

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF LEADERSHIP AND
STRATEGY IN A COPPER MINING ENVIRONMENT:
CARE OF THE SELF, INTERACTIONAL PATTERNS AND
SUSTAINABILITY

Submitted by

Federico Manuel Puga

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ABSTRACT

This study extends the understanding of leadership emergence from a relational perspective (Hosking, 2011; Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011; Uhl-Bien, 2006), specifically related to the forming of trusting relationships.

The argument follows from the conceptual development of subjectification processes referred to as “care of the self” (Foucault M. , 1988; Foucault M. , 2005) and the implications of “regimes of practices” (Foucault M. , 2010; Dean, 2010). The findings contribute to our understanding of the relation between patterns of differentiation and reciprocity (as contextual definitions) and the relational emergence of leadership. We conceive leadership formed by actions that have no instrumental purpose beyond constructing a subject able to form trusting relationships and judge this to be a phronetic practice.

The research is based on a case study of the executive team of a large copper mining company implementing a sustainability strategy that has as its central purpose the construction of trusting relations within a complex net of stakeholders. Based on this case, my second contribution is to conceptualise the function of “parrhēsia practice” (Foucault M. , 2010), a “truth game” about truth, truth-telling and action in the relation of the self and others, which is significant in the formation of the relational leadership of the “conscious pariah” (Arendt, 1978).

The study examines how it is that “truth games” of examining the self and “reframing” interactional patterns can facilitate the relational emergence of phronetic forms of leadership.

The research methodology, designed to deal from a non-dualistic perspective with the relational emergence of leadership, uses a narrative research approach to describe practices (Czarniawska, Narratives in Social Science Research, 2011). It is “uncovered” as representational and dualistic in the research relation, and a discussion of how a non-dualistic research approach could be developed is provided.

Key words: relational leadership, complexity leadership, care of the self, governmentality, trust, strategy as practice, trusting relationships.

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PREFACE

My actual interest in leadership was never at the centre of my enquiries, since I understood its existence as a given and relevant in many of the social events I have experienced or known through my existence. When I arrived at the Centre for Leadership Studies of the University of Exeter, I had more interest in what would have been known as the 'leadership of organisational problems' and especially of complex ones. My focus was on how leadership could act in situations that I found undesirable and able to change them. Poverty, war, injustice, natural disasters, terrorism, etc. are some of these unwanted situations. I have never questioned that leadership was pre-existent and ready for carrying out (and eventually failing) what is right. During my masters degree I had explored how management could work over complex problems and during my consultant and academic life I had lectured on how leadership could make a real difference in the world.

I was juggling with these questions when I embarked on my PhD. It took me some time to clarify my research question, as the subject became more about leadership itself than on its accessories and its effects. What interested me was that leadership became understood as a process of making a difference constructed from interaction simultaneously with its effects. I began to think about leadership in a non-dualist perspective, where we cannot think about it beyond or above the contextual situation that creates it.

It was within this context that I began searching for organisations and situations where I could carry out an empirical examination of leadership. I

found a number of candidates, amongst which were large civil construction projects or the process of handling the effects of one of the largest earthquakes in history. Finally I arrived at the case I researched: the intention of implementing a sustainability strategy in a large copper mining company.

This case seemed to meet most of the conditions I was looking for: there was an emerging process of innovation to cope with a real life challenge, for which at that time almost none previous experience, at least the copper mining industry. The intention of this company was to radically change the company mission and its core practices in order to build a sustainable future. There was a clear commitment from the management team to pursue this and I was granted access to observe interaction by being present and registering the process.

This is the story I am going to tell in the following chapters and from where I emerged probably with more questions than answers, but with one certainty: that we cannot rely on the pre-existence of organisational capacities as a guarantee of forming what are intentional and necessary subjectivities and organisational arrangements. With no understanding of the emergent organising process there is little understanding of them.

It became surprising how many different and richer forms of understanding the social and human experience took shape when this non-dualistic perspective was taken seriously and what an adventure the process of constructing knowledge about ourselves can become.

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This work is the result of the presence of many people, which at different stages in the research process have contributed in a very specific way to its progress, enjoyment and results.

First of all I have to acknowledge my supervisors, Doctor Beverley Hawkins and Professor Jonathan R. Gosling, the long hours of discussion and time devoted to an open minded reading of my innumerable drafts in which I explored the most wearied ideas and possibilities and exposed hundreds of hours of registering and analysing my data. Without their unconditional and enthusiastic support, especially in the darkest period of this process, this work would have not seen the light. I have to mention too the encouragement that Professor Annie Pye provided me in the initial stages of this work, to whom I am dearly grateful.

There is a second group of people whose presence I would like to acknowledge as relevant in this work. These are the hundreds of people I met during my fieldwork who opened their lives, sharing part of their time or letting me be present while coping with their daily occupations. I see them as very active in forming the knowledge I have produced through this work, not just in providing data but also in actively leading my understanding of what life is for the many possible positions that a human being can experience in relation to a large copper mining operation.

Also I would like to acknowledge Angélica, my life partner, from whom I have borrowed so much time, attention and provided so little during the almost four

years that it has taken to arrive at this point. Without her loving and unconditional support most of what I have learned through this process would have not been possible. I certainly acknowledge that the presence of my four children and my four grandchildren, with whom I plan to play with for longer hours once I receive my degree, has been an important incentive to finish this endeavour.

I have to mention my gratefulness to Veronica Gosling, whose friendship and loving care has provided me with the home that I needed in the UK while working on this project.

INTRODUCTION

From the late 1970s, complexity as a scholarly subject has pervaded organisation studies, implying philosophical and practical shifts in how organisational life, management, and development are conceived. After four decades, the field has been prolific in its developments, as well as in diversifying perspectives (Heylighen, Cilliers, & Gersherson, 2007), many of them with contradictory statements in these same grounds.

Morin (2008) distinguishes between “restricted” and “generalised” complexity, highlighting that this diversification is not just a matter of emphasis on one or another view within a unitary field, but an “epistemological cut” (2008:6) in conceiving complexity, which not only are different strands but epistemologically opposites.

“Restricted complexity”, according to Morin, is applied “to systems that can be considered complex because empirically they are presented in a multiplicity of interrelated processes, interdependent and retroactively associated” (2008:6). Usually this approach addresses complexity as a specific case of organisation, so that systems can be conceived as complex and not complex. The main critic to these perspectives (Cillier, 2011) is that, even when complexity and its implications for organisational phenomena are recognised, its purpose is simplification, searching for explanatory principles that instead of embracing complexity try to decomplexify it, reducing the description of complex situations to simple and knowable rules of explanation.

On the other hand, “generalised complexity” means an epistemological rethinking of these processes, embracing complexity by complexifying our thinking and conceiving every system as complex; hence no distinction can be made between them because of its complexity. This means acknowledging that what complexity brings to knowledge is a radical departure of a reductionist way of thinking of organisational phenomena.

Instead of the predictable and ruling sensitivity epistemology of a reductionist thinking of organisational phenomena, complex thinking entails, according to Chia (2011: 183), “thinking that issues from the intimacy and immediacy of pure lived experience... That acknowledges and embraces the inherent messiness, contradictions and puzzling character of reality... That resists or overflows familiar categories of thought... So ... that is sensitive to the suppressed/marginalized ‘other’ that is denied legitimacy in our dominant scheme of things”.

Underpinning this thinking is an ontology of organising that has been referred as “process philosophy” (Langley, Smallman, Tsoukas, and Van de Ven, 2013; Nayak and Chia, 2011; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). This form of understanding organisations gives primacy to an ontology of “becoming” (Bergson, 1911, 1998, Whitehead, 1929) in which processes, relations and interaction are construed as primary attributes of reality”. (2011: 288).

Coming into being of organisation, and social order is seen as emergent processes of combined actions of human and non-human agencies (Ingold, 2000). As Nayak and Chia say it (2011:289): “It is through these everyday practical coping actions and sense making interactions, prior to the

existence of any form of explicit conceptualization and representation, which we collectively forge out a more coherent and livable world". This view privileges process over end-states, becoming over being. Recognises organisations "not as solid, stabilized entities but as 'mediating networks'" (Cooper and Law, 1995) that are "patterned yet indeterminate" (Tsoukas, 2003), secondary effects of "a scattered and heterogeneous social process" (Nayak & Chia, 2011: 284).

