or postmodern approaches to organisational change appear in many guises and take their point of departure from modernist and instrumental change theories from many different sources. In contrast to a planned, managed view of radical change that can be deliberately initiated and “driven” by executive intention to achieve measurable and universally desirable goals, the post-modern approach takes the view that (Midgley 2003, p. 48),

there can be no universals, that absolute truth is no illusion, that the existence of power is inevitable, and that what constitutes progress depends upon the locally and temporally situated viewpoints of actors in social systems.

Consequently, post-modernism encourages and supports the diversity of different research perspectives on what organisational transformation is, why and how it takes place and the benefits that might accrue from pursuing it.

Table 5: Explanatory themes for OT in the interpretive/postmodern paradigm

<b>E. INTERPRETIVE/POSTMODERN PARADIGM</b>	
<b>Theories</b>	<b>Explanatory themes for Transformation</b>
1. Feminist theory	i) marginalised groups; ii) hierarchical nature of organisations; iii) impact on community; iv) transformational leadership and feminism; v) empowerment
2. Appreciative inquiry	i) questioning and inquiry; ii) honouring the past; iii) positive image/vision; iv) relationality; v) constructionist principle; vi) collective meaning-making; vii) bottom-up transformation; viii) team-based transformation.
3. Experiential approaches	i) emotion; ii) work attitudes; iii) positive climate; iv) trust and acceptance; v) sense-making; vi) incremental versus discontinuous change, vii) multiple perspectives
4. Indigenous approaches	i) indigenous culture; ii) interpretive scheme; iii) wisdom of the elders; iv) consensus decision-making; v) personal adoption of aboriginal values
5. Communications and Readiness Approaches	i) message domains; ii) message conveying strategies; iii) relationships; iv) communication; v) power
6. Whole-scale Change	i) collective communication; ii) participant commitment; iii) communicative alignment
7. Multiple Stakeholder Model	i) transforming communication; ii) communication and identity; iii) control and consent; iv) participation and diversity; v) individualism; vi) corporate social responsibility; viii) multiple stakeholder model

Post-modernist approaches to organisational transformation are concerned with the localised and multivocal. Although a number of postmodern perspectives have been grouped together here under one paradigm, it would be a mistake to assume that the theories bracketed here share a clearly defined set of assumptions or a single worldview (Hassard, 1994). This is not only because “Post-modernism has a fundamental distrust of overarching models and meta-narratives” (Cilliers, 1998) but because it also seeks stories that come from the margins and experiences that emerge locally.

### *Learning paradigm*

The learning approach to organisational transformation emphasises both the capacity for ongoing development in the macrolevel of “collective actions and shared understandings” (Love, Huang, Edwards & Irani, 2004) as well as the microlevel of occupational behaviours and relationships. These collective actions and mindsets are imbedded within a social context that shapes the cognitive and behavioural aspects of what is learned (Wenger, 2000). Organisational learning can be seen as a mediating process that connects and transforms the experiences of members and the organisational context of culture and functional structures (Kolb, 1984).

Table 6: Explanatory themes for OT in the Learning paradigm

<b>F. LEARNING PARADIGM</b>	
<b>Theories</b>	<b>Explanatory Factors for Transformation</b>
1. Organisational Learning	i) learning models; ii) organisational learning
2. Kolb’s learning cycle	i) learning cycle
3. The Learning Organisation	i) the learning organisation; ii) organisational identity; iii) collective learning iv) learning process
4. Gustavsson’s Transcendental learning	i) collective consciousness; ii) stages of transformation; iii) meditation is transformational; iv) organisational learning is transformational.
5. Situated Change	i) microlevel transformation; ii) self-organising and emergent change; iii) incremental change; iv) everyday experiments; v) situated change.
6. Learning and technology	i) trust; ii) interoperability; iii) micro-macro
7. Social and Collaborative learning	i) mediation; ii) shared learning; iii) collaborative communication; iv) intersubjectivity; v) micro-macro

### *Multiparadigm and eclectic approaches*

This category of approaches to organisational transformation comprises two different types of theories. One is an eclectic approach which takes the pragmatic view that there many different valid theories which useful insights into different aspects of transformation. Eclectic theories utilise whatever concepts and methods are seen as relevant for the job at hand. These approaches range from modest, middle-level theories that draw on a small number of models to large-scale general theories that incorporated explanatory aspects of many different theories of change.