Instead of conceiving the individual/organisation as a discrete, bounded entity in a dualist internal/external relation to its environment, it recognises it as a relational product of interaction, "a social-cultural nexus of historical shaped relationships such that their identity and characteristics are not bestowed upon them in advance of their involvement with others" (2011: 283). It adopts a non-dualist epistemology of things, making undifferentiated the process of forming of one entity to others, understanding as simultaneous to the forming process of identities and the process itself.

With this perspective, entities are construed in relational terms, so that they become secondary phenomena to more durable (and more abstract to study) processes of interaction brought about by difference and unable to be precisely located in time and space. Instead of attending to bounded locations, properties and possessions (Nayak & Chia, 2011), this non-dualist perspective means attending to the immanence of becoming in the forming of entities, subjects and subjectivities. It means at the same time addressing the openness of things as possibilities in a constant movement of transformation and habituation where what looks fixed is fallacious. It means

thinking process, movement and transformation “on their own terms” (Nayak & Chia, 2011: 291), instead of “static, the separate and self-contained”. This non-dualist perspective means thinking without elevating one organisational phenomenon over each other in causal relationships between them. At the same time, it means acknowledging that organisational epiphenomena are not preexistent to each other, but emergent relationally in interaction.

During the last few decades, leadership studies have seen the emergence of a number of theoretical perspectives relating leadership to complex systems. Most of these theoretical approaches (Goldstein, Hazy, & Lichtenstein, 2010; Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009; Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2008; Pascale, Milleman, & Gioja, 2001; Wheatley, 1999) are underpinned by conceptual developments, which acknowledge the value of complexity science (Goldstein, Hazy, & Lichtenstein, 2010; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2008).

In this sense, most of them can be classified as applying “restricted complexity” (Morin, 2008) concepts to the study of leadership in complex systems, acknowledging the distinction between complex systems from those that are not.

Other theoretical perspectives have addressed the study of leadership in complex environments but been underpinned by different ontology of organisation. The most remarkable and prolific ones¹ have been “Organised

¹ I am not naming here some key organisational theories, such as Actor Network Theory and WHAT IS THIS? (Latour, Reassembling the Social : An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory, 2005) (Law, 2009)

Sensemaking” (Weick K. E., 2012, 2009, 2001) and “Complex Responsive Processes of Relating” (Stacey, 2010; Stacey & Griffin, 2005; Griffin, 2004), which can be classified as belonging to a process philosophy perspective as exposed previously.

This theoretical frameworks, which have provided with important empirical insights into the organising process, has provided little insights for explaining leadership emergence from a perspective which conceives it not as not pre-existent and with no elevated ontological position over the forming processes of subjectivities and institution to which is associated.

This study was developed with the aim to understand leadership from such a relational perspective, as emerging in the complex situation of the implementation of a strategy developed in a large copper mining company. For doing so, I adopted the overarching approach of describing leadership “as practice” (Schatzki, Knorr Cetina, & von Savigny, 2005), described as durable dispositions carried over cultural traditions, whose locus is the field of relationships or interaction, which mutually composes actions and subjects (Barnes, 2005).

In a more particular use of this “practice approach”, I adopted the frame of “governmentality practices”, the “conduct of conducts” and its related concept of “Care of the Self” as proposed by Foucault (2005, 1988) related to the forming of “regimes of practice” (Foucault M. , 2010; Dean, 2010) that can be understood as characteristic rationalities that define forms of visibility, ways of thinking, questioning and acting. It is in this theoretical context that I formulated my research questions.

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this study is to know what leadership looks like and how it emerges, if it does, in the interaction of the executive team and in the relationship of this group with other company stakeholders, in the complex domain of the implementation of a strategy that has as a central and critical purpose forming trusting relationships between a wide and diverse net of stakeholders.

More specifically, I wanted empirically to explore how “practices of the self”, and more specifically parrhēsia, the truth-telling practice, which has been highlighted by Foucault (2010) as prominent in the forming of regimes of truths, can be associated to the forming of trusting relationships.

A second aim was to explore what research approach was appropriate for researching these practices and what we can learn from its applications. A special interest was set in the use of a narrative approach to research (Czarniawska, *Narratives in Social Science Research*, 2011), a method that makes coherent the purpose of researching from a practice perspective.

What I found in this research shows that leadership in this complex context can emerge as a potential capacity to form itself and a regime of practices of trusting relationships in a complex net of stakeholders, when instead of a representational and rhetorical practice, is replaced by the practice of parrhēsia, where there is a strong coherence between truth, logos and bios

in the management practice. Moreover, we see that this practice has no direct action over forming trusting relationships until the relational practice of the self with itself forms the figure of a “pariah” (Arendt, 1978), in the midst of the contradicting habituated practices constituting the predominant regime of practice.

Only when the practice of parrhēsia (Foucault M. , 2010), with all its hazards and contradictions emerge, it is possible to see the power of the “conscious pariah” through the practice of “thinking what we are doing”, which “transforms difference from being a source of weakness and marginality into one of strength and defiance” (Arendt, 1985:5).

At the same time I found that interactional patterns of differentiation (Bateson, Steps to an Ecology of Mind, 2000), such as negative symmetrical or rigid complementarity, makes almost impossible the emergence of a regime of practice of reciprocity associated with trusting relationships. I theorise that these habituated differentiating patterns relate to the context of production relations of mining, and question seriously the affordance of forming trusting relationships within the net of stakeholders in the mining industry.

Finally, I found that the research relationship I adopted was influenced by this same habituated pattern, and my research becomes heavily influenced by the same differentiation process of representation and hierarchical relations with my research object. Following this finding, I explored following Shotter’s (2013, 2010) suggestion of a “witness thinking” (2013; 2010), which departs sharply from a representational perspective, and signals what

other possibilities open up in front of each of the singular events we are immersed in. This implies the need to enter into a “dialogical” (Boje, 2008; Shotter, 2013) relationship with our inner feelings and thoughts in the situation, and that our writing cannot be based in the detached theoretical language we usually communicate our observations, but in a “poetic composition”, where the intention of writing is not to transmit information, but to make practices visible to those involved in the situation, to make them note differences in their actions so that they can take responsibility for it. This mode of writing means holding the researcher accountable to those other or otherness participating in the situation, so writing to “them” or to “it” who can constitute agency in the situation.

As a theoretical background for this study I have drawn from some different theoretical perspectives, which I relate together by the practice perspective proposed by Chia et al (2007; 2011) as “post processual”. First, I explore the theoretical foundation of a non-dualistic ontology of leadership. For this, I explain how leadership in complex domains has been treated in mainstream literature and I will suggest, drawing on the notion of “transformative causality” offered by Stacey (2010), an alternative perspective. This alternative regards leadership as part of the same forming process of subjects and subjectivities it contributes in its formation, referring to a relational perspective (Bateson, 2000) and process philosophy (Nayak & Chia, 2011).

After this, I will examine what leadership means as a subjectification process from a two-fold perspective: (a) a relational one which allows us to conceive

it as emerging in the midst of detailed sequences of interaction, (along with many other subjects and subjectivities), and (b) the processes by which subjectivities form and change. Then I will introduce the concept of “difference” as a key organising principle and as a foundation of a relational ontology. Finally, I will set the foundations of this perspective of leadership within the concept of “care of the self” (Foucault, 2005, 1988).

As it is central to the subject of this research, namely leadership of trusting relationships, I explore as a theoretical background the understanding of trusting relationships from a practice perspective (Schatzki, 2001). I will propose that trust, as a relational concept, can be conceived as a way of engagement with the world characterised by one of two types of care. Drawing on Solomon’s (2007) concept of emotion, I will explore the composition of trusting relationships as a process of subjectifying a relation of care and value. I will critique the possibility of building trusting relationships as a deliberate and individuated action and propose it as emerging from a specific type of relationship with the “other” and “things”.

Finally, since the study of leadership in this work is situated in a strategy implementation process, it is relevant to introduce the discussion of strategy as practice (Chia & MacKay, 2007; Whittington, 2006) and the stance required to keep a non-dualistic perspective coherent throughout this work. For this, I contrast strategy from a representational perspective to a relational perspective, consistent with the “practice turn” (Chia & Holt, 2011; Schatzki, Knorr Cetina, & von Savigny, 2005).