Table 7: Explanatory themes for OT in the Multiparadigm/Eclectic approach

<b>G. MULTIPARADIGM AND ECLECTIC APPROACH</b>	
<b>Theories</b>	<b>Explanatory themes for Transformation</b>
1. Multiparadigm Framework	i) multiparadigm as a theoretical perspective; ii) subjective-objective dimension; iii) radical-regulatory change dimension; iv) quadrants
2. Theory E & Theory O	i) two ideal types – Theory E (economic approach) and Theory O (organisational approach) ii) purpose; iii) leadership; iv) focus; v) planning; vi) areas of transformation.
3. The network organisation	i) holistic and networked approach;; ii) transformation of board and management leadership; iii) transformed customer relationships; iv) communication; v) integrating learning; vi) information technology; vii) collective vision.
4. Discontinuous Change	i) leadership; ii) organisational identity; iii) organisational architecture; iv) organisational environments; v) emotions; vi) transformative culture.
5. Stream Analysis	i) organising arrangements; ii) social factors, iii) technology, iv) physical setting; v) interconnections; vi) organisational hierarchy, vii) organisational stream components
6. Other Eclectic Approaches	i) planned approach to transformation; ii) multilevel nature of transformation; iii) areas of transformation; iv) culture; v) management skills; vi) team building; vii) systems/structure; viii) reward system; ix) human spirit; x) quadrants framework
7. The 'Death Valley' model	i) integrative approach; ii) change process; iii) micro-macro; iv) transition and transformation; v) death valley; vi) the transition process; vii) comparisons of change
8. Integral theory	i) agency and communion; ii) quadrants
9. Organisational Transformation Theory	i) the driving forces of transformation; ii) the transitional processes; iii) the structural elements that undergo transformation

Eclectic approaches do not attempt to build systematic expansion frameworks nor do they try to integrate alternative conceptualisations. In contrast to this eclecticism, the second approach is truly multiparadigmatic in that a diversity of theories and models are conceptually integrated to form a consistent and systematic theoretical explanation for transformation (Lewis & Kelemen, 2002).

#### *Organisational environment paradigm*

The organisational environment approach to transformation maintains that radical change can be initiated, driven, guided and maintained through coordinating the relationships between organisations and their commercial, social and natural environments. This approach emphasises such factors as social movements and inter-organisational relationships in the change process. Explanations of transformation are based on the relational exchanges at ever level between organisations and their clients and customers, community bodies and the broader socio-economic environments in which they operate.

Table 8: Explanatory themes for OT in the Organisational Environment paradigm

<b>H. ORGANISATIONAL ENVIRONMENT PARADIGM</b>	
<b>Theories</b>	<b>Explanatory themes for Transformation</b>
1. Corporate transform.	i) interorganisational cooperation; ii) unions and governments
2. Environmental Change Typology	i) general environment; ii) environmental change attributes; iii) avalanche environmental change; iv) organisational recreation
3. Corporate Sustainability	i) complexity shifts and sustainability; ii) SqEME model; iii) stage-based holarchy of values systems; iv) environmental circumstances; v) transcend-and-include principle
4. The Transformational Path to Sustainability	i) the need for transformation to sustainability; ii) the sustainability phase model; iii) change drivers; ; iv) transformational change model; v) cosmocentric consciousness
5. CSR	i) sustainability; ii) diversity; iii) epistemological frameworks; iv) corporate mediation of values
6. Holonic networks	i) holons; ii) interorganisational interaction; iii) transorganisational source of transformation