COPPER MINING IN CHILE: MMC

The copper mining industry and especially the mining activity interacting with local communities are under pressure. On one hand there is a growing demand for minerals, due to the hunger fed by the growing demand from China. Reports show that the demand for copper has been risen at an annual pace of 10.1 percent since 1980 and there is an imbalance between a growing consumption and the production capacity². If the pace of consumption remains the same, mainly fuelled by the demand of Chinese growth, in the next twenty-five years it would be necessary to produce more copper than what has previously been produced in its whole history. On the other hand, there is a growing demand of local communities for safer and healthier standards of operation for mining, the preservation of their quality of life and customs, as well as participating in the economic benefits of the industry.

This is the context of MMC, a leading copper mining company, operating in central Chile, which has become a benchmark for the Chilean copper mining industry in the production of economic value and social responsibility during the ten years it has existed. Chile is the largest copper producing country and in the country can be found the largest copper mines in the world.

² <http://www.aqmcopper.com/s/CopperFundamentals.asp>

This company belongs to a major mining holding group, integrated by Chilean and Japanese capital, with operations in Latin America and Asia. It began its operations on the year 2000, projecting a lifespan of twenty-five years according to its proven reserves and production rate. After ten years of operations had produced approximately US\$ 8bn of economic value, and increased its proven reserves to a lifespan of one hundred years. However, a recent environmental incident, where it risked its license to operate, showed that the company's relations with its stakeholders required a significant reframing if its aim is to build a sustainable operation for the future.

I chose this company to explore the answers to my questions because it offered the rare opportunity of researching not just the utilitarian concept set as a strategic intention but on trusting relationships at the core of its aim of change. This means researching into the formation of a regime of practice that even when it can have a utilitarian purpose can be understood as a phronetic practice in itself, a practice which leaves no trace and becomes itself an action of subject and identity formation.

The company management formulated in March 2010, just a few months before I began my research, a strategy they called "sustainability strategy 2010 – 2020", where at its core was the aim of producing simultaneously economic, social and environmental value. At the core of producing this "sustainable value", they defined as imperative building trusting relationships with all their stakeholders.

STRUCTURE OF THIS WORK

This work is organised into six chapters, which lead to discuss implications for researching practices with of a non-dualistic understanding of leadership, forming of trusting relationships and patterns of interaction.

The first chapter discusses the theoretical implications of studying leadership from a non-dualistic ontology. I have also discussed here the concepts of “strategy as practice” and “trusting relationships” in the same perspective.

The second chapter discusses the overall approach to research and addresses three questions: what are we observing? What does observing mean? And by which methods can we do this with a non-dualistic ontology? In this chapter the case details are introduced.

The third chapter discusses the experience of the research process, including a more detailed description and analysis of the research methods used for constructing the case events. Some of the methods constructed for researching in this project failed to perform what was intended and this is analysed in the context of the case development.

Chapter 4 presents two types of material: (a) Contextual information about the state of trusting relationships between some of the company’s stakeholders at the beginning of the research process and (b) Eight events that contribute different dimensions of the study purpose. These events show: (1) How the process fails to produce the intended outcome and how the sustainability strategy fails (2) The long process of subjectification by

which one of the executives develops an ethical stance that allows the assembly of an “environment” that leads later to the formulation of the “Sustainability Strategy (3) How the strategy intentions are communicated through elaborate and rhetorical methods containing a large amount of metaphor and symbolism which contradict the settings and performativity qualities of the communications (4 and 5) An illustration of how the top executive team interacted, which seemed overtaken by the habituated practice of the hierarchical and functionalised roles of the company practices. Their interaction was also constructed through practices of increasing differentiation, which made the group unable to establish a reflective relation to their practices and to the intended trusting relationships declared by the strategy (6 and 7). A demonstration of the reduced possibilities of subjectifying trusting relationships and leadership in the midst of differentiating patterns of interaction. And (8) how the context of these company practices influences and has agency over how the research is conducted and the type of outcomes that become possible through it.

Chapter 5 provides the analysis of the events examined in the previous chapter and details the more important findings of the research process.

Chapter 6 discusses the implications of these findings for the understanding of leadership in a non-dualistic perspective. It also discusses the relevance that reflexive interactional patterns of behaviour have with copper mining and its possibility of building sustainability futures. I discuss here the implications for alternative interactional patterns that may be constructed through the same process of interaction and the implications that a non-

dualistic, positive reciprocity has for researching practices in complex settings.

CHAPTER 1: THEORY BACKGROUND

TOWARDS A NON-DUALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGY OF LEADERSHIP

A dualist epistemology has dominated leadership studies underpinned by the assumption that knowing can be done by conceiving the phenomenon as bounded and concrete, locatable and observable as a thing in itself. This dualist epistemology has led to the formulation of a rich array of leadership theory, which has influenced practice and research.

However, it seems that choosing between opposing dualities, such as individual/collective (Fairhurst, 2001), transformative/transactional (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978), entities/relational (Uhl-Bien, 2006), has been under-problematised, ignoring the consequences of dealing with such complex phenomenon in this way.

Fairhurst (2001: 380) argues about the inconvenience of choosing opposites as a form of dealing with these dualities, especially because its effect in marginalising and elevating mainstream perspectives over emerging ones. Focusing on one of the opposing sides of the dilemma, as collective/individual apparent opposites, means that one or the other remains bypassed, and the description of the phenomena simplified. Too much focus on the “collective” means overlooking the dynamic of the “individual” whatever its conception, or otherwise too much emphasis on the “individual” send to the “background” the role of the collective in the presence of leaders. There are a number of

important dualisms that have pervaded leadership research, which have produced fertile ground because of the creative tensions that this dialogue produces within the research community.

Fairhurst (2001: 382) proposes a dialectic form of inquiry to deal with these dualisms, “which holds that both opposing poles of dialectic thinking are important regardless of how visible or dominant either pole might be”. Instead of the “either – or” logic of choosing between apparent poles, she suggests a “both – and” orientation in which instead of the marginalised use of the opposing pole to contrast one or the other, a dialogue is established between both perspectives. She suggests that such an orientation can bring more complex understanding and complex inquiry into what constitutes leadership (2001: 425).

A more coherent position with a complex view of leadership, especially with a “generalised” type, as discussed by Morin (2008), should question dualism altogether and abandon any attempt to elevate a phenomenon over others. Instead of logic of “both-and” as a form of resolving the paradox of dualism, Griffin (2004) suggests a logic of unity, which preserves the paradox, introducing a relation between antinomians that allow them to exist “at the same time”.

In this perspective, action cannot be separated from the subject construction, and subject’s actions and context cannot be separated from each other as well. It means replacing the conceptual understanding of participation as an autonomous individual participating in a whole from which is separated, for a self and context emerging simultaneously from interaction. Leadership should

not be seen here as an autonomous entity making decisions separated from its context, but embedded in it, and its presence possible only in given contexts.

A non-dualistic epistemology gives place to process philosophy (Chia & Nayak, 2011), as I have described in the introduction, which gives primacy to “becoming” (Chia & Tsoukas, 2002) and the forming process of interaction brought about by difference (Bateson, 1991). Process philosophy sees change as constitutive of reality, where entities and its forming process have no primacy over each other, conceiving the forming process of subject and subjectivities as an eco-logical process of mutual composition by actions.

This view to studying leadership, has received a number of titles, the most common of them is “relational approach to leadership” (Hosking, 2011). Instead of focusing on the ‘entities’, as leader and followers or leader and context, a relational approach attends to the processes of relational formation, in which actors are phenomena of the process, background in relation to contextual foreground.

This perspective needs to be distinguished from leadership relationships: configuring leadership in terms of relationships amongst or between people and their contexts; and also distinguished from “relational leadership” (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011; Uhl-Bien, 2006) which acknowledges the distinction between relationships and relationality in explaining the emergence of leadership, but still keeps relationality as something that happens between already existing entities such as an organisation and its members.

By contrast, the non-dualistic perspective of a relational approach to leadership addresses entities as secondary to the mutual composition of actions in forming

practices that explain the forming of subjects and subjectivities. It is practices, as acts of organising, which constitute the objects of attention in this study, and not actors that have immanence (Schatzki, Knorr Cetina, & von Savigny, 2005).

I therefore adopt the terminology of “a non-dualistic epistemology of leadership” to refer to this processual, profoundly relational approach. However I acknowledge that it poses a number of challenges for its definition and use in empirical research. So defining what I mean by a non-dualistic epistemology becomes relevant, so that the overarching orientation by which we discuss leadership and its context theoretically can remain coherent through this work.

An empirical examination of leadership, characterised by the strategic intent of forming trusting relationships and viewed from a non-dualistic perspective, brings with it a number of implications. These need to be discussed in order to first define the boundaries of how topics are to be empirically dealt with.

First, I will explore the theoretical foundation of a non-dualistic ontology of leadership. For this, I will explain how leadership in complex domains has been treated in mainstream literature. I draw on the notion of “transformative causality” offered by Stacey (2010), an alternative perspective. This alternative regards leadership as part of the same forming process of subjects and subjectivities it contributes in its formation, referring to a relational perspective (Bateson, 2000) and process philosophy (Chia & Nayak, 2011).

After this, I will examine what leadership means as a subjectification process, the forming of the subject of leadership, from a two-fold perspective: (a) a relational one which allows us to conceive it as emerging in the midst of

detailed sequences of interaction, (along with many other subjects and subjectivities), and (b) the processes by which subjectivities form and change.

Then I will introduce the concept of “difference” (Bateson, 1991) as a key organising principle and as a foundation of a relational ontology.

Finally, I will set the foundations of this perspective of leadership within the concept of “care of the self” (Foucault, 2005, 1988), parrhesia and its implications in the “conduct of conducts”, the governmentality practice (Foucault M. , 2010) in the forming process of a “regimes of practice”.

A second topic I will explore in this chapter is the understanding of trusting relationships from a practice perspective (Schatzki, 2001, 2005). I will propose that trust, as a relational concept, can be conceived as a form of engagement with the world characterised by one of two types of care. Drawing on Solomon’s (2007) concept of emotion, I will explore the composition of trusting relationships as a process of subjectifying a relation of care and value. I will critique the possibility of building trusting relationships as a deliberate and individuated action and propose it as emerging from a specific type of relationship with the “other” and “things”.

Finally, since the study of leadership in this work is situated in a strategy implementation process, it is relevant to introduce the discussion of strategy as practice (Whittington, 2006; Chia & MacKay, 2007) and the stance required to keep a non-dualistic perspective coherent throughout this work. For this, I contrast strategy from a representational perspective to a relational perspective, consistent with the “practice turn” (Schatzki, Knorr Cetina, & von Savigny, 2005; Chia & Holt, 2011).

The following figure tabulate how a non-dualist perspective and how the many concepts link together in this chapter.



Figure 1. Towards A Non-Dualistic Epistemology of Leadership

As can be observed in the figure, I am presenting this perspective not just as another form of conceiving leadership practice, but as a different epistemology of leadership formation and ontology, which I think has profound implications. This epistemology can be characterised by a relational process of formation, which assumes logic of transformative causality (Stacey R. D., 2011) is brought about by the immanence of interaction and difference. Time is constituted by

trajectory, but by movement conceiving every phenomenon as emergent. Practice theory seems to suit the criteria of this epistemology and acts as an overarching frame of the development of specific understanding of leadership from a relational perspective. The very central concept for understanding the emergence of leadership in this work is Care of the Self (Foucault M. , 2010, 2005,1988) and its relationship with the formation of regimes of truth, by which people conduct their behaviour as a governmentality practice, is central to understand the formation of practices. I focused my research on the formation of a specific regime of truth, the formation of trust in the midst of the implementation of a Sustainability Strategy, and so I give a special attention to the trust and strategy as practices.

TRANSFORMATIVE CAUSALITY

Researching leadership in complexity has been underpinned by various ontological assumptions. A key distinction, which allows a classification of these perspectives, is the way in which the research literature deals with reflexivity and dualism. Realists often assimilate concepts derived from complexity sciences (Langton, 1996; Gell-Mann, 1994; Kaufman, 1995; Holland, 1995; Goodwin, 1994) and their analogical use in the social sciences. Some claim that organisations actually *are* living systems and they give emphasis to the implied order present in the simple rules of behaviour - such as caring relationships (Wheatley, 1999) - or the importance of conflict in shaping complex adaptive systems (Pascale, Millerman, and Gioja, 2000).

The common thread of these perspectives, according to Stacey (2010:32), is that they all hold a “formative causality”, where the cause of a form “...is the process of formation itself where a mature version of the phenomenon is already present at the beginning and is unfolded through a formative process of maturing”. Even when writers with these perspectives advocate the concept that order emerges from individual agents following rules, they also assume the existence of hidden orders (Wheatley, 1999). These orders may be “organisational souls” (Lewin and Regine, 2000) or “organisational attractors” (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1998), positioned above and beyond interaction and acting as the source of stability and change. Furthermore, what these perspectives suggest is the pre-existence of agents and entities as autonomous, deliberative and self-created - that they are not shaped by the

formation process itself and that they enjoy a privileged position, giving form to organisational phenomena.

The issue with this ontological stance is that these “orders” are assumed to be intelligible and, as a result, it is possible for an autonomous individual to make rational choices. This perspective underpins “methodological individualism” (or collectivism), which pervades most management research and which has been extensively criticised (Chia and Holt, 2011; Chia & MacKay, 2007; Ingold, 2000). As stated by Stacey (2010:86), this is the same framework of causality that underlies most management discourse: that simple rules can be understood as formative causes which managers can choose to implement guided by their choices. “If they are chosen correctly, then managers get what they want ” (2010:89).

This ontology allows its advocates to conceptualise leadership in complexity from a dualist perspective, which distinguishes between the realities of the individual and the organisation, rendering leadership as the operation of an autonomous agent. An example of this perspective is the “Enabling Leadership” (Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey, 2008:206) concept, which suggests that leaders “can create the general structure of complex networks and the conditions in which sophisticated networks can evolve, promote interdependency and foster (generative) tension”. Here, leadership stands aside from interaction, in the privileged position of influencing the interaction process of other entities to which it belongs, whilst assuming a causal relationship with organising.

Plowman and Duchon suggest (2008) that there are some leadership myths that have been dissipated. One of these is the agentic notion of leadership, in which leaders are supposed to specify desired futures, direct change, eliminate disorder and influence others in order to generate the desired results. They suggest that these myths should be replaced if an understanding of organisational reality shifts to the concept of emergent self-organisation where people and groups take adaptive actions, both locally and in the present, without the direction of a specific agent.

Plowman and Duchon (2008) suggest that, in an evolving perspective of organisation, leaders have agentic roles, such as providing links to emergent structures, making sense of patterns and encouraging processes that enable a developing order. In a similar vein, Hazy (2008) suggests the existence of generative, unifying and convergent leadership. Hence, even when there is a shift in the agentic role of leadership from an individualistic to a self-organised perspective, these authors have not gone beyond methodological individualism and the notion of leadership as located and autonomous.

Leadership from this perspective is conceived as pre-existent to interaction and able to produce deeds that do not belong to the same group of actions. This way of considering leadership and organisation, which reduces its complexity, has profound implications in the way we consider our world and, as such, has been denounced by many (Morin, 2008; Bateson, 1991) as a source of man's struggles. A non-dualistic perspective avoids not just the simplification of leadership but also a different attitude towards the complex and the uncertain.

An alternative option to the formative causality stance is to take a coherent understanding of what self-organisation and emergence are – which Stacey (2010) defines from a “transformative causality” perspective. Organisational features and unpredictable futures emerge in the present, in interaction between actants, which themselves emerge relationally through a reflexive process of formation. The term “interaction” refers to how actions have an effect upon themselves – creating other actions whose associations are able to construct subjectivities and which, in turn, belong to the reflexive action of subjects constructed by these same interactions.

It is in the sphere of these interactions that identities, structures, technologies, etc., emerge – not as reified objects, but as descriptive possibilities of interactions in a “becoming” process (Chia and Tsoukas, 2002). Czarniawska (2008) names these associations of actions as “action nets”: actions that come from – and create – additional actions. Law (2011) states that these take place in multiple and synchronic ways. At the same time, interaction refers to a relational phenomenon where “the betweenness of action” (Cooper, 2005) is that which is relevant, not action, which holds no value without its relationality.