*Paradox/ dialectic paradigm*

Theories coming within the dialectic and/or paradoxical paradigm employ such ideas as complementary forces, paradox, inherent ambiguity and conflict to identify dimensions and frameworks on which the organisational processes and dynamics are mapped. For example, the competing values framework of Robert Quinn and colleagues focuses on the competing conflicts inherent in any human system and explains change in terms of the resolution and balancing of these inherent conflicts (Quinn & McGrath, 1985). Referring to the competing values framework of Robert Quinn, Denison and Spreitzer point out that (1991, p. 3), the competing values model “allows for conceptualisation of both paradoxical and linear phenomena, and for the analysis of both transformation and equilibrium”. It can pick up on the “inherent tensions in organisational life”. Another example is Paul Nutt’s theory of “issues tensions” (2003) which also proposes inherent paradox as a driving factor in change and that the identification of these tensions is essential for a successful navigation of the transformation journey.

Table 9: Explanatory themes for OT in the Paradox/Dialectic paradigm

<b>I. PARADOX/DIALECTIC PARADIGM</b>	
<b>Theories</b>	<b>Explanatory themes for Transformation</b>
1. Competing values framework	i) paradox and polar relationships; ii) internal versus external; iii) control versus flexibility; iv) four quadrants of organisational effectiveness; v) managerial leadership roles; vii) pathology and imbalance; viii) multilevel application.
2. Paradox and identity	i) the concept of individual and collective identity; ii) transformational paradox; iii) multilevel transformation; iv) transition model; v) linguistic identity markers.
3. Paradox and transformational leadership	i) strong and listening leadership; ii) directed and empowered staff; iii) careful and bold risk-taking; iv) respected and challenging; v) passionate and rational; vi) determined and flexible; vii) people and systems oriented; viii) recognises tangibles and intangibles; ix) pursues growth and sustainability.
4. Dialectical Theories	i) dialectical dynamics, ii) unifying and conflicting dialectics
5. Structuration theory	i) reciprocity; ii) micro-macro

*Process paradigm*

Where structural theories of change focus on describing the stable, enduring, and apparent configurations of organisations, process theories focus on the emergent, dynamic relations that are inherent to organising activities (Nutt, 2003).

Table 10: Explanatory themes for OT in the Process paradigm

<b>J. PROCESS PARADIGM</b>	
<b>Theories</b>	<b>Explanatory themes for Transformation</b>
1. Lewin’s field theory	i) three-step process of change: unfreeze, shift, refreeze; ii) field theory; iii) group dynamics; iv) action research
2. Buckley and Perkins’ Transition Cycle	i) seven-phase process of transition: unconscious, awakening, reordering, translation, commitment, embodiment, and integration phase; ii) embodiment cycle: the alignment of consciousness and behaviour; iii) transformation comes about through a shift in consciousness.
3. Gemmill and Smith – The process of transformative change	i) four-phase process of transition: disequilibrium conditions, symmetry breaking, experimentation, and reformulation.