In the MMC case, in which I explore this concept empirically, it is possible to locate people, the productive processes and the technologies used to extract, concentrate and transport the copper concentrate. However, when the question arises of who is *acting* on these materialities, their location becomes elusive and almost untraceable, eliciting the material semiotics (Law, 2009) of relationality.

TRANSFORMATIVE CAUSALITY AS A RELATIONAL FORMING PROCESS

Contrasting with the “formative causality” perspective described by Stacey (2010:89), a “transformative causality” perspective favours local and present interactions between diverse and heterogeneous actants that form population-wide patterns and are, at the same time, formed by them.

In the case study, as will be shown in more detail, it cannot be taken for granted that just because there is a prescriptive position of power (such as an individual in a managerial position) that this subjectivity will emerge and have pragmatic effects. I assume that every action is relationally charged with offers of meaning and identity definitions which, when confirmed, rejected or ignored in the flow of interaction, can bring to existence all sorts of phenomena. Power struggles are always relational efforts, mostly tacit, and born from a process to control the edition of narratives as analogies to the flow of actions.

Predictability and comprehensive intelligibility are not possible within this concept of self-organisation. This does not mean that the future is a matter of chance, since it is the product of the interaction of all the actants that constitutes a given action net and the latency of indeterminacy. Patterns arise, but cannot be traced as projections of the past into the future. Possibilities are there, but they are incomprehensible, and thus unintelligible.

Even with a carefully planned agenda around which interaction is to take place, it is not possible to find a blueprint for events to be performed, the identities of actors who are to be enrolled or the actions to be created.

As Nayak and Chia (2011) assert, "...organisations are theoretical reifications that refer to slower-changing configurations of social relationships resulting from the sustained regularising of human exchange." This is to say that every regularisation is reification – an invention of the limited calculus that is used to analogically describe organisation. These reifications are affected by what Whitehead (1985: 7) calls "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness", which states that "among primary elements in nature, as apprehended in our immediate experience, there is no element whatsoever which possesses the character of simple location".

RELATIONAL COMMUNICATION: A CLOSER LOOK AT INTERACTION

It seems, as suggested by de Certeau (1997), that when closer attention is paid to the details of interaction, and we stop trying to abstract organisational reality from it, it is possible to consider a non-dualistic perspective of organisation where there is no privileged position to define the rules on which actants will interact. Moreover, looking closer at interaction, practices seem formed by the temporarily situated sequence of actions, in which actions and reactions cannot be understood as neutral to each other.

I find the theoretical foundations of the concept of "relational communication" (Bateson, 1972, 2001) useful in this regard – a concept whose contributions can be summarised in the following two propositions, suggested by Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson, (1967):

1) Every act can be interpreted and acquires a message value (a difference that makes a difference) which contains information. Since there is no possibility of a non-action, there is always the possibility of creating a subjective position in interaction. As Cooper (2005) asserts, the latency of what becomes possible is unintelligible and can never be apprehended, so the presence of subjectivities has, at the same time, endless possibilities.

At the same time, given that discourses and habituated practices give context to the situation, there are constraints to interpretation, which do not determine, but limit its possibilities. Both sending and not sending a letter can be regarded as a communicative action, rendering some form of reaction, which sets the context for its meaning. Action draws results from a recursive enactment of interaction and always creates some form of subjectivity due to the presence of interpretation.

2) The second concept relevant to define relational communication is that all action has a multilevel meaning. The content level, which “reports” representational content, remains meaningless unless contextualised by a second and simultaneous “relational” level. Action has no determinacy, even as a “random” object or events, unless inscribed in a pattern. It forms a kind of temporary limit that bounds actions together. This “relational” level is where actions recursively “negotiate” meaning within interaction. It is in this level where the

definitions of the relationship and identity are constructed, conserved and transformed.

These “levels” have no *a priori* ontological distinction – they become constituted by their inscription in a pattern formed by the unfolding process of interaction, where we have to acknowledge the effectual relationality of every action. Just like a letter in a word, or a word in a phrase, so context has no ontological status outside the mutually constituted content and relational level. Hence, every action (or any type of manifestation) contains traces of its contexts and these contexts can only be constituted by the presence of action, which obtains its determinacy in context. Meaning then is contingent on how the sequence of recursive communication events (actions) is punctuated in the interpretation process.

I suggest that the relationality of action – with avoids the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, and should be regarded in its multiplicity in creating possible subjectivities – constitutes a useful concept to understanding the organising phenomena as a transformative causality process. This type of causality explains the emergence of subjectivities from a non-dualist position embedded in the flow of interaction.

POWER AS IMMANENT TO INTERACTION

From these propositions, it becomes important to highlight that action itself has no power to create practices – the material nexus that govern the meaning of these actions or creates them in the formation of subjectivities or institutional arrangements. Actions acquire their commune, active quality, and become non-propositional “offers” of meaning only in interaction in which they can be determined. It is by its *confirmation* (Leone Cissna & Sieburg, 1982) in interaction that action acquires significance and constructs all sorts of subjectivities, a concept that I will empirically explore further in this work.

Simultaneously, action may become rejected (converting “offers” into other possible latent meanings). Action can be ignored as well as constitute an identity factor, where more of the same is maintained (thereby preserving what constitutes the habituated practices that make context immanent).

An important consequence of this perspective is that there is no vacuum of practice – there is always a pragmatic effect of action. The iteration of patterns of actions always has consequences in the types of identities, subjectivities and practices that become enacted.

What I would particularly like to highlight here is that power to subjectify practices does not reside in the “offer” in the response (which is an “offer” as well), but in the endless and multiple sequence of “offer-response-offer”. Without the “offer”, there is no value in the “response”, as both actions in interaction have the same status and emerge from endless possibilities.

Bateson (1936; 1972) elaborates on these types of communicative concepts and situates them in a broader frame of communicative patterns, on which I will

elaborate in the next chapter in order for it to be analysed, not just as an abstract concept, but also from a practice perspective.

We also have to be aware that actions acquire their meaning by acts of interpretation, which are not of their own making, but follow the enactment of discourses, which make them intelligible. Discourses are central to the social construction of reality and the negotiation of meaning in the present and local contexts of interaction. They “provide the means through which experience is ordered and sense is made” (Clegg & Kornberger, 2011; Weick, 2001).

Intelligibility, then, becomes an important factor in the process of interpretation - enabling or restricting possibilities and shaping patterns of action. The “new” can be enacted into practices when it makes sense within the scope of intelligibility.

DIFFERENCE AS AN ORGANISING PRINCIPLE

That which organises is not a substance. As Chia and Nayak (2011: 287) note, “...things are relationally produced which cannot be construed by their own making but because of *difference* as their main organising process”.

Bateson elaborates (1991: 219), “difference...is not (a) material and cannot be localised...to locate difference, i.e., to delimit the context of an interface, would be to posit a world incapable of change. Zeno’s arrow could never move from a position “here” in this context to a position “there” in the next context.” Difference, then, cannot be placed in time or remain in whatever time it is

located. It is not a quantity but a threshold. What triggers a response is not how much energy is in place, but the tipping point of what makes a difference. Difference, as an organising phenomenon, requires a catalyst to cross a liminality of action that allows it to be noted as such to produce other actions.

The opposite of difference is redundancy – that which produces no reaction and frames action as neutral. Bateson explains that what defines the existence of something is that it becomes a “difference that makes difference” (2000:316). Leadership, trust and strategy cannot be located in a bounded individual, quantified or generalised from one context to another. Difference as an organising principle makes us raise our views from the atomistic view of a bounded phenomenon to its emergence embedded in the ecology of relationality.

TIME AS THE FORM OF ACTION

Embedded in a relational perspective, which acknowledges difference as an organising principle, is the meaning of time. When time is not “spatialised”, (Deleuze, 1991:104), movement and trajectory are distinguishable from each other. There is no confusion between “becoming” with “being” and “process” with “end- states”.

The past and the present interact in ways that reveal that the past becomes immanent in the present. The past is not the present that once was, but is inextricably implicated in the present as what was – its absence is what constitutes its existence in the present. Far from being a mere dimension of time, the past becomes the synthesis of all time in which the present and the future are only dimensions. Alternatively “...we cannot say that it was. It no longer exists; it does not exist; it insists; it is” (Deleuze, 1994:80, in Chia and Nayak, 2011:295). What differentiates the past from the present is action and movement. “The present is “that which is acting”; the past is “that which acts no longer”.” (Chia & Nayak, 2011:295)

Consequentially, time is understood as an unfolding force that carries the past into the present. The future – rather than a container or axis in which events are deemed to unfold over time – is equivalent to movement, not to trajectory. Interaction in the living present, the organising process, “produces nothing further than more interaction” (Stacey 2011:241).

Time is not a dimension, but the form that unfolds by action. Since there is no discrete trajectory to measure, it can only be discerned by experience. As Deleuze (1991: 32) says “experience exceeds our concepts by presenting novelty, and this raw experience of difference, by actualising an idea, unfettered by our prior categories, forces us to invent new ways of thinking”. Experience is, then, the creation of difference that makes difference.

This perspective – which reinstates experience as the “becoming” of difference as central to the organising phenomenon – is a call for complicating our thinking about the organising phenomena.

Giving primacy to experience in the organising process distances its conceptualisation from understanding it as the instrumental and simplified perspective that has caused the organising process to be understood as self-contained and isolated from some of the social, environmental and economic crises that have occurred in the last few years (Stacey, 2010). It also allows us to understand the organising phenomena well beyond our capacity to codify and represent.

As Morin (2008:98) states, “strategy is not about an omniscient thinking, it is always local, situated in a given time and place. Neither is it complete thinking, for it knows that there is always uncertainty”. Strategy is a call to face this uncertainty, but also to accept the limitations of our thinking when facing organising phenomena and preventing the many consequences of a simplified way of considering them, limiting it to our understanding and ignoring any ambivalence.

A relational comprehension of social processes leads us to think about ecologies and not individuals, to locate causality in interaction instead of in entities, to understand time as movement and to gain peripheral vision and connectedness (Cooper, 2005). It also acknowledges that oblique strategies (Chia, 2011) and indirect action (Chia and Holt, 2009) can do more than the intention to apprehend and control events.

This epistemology, which sees organisations as “...immanently generated and constantly recreated” (Tsoukas & Dooley, 2011), poses a challenge to the concept of leadership in the complex domain of organising as an individuated and locatable phenomenon.

A RELATIONAL ORIENTATION TO LEADERSHIP

Research into leadership in complexity has usually adopted a “substance ontology” approach (Chia & Nayak, 2011), where practices located in specific agents account for given effects in a causal relationship between phenomena. The description of these actions, usually described as enabling and generative, belongs to individuals who are aware of the emergent nature of a phenomenon and learn to become complexity leaders (Goldstein, Hazy, & Lichtenstein, 2010; Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009; Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2008) – able to articulate actions with specific effects over the conditions which “produce” emergence.

It is this causal relationship – which is challenged throughout this work – which assumes leadership with no privileged position is able to “influence” emergence or lead to form a phenomenon. A relational orientations conceptualise it as an effect on a reflexive relation, constituted by actions which simultaneously form the subject of leadership and subjectivities of leadership. This suggests that there are actions which constitute “offers” of subjectivities and open up possibilities of constituting subjects and subjectivities, including leadership. Such offers are not of their own making but are to be understood as relationally-constituted and beyond intelligibility.

If there is no advantageous position *per se* in facing a complex situation for the creation of subjectivities, institutions and identities that are brought together

through organising phenomena, then what constitutes the phenomena of leadership in these domains?

In the literature, leadership from a relational perspective is conceived in at least two different conceptions, which need to be distinguished. One is called 'relational leadership' (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Drath, 2001), which understands leadership as relationally formed, and as a process of structuring in the interaction of already formed subjects. What distinguishes this perspective with a relational perspective to leadership (Hosking, 2011: 458) is that it sees leadership, and any other identity and subjectivity as always emergent in relational processes. All are types of actions that have presence in interaction, such as conversations and gestures, even those that are anticipated but not fulfilled which constitute in a dialogical dance with the subjectivities we call leadership, identities and trust. A relational process which seems to fulfil the criteria in this respect, which can be considered as able to constitute subjects and subjectivities is the one proposed by Foucault (2005; 1988). It is the subjectification process, the process by which the subject comes to being, through Care of the Self, which I will explore in this respect in the next section.

CARE OF THE SELF, CONDUCTING THE SELF AND OTHERS

An assertion like “be the change you want to see in the world,”³ or “I am the master of my fate – I am the captain of my soul”⁴, points us to a non-dualistic notion of leadership that subverts dichotomies such as ‘in’ and ‘out’”, and defines the relation of the self with the self as an agency of leadership.

The “practices of the self” (Foucault 2005, 1988), as a phenomenon that overcomes the dichotomy of “in and out” in a relation of the self with the self (Foucault, 1988, 2005) is a radical proposition, which departs from the mainstream concepts of leadership. It implies that the subject of leadership is simultaneously its object. As Foucault (1988: 230) states: “the care of the self is the care of the activity and not the care of the soul as substance.” Leadership becomes a non-locatable, incommensurable and insubstantial product of difference.

Leadership is viewed here not as the result of actions or virtues of individuals, but as a relational phenomenon. I recognise that leadership implies a capacity to induce or initiate action and am sceptical of this implication on ontological

3 Arun Gandhi's summary in direct quotation in "Arun Gandhi Shares the Mahatma's Message" by Michel W. Potts, in *India - West* [San Leandro, California] Vol. XXVII, No. 13 (1 February 2002) p. A34.

4 Nelson Mandela's letter to Francois Pienaar, captain of the South African Rugby Team, 1995, based on Hensley's poem 'Invictus' (1875- 1902)

grounds. However, I am curious about (and take seriously) the discourses of leadership associated with my research.

Leadership in this perspective becomes a relational phenomenon whose presence within interaction raises the possibility of forming subjectivities. Its form stems from difference in interaction, by its confirmation, rejection, or disconfirmation as pragmatic contextual effects (Rogers & Escudero, 2004; Leone Cissna & Sieburg, 1982). What makes a difference here are not actions themselves but difference as a purely relational concept (Bateson, 1972, 1992, 2000), the “betweenness” of actions (Cooper, 2005), which brings presence to what is latent in ceaseless sea of possibilities.

The experience of the sunset by the sea, the contemplation of a wild landscape, or the mechanism of a given technology are all examples of events which can produce experiences as deep as observing courage, humility, coherence, sacrifice, self-respect and happiness. Leadership as a relational phenomenon is an effect upon experience that transforms the experience of the self – a subjectification action. Leadership here can be considered only as an effect, with no substance, in the midst of interaction, as the realised ability to form identities, institutions and subjectivities.

Foucault’s notion on subject constitution (2005; 1988) has received much attention as a result of his initial, and controversial, notion that subjects and subjectivities are products of knowledge/power relations, which account for the subject in a historical framework as an “artefact”. “The individual, with his identity and characteristics, is the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires, forces. Discipline makes individuals;

it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and instruments of its exercise” (Foucault, 1979:170).

Foucault initially denounces both the idea that the subject is the sovereign of power and the notion that one is nothing but what one makes of oneself. However, it is important to read this assertion as a criticism of the Kantian idea, which attributes power to human action in spite of the web of constraints in which human beings are thrown, rather than to his ultimate aim of distancing himself from a structured understanding of the subject constitution, which seems to have been his lifelong project (Foucault M. , 1991).

An ontological reading of Foucault’s later work – as suggested by Gordon (1999), and which Davidson (1986) situated in the “ethical” later period of his work (archaeology and genealogy being his earlier themes) – from the publication of the second volume of *History of Sexuality* (Foucault, 1988), conceives freedom as a condition of being human, and not as property that can be expropriated because of the historical constraints of existence.

For Foucault, it seems that even when the self is not self-constructed, it is discovered and then invented by itself. He does not deny the existence of structure, but acknowledges that the subject maintains agency in a structure that can restrict, constrain and delimit action. Furthermore, “ he acknowledges that the subject keeps agency even in the domain of structure that produces modes of behaviour, fabricates objects and create realities, showing that the tension between structure and agency can be preserved without undermining the other” (Gordon, 1999:397).