4. The transition model of Levy and Merry	i) five-phase process of transition: crisis, transformation, transition, stabilisation and development.
5. Revolutionary change	i) five-phase revolutionary process model (after Kuhn): normalcy, confrontation of anomalies, crisis, selection (revolution) and a new normalcy period.
6. Elgin's model of transformational conditions	i) eight-phase model of the transformational process: growth and efficiency, decline, crisis, procrastination, chaos, back to basics, transformation and revitalisation; ii) the necessary conditions for moving through at each phase.
7. Johnston's Phases of Transformation	i) eight-phase transformation process: current paradigm, stimulus, unfreezing, discovery of new paradigm, refreeze, implementation, feedback (confirmation or disconfirmation).
8. The paradigm reframing model	i) seven-phase model for paradigm reframing: fertilisation, crisis, incubation, diffusion, struggle for legitimacy, politics of acceptance, and legitimization.
9. The Rhizomic Model	i) the inherency of flux, change and transformation; ii) the "heterogenous becoming of organisational transformation"; iii) the loosening of structures to facilitate change; iv) the "logic of otherness"; v) "immanence".
10. Bacharach's logics of action theory	i) logics of action (cognitive-behavioural schemas; ii) dissonance reduction; iii) organisational hierarchy; iv) individuals and collectives both possess logics of action.
11. The clinical perspective	i) parallels between individual and organisational development; ii) phases of transformation; iii) developmental pathologies; iv) organisational subconscious
12. Organisational frame ending	i) model of change states: experimentation, understanding, commitment, education, application to leveraged issues, and integration into ongoing behaviour.
13. Moore and Gergen's Stages of Transition	i) four stage model of transition: shock, defensive retreat, acknowledgement and adaptation and change.
14. Change phases Model	i) eight phase model of transformation; ii) new CEO.
15. Organisational tracks	i) Transformational tracks; ii) Nonlinear progression; iii) change dynamics
16. Process Transformation	i) non-linear dynamics; ii) micro-macro dynamics; iii) agency and structure; iv) organisational Resistance to change.
17. Diversity and Transformational Process	i) 5-phase model of diversity and transformation: discovery, assessment, exploration, transformation and revitalisation.

Process theories seek to give explanations to the "how" and "why" questions of change, i.e. how and/or why does an organisation transform or transition from its current state to a preferred state. Process or transition models of transformation (see Lichtenstein, 2000b) look at the dynamics involved in moving from one state to some qualitatively different state. During these transition, radical modifications in organisational structure, behaviour, and consciousness occur. Process theories are concerned with the temporal dynamics of change and so they "focus more on how living systems transform than on what is transformed and why" (Levy and Merry, 1986, p. 239). The concern with the temporal aspects of organisational change leads to theories that outline a narrative view of event sequences or process phases.

### *Psychological paradigm*

Many models of organisational transformation place central importance on the psychological aspects of their members. In particular these models emphasises cognitive factors such as cognitive schemes, information processing, and cognitive-behavioural approaches to personality theory. The cognitive emphasis in psychological theories of transformation is seen in reference to cognitive reframing as a required aspect of the change process.

Table 11: Explanatory themes for OT in the Psychological paradigm

<b>K. PSYCHOLOGICAL/COGNITIVE PARADIGM</b>	
<b>Theories</b>	<b>Explanatory themes for Transformation</b>
1. Decision-making theory (OODA Loop)	i) transformation occurs through the iteration of the OODA loop (observation, orientation, decision, action); ii) individual and organisational evolution lies in the maximisation of potential through capititation of ongoing learning.
2. Information processing mode	i) connecting exterior environments to interior decisions; ii) self-organisation and renewal; iii) rich information
3. Reframing Theory	i) cognitive schema; ii) reframing; iii) transformation of meaning system; iv) Trust
4. Chapman's transformation framework	i) psychological reframing; ii) organisational structures and systems, iii) involvement of stakeholders, iv) visionary leadership from CEOs, v) the interconnectedness of organisations.
5. Motivational theories	i) individual focus; ii) top-down leadership; iii) motivation and incentive; and iv) emotion and beliefs.
6. Streams model of transformation	i) organising arrangements; ii) social factors, iii) technology, iv) physical setting; v) interconnections; vi) organisational hierarchy, vii) organisational stream components

*Spirituality paradigm*

There is a substantial and growing body of academic literature that emphasises the crucial part that spirituality can play in organisational transformation. Transformation and spirituality share several common elements. Both are concerned with human potential and both are, in one way or another, concerned with radical change. Spirituality has been recognised as a core aspect of the organisation transformation field from its very inception. More than twenty years ago one of the founders of the organisation transformation movement, Harrison Owen, wrote that (1983, p. 7),

The essence of OT is energy and spirit. OT is a natural process whereby human energy and spirit exercising for full the search for a better way to be ... a new life form.

Authors writing within the organisational spirituality paradigm use a number of different theoretical orientations in explaining how transformation occurs.

Table 12: Explanatory themes for OT in the spirituality paradigm

<b>L. Spirituality Paradigm</b>	
<b>Theories</b>	<b>Explanatory Factors for Transformation</b>
1. Spiritual leadership	i) stages of spiritual transformation, ii) leadership, iii) relationship, iv) spiritual transformation as a form of ultimate purpose
2. Ethical/moral models of organisational spirituality	i) connectedness, ii) social responsibility, iii) environmental crises, iv) the notion of service
3. Stage-based models	i) stages of spiritual transformation for individuals; ii) stages of spiritual transformation for organisations.
4. Harrison Owen	i) transformation is a manifestation of the human Spirit; ii) "open space technology"; iii) "self-organisation in human systems"; iv) "chaos"; v) "stages in organisational life"; vi) catalyst for transformation
5. Spirituality and organisational transformation	i) "emotional aspects of critical variables" in organisational transformation; ii) new management paradigm - transformational leadership; iii) organisational spirituality; iv) intrinsic motivation within individuals; v) individual-organisational alignment; vi) micro-macro; vii) economic versus non-material focus; viii) process model of spiritual evolution; ix) holism and spirituality
6. Organisational spirituality and the 'new sciences'	i) consciousness; ii) the emergence of new worldviews; iii) micro-macro.



*Systems and new science paradigm*

The new science theories of chaos, complexity and living systems have much in common with the older generation of systems theories developed during the 1960's and 1970's. Because of their focus on a systems approach to organisations, both the new sciences and the older systems theories are included in this paradigm. Systems theory approaches to organisational transformation have been represented in the literature since the 1980's and for two decades before that open systems school was a dominant model in organisational studies. Systems approaches draw parallels between the behaviours of organic and inorganic systems and those of human social systems.

There are important commonalities in the way many systems, including human systems, change and ... we can benefit by comparing research findings from disparate areas because different facets of kindred processes may come into focus as the methodology and level of analysis vary. (Gersick, 1991, p. 11)

The new science approach to organisational studies assumes that, "human organisations, most particularly the enterprise, are subject to the very same principles and precepts underpinning the new science" (Fitzgerald, 2002, p. 339). These new science principles are particularly concerned with the emerging disciplines of "Chaos and Complexity theory" (van Eijnatten, 2001). Many theorists have written on the connections between organisational transformation and various principles found within the new sciences (Druhl et al., 2001; Gerard & Teurfs, 1995; Lichtenstein, 1997; Munaker, 1996; Pienaar, Russell, Roets, Kriel & Grimbeek, 1999; Shelton & Darling, 2003).

Table 13: Explanatory themes in the Systems and New Sciences paradigm

<b>M. SYSTEMS AND NEW SCIENCES PARADIGM</b>	
<b>Theories</b>	<b>Explanatory themes for Transformation</b>
1. Open Systems theory	i) systems – inputs, outputs, internal processes; ii) operational improvement; iii) corporate Self renewal; iv) strategic transformation; v) types of transformations and parts of the system; vi) hierarchy of organisational transformations
2. Evolving Systems Model of Change	i) environment; ii) organisational purpose; iii) people; iv) leadership and management; v) structures and systems; vi) meaning and climate; vii) power and authority
3. Soft Systems Theory	i) rich picture description; ii) holons; iii) situation as culture and structure; iv) worldview; v) politics and power; vi) hierarchy
4. Chaos theory	i) consciousness; ii) connectivity; iii) indeterminacy; iv) emergence; v) dissipation; vi) chaos as a metatheoretical lens; vii) Stages of transformation
5. Complex Adaptive Systems Model	i) self-organisation or autopoiesis; ii) environmental adaptation; iii) chaotic dynamics; iv) far-from-equilibrium; v) stages of change
6. Living systems theory	i) transformative environments; ii) continual change; iii) interconnectedness; iv) self organisation; iv) coevolution; vi) democratic governance; vii) subsidiary governance; viii) interorganisational relationships.
7. Sustainable Business excellence model	i) environmental change; ii) complex adaptive systems; iii) edge of chaos; iv) emergence and self-organisation; v) strategic inflection point, vi) quality of conversations; vii) degree of diversity; viii) richness of connectivity; ix) degree of felt stress of system agents; x) degree of empowerment of system agents
8. Dissipative structures model	i) equilibrium and far-from-equilibrium; ii) internal and external environments; iii) stable order and dynamic order; iv) deep structure, v) archetype
9. Complexity theory	i) emergence of order; ii) bifurcation point; iii) order-generating rules; iv) primary dynamics