For Foucault, freedom is a condition of power, since power is an action that modifies other actions and “is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free”. Thus “...power only exists if a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions may open up” (Foucault, 1982:789). His “ethical” period constitutes an elaboration of the structure/agency relationship. During this period, Foucault introduced his concept of “technologies of the self” (Foucault M. , 1988; 1991), in which he elaborated on the ancient notion of “the care of the self”. This concept was prominent in the pre-classical past but was obscured later by the Delphic principle of “know thyself” which, for Foucault, constituted an inversion of the hierarchy of these two principles.

One of the consequences of this inversion is that the principle of “know thyself” led to the paradoxical situation that the self is simultaneously known as a possibility of knowledge, as well as an object of empirical enquiry. This suggests that there is the possibility of a self that can be rejected, liberated or renounced. Foucault (2005) argues against the existence of a transcendental self, but he is in favour of the possibility of a transformation of the self, saying that we are fortunate to have this opportunity – a self that can be converted into an art work.

For Foucault, care of the self is not a sort of meditative state, fixing attention to the internal experience of oneself. Instead, it is related to actions taken, by which the self forms itself, and is not concerned with the search for a transcendental experience of oneself. “It accentuates an ontological notion of freedom as the possibility of being human, and not human will, which can

coherently stress the idea of improving one's self and transcending one's limits" (Martin et al, 1988).

The self is the equivalent to what, in transcendental terms is "the soul" and which Foucault compares to what is upright, good and great. He quotes Seneca, by saying "What else should you call such a soul than a god dwelling as a guest in a human body? A soul like this may descend into a Roman knight as well as into a freedman's son or a slave" (Gordon, 1999: 408). By this, he suggests that the soul corresponds to any status or condition where the only condition is the performance of a practice that can reflexively constitute the self.

Care of the self entails one simple but essential consequence for our purposes: that the ruler is simultaneously the ruled. This is, for Foucault, the principle of government: "the fact that man is one and the other at the same time, through an interplay of directions sent and received, of checks, of appeals, of decisions taken" (Foucault, 1988:87). By contrast, this definition is illustrated by him in the concept of the tyrant, "as a person who is evil towards his subjects because he is a slave to his appetites; his immoral comportment towards others is a consequence of neglecting self care" (cited in Gordon, 1999:409).

This notion of care resembles Heidegger's reference to the way by which the "being-in-the-world" is concerned, "tuned in" to the other, its constraints and possibilities (Gordon, 1999). Foucault does not mean that as a result of this relation the self can become an autonomous, self-contained source of decisions. What he means is that he acknowledges the self as embedded in the immanence of practices – practices which are always situated in an emergent

web of constraints but with endless possibilities of constituting a practice of the self as an aesthetic and ethical project.

CARE OF THE SELF AND ACTION NETS

Care of the self, as the product of actions embedded in the immanence of practices, is what makes the concept of “action nets” (Czarniawska, 2008) valuable for analytic purposes. This allows me to trace how elements in a web of interaction “take the form that they do in more or less precarious interaction with one another” (Law, 2008: 632).

Leadership becomes an “act of organising” (Fairhurst and Grant, 2010: 181), a practice emerging from interactions with no ontological, privileged position, but interpreted and subjected relationally because of its capacity to subjectify truth in others. As a phenomenon, brought up pragmatically by difference, leadership produces subjectivities that become powerful in forming subjects and further subjectivities.

Leadership, as the craft of the self, emerges because of the reflexivity of actions. As we have explored previously, these actions cannot be predicted, since they result from the endless possibilities available from any given situation. As a result, there is no guarantee whatsoever that “offering” a given subjectivity will be confirmed by a subsequent action, thus able to construct a

specific type of subject, subjectivity or practice. Leadership is always a precarious phenomenon.

CARE OF THE SELF AND PHRONESIS

What particularly stands out from these practices “is the elaboration of one’s life as a personal work of art” (Foucault, 2005:43), which situates them in an aesthetical and ethical domain of the subject constitution. Furthermore, Foucault elaborates on this notion as a practice related to “the art of living”, where “the art of living and the art of oneself are identical”(2005: 86, 206). This makes it equivalent to the “search for happiness” (2005: 92), “the subject fulfilment” (2005: 126), the “identification of existence with the art of oneself” (2005: 178) and the “discovery of which knowledge enables us to live properly” (2005: 178). In this sense, the care of the self is a phronetic practice “which gives special importance to the ethical and aesthetic dimensions on how to live well, a practice as a *style* of being”. (Chia and Holt 2011:107).

CARE OF THE SELF AND GOVERNMENTALITY

“Conduct of conducts” is Foucault’s (2010) definition of “governmentality” – where government of the self meets with the self of others in creating the intertwined formation of complex practices of government technologies, in

which the “other” constructs its own definitions of truth in its practices in the world.

Care of the self is not concerned with governing, but is related to the way by which subjects are formed, mobilised and work through the choices, desires, aspirations, needs, wants and lifestyles of individuals and groups (Dean, 2010) in the creation of regimes of practices. In summary, care of the self relates to a practice of creating the subject and the potential subjectivities of the “other” through the creation of the semantic object of leadership itself.

Dean (2010: 32) proposes “regimes of practices” which he suggests “...possess a logic which is irreducible to the explicit intentions of any actor but yet evince an orientation toward a particular matrix of ends and purposes”. In this process, he suggests (Dean, 2010: 43) it is possible to distinguish three dimensions of this practice:

1. Characteristic forms of visibility, ways of seeing and perceiving.
2. Distinctive ways of thinking and questioning, relying on definitive vocabularies and procedures for the production of truth.
3. Specific ways of acting, intervening and directing, made up of particular rationality, and relying upon definite mechanisms, techniques and technologies.

These regimes of practices presuppose the unequal relation of the self with itself – the exercise of power of the self-subjectifying the self. This relation is essentially an act of interpretation of the self as an entity that, without substance and location, is able to define its ethical and aesthetic dimensions.

This non-propositional, ontological interpretation process governs the relation of

the self with itself, but demonstrates, at the same time, the care of the self as a relation with the other. The process is defined by pursuing relational practices such as love, trust, hate and resentment. The transactions involved in this relation can thus be seen as secondary to the immanence of these practices.

In this section, I have explored the foundations for a relational, non-dualist ontology examination of leadership. Leadership is exposed as a forming process with no pre-existence to the subjectivities emerging in interaction, but instead a relational phenomenon that is formed by and forms subjectivities in the midst of interaction along with the process of organising. As a result, I have given special attention to the care of the self as a subjectifying and governmentality process in the formation of leadership and other subjectivities.

The empirical examination of this perspective on leadership is situated in MMC – a copper mining company. More specifically, it is situated within the relation of the executive team with the company's stakeholders in the midst of a declared strategic intention of forming trusting relationships with all of them.

TRUST AS PRACTICE

Trusting relationships are better understood as ontic states that only come to our attention when broken. The issue with trusting relationships is not so much how they are sustained, but how they are formed and repaired. In this work I explore how leadership is constituted in the forming of trust and if it is possible for it to emerge in this type of environment. This is relevant because the strategic intent formulated by the executive committee of MMC was to generate trusting relationships with all their stakeholders. This was constructed without questioning what the generation of these relationships would entail and without any concept of themselves as sovereign agents able to form this subjectivity.

If we review mainstream trust research (e.g. Lyon, Möllering, & Saunders, 2012; Schoorman, Mayer, & Davis, 2007) we can appreciate that this field is vast and has a common ontology which acknowledges trust as a phenomenon which occurs between individuals, within and between organisations and across different levels, involving cognitive dimensions and dispositional aspects.

From a common definition – defined as “the psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the behaviour of another” (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998) – trust has evolved from an attribute-based perspective to a more relational one, and from there to a more contextual based perspective. Contextual and cultural differences have been studied (Saunders, Skinner, Gillespie, Dietz, & Lewicki, 2010), as well as factors explaining trustworthiness (Dietz, Gillespie, & Chao, 2010) and the effects in organisational dimensions of behaviour (Sousa-lima,

Michel, & Caetano, 2013). Another area of research has focussed on inter-organisational trust and, particularly, on how it is created, maintained and repaired (Kroeger, 2012; Zaheer & Harris, 2005).