*Team paradigm*

Most theories of organisational transformation target either the microlevel of the individual or the macrolevel of the organisation in their explanations of change. A third approach considers the mesolevel of the team or group as the focal point for explaining how change takes place. These theories attempt to bridge the micro-macro division by proposing that the middle level of the team enables individuals and the organisation to mutually interact and influence each other (House et al., 1995). Team-based theories are particularly interested in group dynamics and in collective identity. They also focus on how the emergence of new ways of organising is facilitated in small group environments and in how those emergent forms spread to the wider organisation.

Table 14: Explanatory themes for OT in the Team paradigm

<b>N. TEAM PARADIGM</b>	
<b>Theories</b>	<b>Explanatory themes for Transformation</b>
1. Group methods	i) structural change; ii) communication; iii) participatory leadership
2. Strategic Team approach	i) team structure; ii) bottom up; iii) empowerment; iv) conditions for strategic teams;
3. High Reliability Organisation	i) adaptability; ii) communication; iii) coordination; iv) decision-making; v) interpersonal relations; vi) team leadership/management; vii) shared situation awareness; viii) shared team mental models
4. Team-based working	i) team; ii) collective identity; iii) team development; iv) communication; vi) involvement

*Transformational leadership paradigm*

Transformational leadership is a concept developed by James McGregor Burns (1978) who distinguished between transactional and transformational styles of leadership. Transformational leadership brings about radical and far-reaching change in an organisation's culture and functions and consequently, leadership has been regarded as a major factor in many theories of transformation (Friedman, 2000; Greiner, Cummings & Bhambri, 2003; Rooke & Torbert, 1998). However, there are a number of fundamentally different ways of considering leadership as a general aspect of organisational life. These different perspectives can be placed into three categories: i) top-down models (Ashburner et al., 1996; Schaffer & McCreight, 2004; Vandermerwe & Birley, 1997), ii) bottom-up models (Bechtold, 1997; Kashner, 1996), iii) alternative approaches (Brezinski & Fritsch, 1996; Dunphy, 2000; Lupton, 1991; McNulty & Ferlie, 2004).

Table 15: Explanatory themes for OT in the Leadership paradigm

<b>O. TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP PARADIGM</b>	
<b>Theories</b>	<b>Explanatory themes for Transformation</b>
1. top-down theories	i) transactional and transformational leadership; ii) developmental level; iii) cognitive style; iv) interpersonal style; v) ethical and moral awareness; vi) leadership practice; vii) new blood; viii) recognising the challenge; ix) capacity for innovation in creativity; x) vision; xi) consultants; xii) wisdom; xiii) ethics; xiv) planned change; xv) spirituality
2. Bottom-up theories	i) environmental imperatives, and ii) incremental transformation; iii) organisational learning and bottom-up leadership; v) misuse of power; vi) unions; vii) empowerment; ix) barriers to transformation; x) micro-macro; xii) ownership; xiii) employee involvement
3. Alternative approaches	i) reciprocal leadership; ii) formal and informal phases of transformation; iii) domains of transformation; iv) social identity and leadership; v) mediation of identity; vi) collective agency

## APPENDIX C – Process Theories of Organisational Change

Table 1 looks at some formative process models from a number of disciplines that have acted as guides for subsequent organisational theorists. Tables 2 and 3 provide comparisons of process models that are specific to the field of organisational change. Both individual and collective models of transformation are included in these tables. In these comparative tables the various transition phases are aligned according to the descriptions provided by the theorist. Consequently, this calibration of phases relies on the descriptive accuracy of the sources. Some models pay more attention to the initial phases of transition and some focus on the later phases.

Table 1: Process Models of Transformation from Various Disciplines

Transition Phase Description	Human development (Wilber, 1980)	Dissipative structures (Prigogine & Stengers, 1983)	Creative process (Adams, 1984)	Peak experience (Quinn & Cameron, 1988b)	Scientific Revolution (Kuhn, 1996)	Cultural revolutions (Elrod & Tippet, 2002)	Dialectical Development (Nutt, 2003)
12. Creativity at the new level	Successive emergence of new structures				Creative discovery via new paradigm		
11. New baseline level	New level of development	Fluctuations within new boundaries	Verification	Return to rational routines	Normal science with the new paradigm	Routinisation	New order
10. Integration of lower capacities	Integration of lower structure	Jump to a higher order of complexity		Reframing	Revolution	Transformation	
9. Transform to new paradigm	Transcendence of lower structure						
8. Leaving behind old paradigm	Dis-identification with lower structure		Illumination			Reformulation	Revolution
7. New opportunities	Identification with higher structure						
6. Emergence of possible solutions	Emergence of higher-order	Bifurcation point	Incubation	Frame generation		Revitalisation	
5. State of Shock		Crisis		Paradox is always present	Paradigmatic Crisis	Distortions	Crisis
4. Crisis climax	Delegitimisation						
3. Building Crisis		Fluctuations past a threshold					Conflicts
2. Ambiguities & anomalies			Preparation		Growth of anomalies		Growing dissatisfaction & alienation
1. Baseline level (paradigm)	Current level of development	Fluctuations within defined boundaries			Normal science in old paradigm	Steady-state	Steady-state

Table 2: Process Models of Organisational Transformation

Transition Phase	Conditions for Transformation (Elgin, 1977)	Paradigm Reframing (Nicholl, 1984)	Transformative Change (Gemmill & Smith, 1985)	Phases of Transformation (Johnston, 1985)	Transition Model (Levy & Merry, 1986)	Archetype Tracks (Greenwood & Hinings, 1988)	Transition (Moore & Gergen, 1988)	Change Cycles (Mintzberg & Westley, 1992)	Teams (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993)
12. Creativity at the new level	Revitalisation				Ongoing Transformation				
11. New baseline level				Refreeze (confirmation or disconfirmation)	Stabilisation				
10. Integration of capacities						Transformation	Archetype coherence (B)	Change	
9. Transform to new paradigm	Transformation	Legitimization	Reformulation	Discovery of new paradigm	Transformation		Adaptation	Revolution	Real team
8. Leaving behind old paradigm		Struggle for legitimacy				Embryonic archetype coherence (B)			
7. New opportunities		Diffusion			Transition state				
6. Emergence of possible solutions	Chaos - "innovations" & "back to basics"	Incubation	Experimentation	Unfreezing	Crisis	Schizoid incoherence	Defensive retreat	Struggle	Potential team
5. State of shock	Procrastination		Symmetry breaking						
4. Crisis climax	Crisis		Disequilibrium						
3. Building Crisis	Decline	Crisis	Stimulus		Embryonic archetype incoherence (A)		Adaptation	Pseudo-team	
2. Ambiguities & anomalies		Fertilisation							
1. Base-line level paradigm	Growth and efficiency			Current paradigm	Current state	Archetype coherence (A)		Stability	Working Group

Table 3: Process Models of Organisational Transformation (continued)

Transition Phase Description	Revolutionary change (Simsek & Louis, 1994)	Resistance (Marotti, 1996)	Worker performance (Bupp, 1996)	Transitional change (Grant, 1996)	Spiral Dynamics (Beck & Cowan, 1996)	Cox & Beale (1997)	Diversity and Transformation (Dreatchlin, 1999a)	Rhizomic Model (Chia, 1999)	Steps in Transformation (Kotter, 2006)
12. Creativity at new level			Creativity	Creativity			Revitalisation of individuals & systems	Immanence	
11. New baseline level	New normalcy period				The new Alpha: new stage of life conditions achieved, return to a steady state of functioning				
10. Integration of capacities		Re-emergence	Accomplishment	Accomplishment		Action to address issues and implement solutions		Logic of "otherness"	Institutionalising new approaches
9. Transform to new paradigm									Consolidating
8. Leaving the old paradigm									Short-term wins
7. New opportunities	Revolution	Readiness	Opportunity	Opportunity	Delta Surge: time of energy and release, old barriers are overcome	Understanding of opportunities and costs		Loosening of structures	Empowering others
6. Emergence of possible solutions		Openness	Exploration	Acceptance and letting go			Exploration of alternatives	Heterogenous transformation	Communicating the vision
5. State of Shock		Resignation	Acceptance				Assessment of challenges		Creating a vision
4. Crisis climax		Depression	Grief	Depression and incompetence	The Gamma Trap: feelings of hopelessness, anger, and barriers to progress	Awareness of problems and deficiencies			Form a guiding coalition
		Bargaining	Chaos						
3. Building Crisis		Anger	Anger						
	Confrontation of anomalies	Denial	Shock/denial	Denial and minimisation				Inherent flux	Establishing a sense of urgency
				Shock and immobilisation					
2. Ambiguities & anomalies					Beta Condition: a time of uncertainty		Discovery of anomalies		
1. Baseline (paradigm)	Normalcy	Equilibrium			Alpha fit: stability and status quo				

**APPENDIX D - Learning and knowledge acquisition theories**

Table 1a: A phase-based comparison of theories of learning and knowledge acquisition

Learning Cycle phases	Education (Dewey, 1938/1997)	Learning models (Juch, 1983)	Experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984)	Validity claims (Habermas, 1984)	Forms of knowledge (Bhaskar, 1986)	Learning as technology (McCarthy, 1987)	Organisational learning (Miller, 1996)	Knowledge Strands (Wilber, 1998)	Organisational learning cycle (Dixon, 1999a)
Doing and Handling	Experiential continuity	Doing	Concrete experience	Truth	Performative	doing something with it	Experimental	Injunction	Information generation
Thinking and Sensing		Sensing	Reflective observation	Truthfulness (Sincerity)	Experiential	taking it in	Analytic Structural	Apprehension	Experiential integration
Interpreting and Understanding	Situational interaction	Thinking	Abstract Conceptualisation	Comprehensibility	Epistemological	ordering and naming it	Synthetic		Collective interpretation
Validating and Explaining		Addressing	Active experimentation	Rightness (legitimacy)	Propositional	expressing it	Interactive Institutional	Validation	Social action

Table 1b: A phase-based comparison of learning/knowledge theories (cont.)

Learning Cycle phases	2-phase learning (Greenaway, 2002)	Organisational knowing (Choo, 2002)	Organisational learning schools (Bell, Whitwell & Lukas, 2002)	Organisational learning (Akgun, Lynn & Byrne, 2003)	Organisational transformation (Spitalella, 2003)	Integral cycle (Edwards, 2005)	Systems learning (Mingers, 2006)	Organisational learning cycles (Tsai & Lee, 2006)	Organisational learning cycles (Rosendaal, 2006)
Doing and Handling	Do/Experience	Action selection	Economic School	Acquisition	Action	Acting	Action	Care why	Scanning and problem solving
Thinking and Sensing		Knowledge creation	Developmental School	Thinking Emotion	Observe	Reflecting	Appreciation	Know why	Abstraction
Interpreting and Understanding	Review/Reflect	Sense making	Process School	Sense-making Collective memory	Orient	meaning	Analysis	Know what	Diffusion and absorption
Validating and Explaining			Management School	Dissemination Implementation	Decision	learning	Assessment	Know how	Impacting

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