It seems that trust can be conceptualised as something that people, groups and institutions either do or do not possess, constructed through specific types of capabilities, actions and attitudes. This is the perspective that has underpinned mainstream research of organisational preconditions for constructing trust and mistrust (Saunders, Skinner, Gillespie, Dietz, & Lewicki, 2010).

From a practice perspective, it is held that it is not just the relationship between individuals but sites of intelligibility in which “events, entities and meaning help compose one another” (Schatzki, 2005). Trust should be understood not just as an epiphenomenon emerging from interaction, but as a practice that defines perspectives and worldviews, central to the type of engagement with the world.

Practices are not just what people carry out; they are based on the interdependence of actions as “the accomplishments of competent members of collectives” (Barnes, 2005: 25) and become shared “fields” (Bourdieu, 1998) or “social sites” for description of the social. Neither do practices hold properties in themselves: action acquires meaning and intelligibility by its relationality and relativity (Cooper, 2005), so that nothing has reality outside the enactment of the interaction that takes place within these fields. Alongside this reasoning, practices cannot be just transported as unrelated to their fields, as it seems mainstream research on trust has agreed.

Whilst examining trust as practice, I relate to a position that holds it as a phenomenon that emerges from the interaction between actants and that, through its associations, construes a diversity of materialities. However, connections resulting from associations are precarious (Latour, 2005; Czarniawska, 2008), and so are their effects.

Trust, as a practice, expresses an orientation towards the “other” and things, a way of engagement with the world, an ontic state – and what Solomon (2004, 2007) defines on behalf of Heidegger (1962) as an emotion.

Hate, resentment, pain, cynicism, resolution, etc. all constitute emotions and each of them are (contrary to the common wisdom that speaks of them as psychological and physiological states), according to Solomon (2004; 2007), the result of evaluative judgements – not in the cognitive sense, but in a non-articulated and non-propositional sense of an ontic state. As an essentially interdependent, not individuated phenomenon, this concept of emotion offers the possibility of understanding practices, not just as coordination but also as a profound way of sharing the way of “being in the world”. Maturana et al (2008) has a term for this form of shared practice: “emotionating”.

As Solomon (2004: 1092) points out, emotions are “subjective engagements in the world”, which define intentionality. Just as love defines a way of relating to the world, so the same applies to trust. What defines the type of engagement, and thus the type of emotion, is the type of judgement (in a non-propositional form) that occurs as a result. For example, anger means a judgement that one has been wronged or offended; embarrassment means a judgement that one has fallen short of expectations.

As Solomon (2007: 19) notes, emotions are always concerned with something, and this “aboutness” of emotions refers to intentionality. This is why Solomon (2007: 20) asserts that emotions are meaningful “strategies through which we manipulate and manage our world, and the ways in which we are responsible for our emotions”. He goes further by asserting that emotional integrity is a desirable aim, “the aim and ultimate achievement of emotional intelligence, as the centre piece of our emotional-ethical lives” (2007: 204).

These evaluative judgements, that structure emotions, are based on shared beliefs and express attitudes towards others and things. This brings into play the idea that ethics is an expression of emotion and not the inverse. It acknowledges that emotions have a moral structure within them and not only reveal a way of engaging with the world but also, in the process, make it more comprehensible. As Nussbaum (2004) puts it, “the story of an emotion is the story of judgements about important things, judgements in which we acknowledge our neediness and incompleteness before those elements that we do not fully control”.

TRUST AS CARE

According to Solomon and Flores (2001), trust’s “aboutness” is care, within which Heidegger (1962) distinguishes two meanings. The first relates to the anxieties of the finitude of life and is worrisome, where care represents the struggle for survival and expresses the preservation of the self. For Heidegger, this type of care continually drives us to the trivial and conventional search for

the meaning of life and, at the same time, truncates the possibility of humanity in us. It removes us from the possibilities of being.

Even when a “preserving” care is always present, the second type of care identified by Heidegger (1962) is the one I relate to trust: care as a practice that opens up possibilities, embraces its own possibilities and others. This second type of care, termed by Heidegger “solicitude care” (in Bishop and Scudder, 1991:), refers to the construction of a temporality that sets the future as worth visiting. Care, in this perspective, becomes a practice that opens up possibilities rather than representing an escape of the present. It embraces the self without prejudice and views the other as a desirable adventure or project, becoming care as solicitude. Solicitude care represents a way of being in the world that embraces existence as a project worth being lived and created regardless of the uncertainties and finitude of life. Trust as an ontic state becomes, in this perspective, a complex and multiple type of non-propositional judgment and wisdom that constructs the self and the others as of value for the future.

Trust, in this perspective, is not based on the functional concept of care, where care enters in the world of the other as taking care of what needs to be done for the other. This is what Heidegger calls a minimal care (in Bishop and Scudder, 1991: 90) for the other and requires consideration so that the service is rendered properly. This type of care means jumping in and taking over the other, who then is dominated and dependent in the caring relationship. Doing what the other can do for him or her, the “solicitous” action is actually taking “care” away from the other. In contrast, Heidegger asserts (in Bishop and Scudder, 1991:92) that there is a solicitous care that “jumps ahead” of the

other, anticipating his or her potential, not in order to take his or her care away but to give it back. This kind of solicitude is authentic care, for it helps the other to know him or her in care, and to become free to care (Heidegger, 1973; Bishop and Scudder, 1991).

The future can become, in the local and present interaction, constructed in the presence of trusting relationships. Trust becomes the practice of caring for what is valued. This means that trusting relationships become a practice of creating a valued future for those involved. Mistrust, or the lack of trust, means that there is no foreseeable future to share.

Trust, as an ontic state, is at the same time a relation – not a neutral relation, but a relation that regards the future as worth sharing. Trust is not about a specific action but emerges from the type of actions that endorse this type of engagement with the world. It is constructed when actions are interpreted as caring for the type of future that becomes worth sharing.

This concept of trust departs from the mainstream literature which treats trust as a mediating resource (Russell, 1996; Zaheer & Harris, 2005) and which is beneficial at different levels of social interaction (Fukuyama, 1996). Here, trust, as a relational phenomenon (more than a mediating “resource”), is constituted by giving the relation a positive sign and by caring for a shared, desirable future. In this sense, it constructs a type of reality rather than mediates in one.

DOMAINS OF TRUST-ING

Solomon & Flores (2001) suggest that trust develops in at least three domains of practice: sincerity, competence and responsibility. Its main fabric is built in the integrity of demands and promises carried out through interactions that reflect its “aboutness”. These interactions involve implicit and explicit expectations, preferences, contradictions, conditions, and identities. What is significant here is not what someone does in regard to someone else, but how these actions acquire a specific type of meaning, which can only emerge in interaction.

MISTRUST

Mistrust, then, resides in the same domain – representing the lack of care for what is valued – and is a practice of destroying expectations of future possibilities in the midst of interaction.

However, the presence of mistrust is not simply the absence of trust – trust is built on the very possibility of its absence. Otherwise, trusting relationships could mean the absence of basic judgement about the world and the emergence of fanatical engagements that would become disinclined to trusting relationships.

TRUST AS A STRATEGIC INTENT

The formulation of trusting relationships as a “strategic intent”, as posed in the case analysed in this thesis, throws up a number of interesting challenges.

Within an organisation, it is perhaps difficult to see how the authoring of strategy can “intervene” in the formation of trusting relationships if it is not by an authentic engagement in caring relationships with themselves and with all of the organisation’s stakeholders.

Perhaps the most important of these challenges is that trusting relationships cannot be prescribed or caused by the actions of leadership. As I have expanded on previously in relation to subjectivity, trusting relationships can emerge in the relationship of the self with the self, as a specific way of caring for the self.

I have explored the implications of trusting relationships as a specific type of subjectivity, examined from a relational non-dualist perspective. Trusting relationships, understood as a practice, seem to be subjectified as relations of care, specifically for what is valued in a relation. I have explored them as an ontic state, but at the same time enacted and constructed through the different domains of actions. Trust, in this sense, can be created and destroyed through the same interaction process. I have given special attention to the phronetic defining quality of its practice.

STRATEGY: FROM CONTENT TO PRACTICE

This case study of leadership has been carried out in the context of a strategy implementation. To understand leadership in this context it will be necessary to explicitly clarify what strategy means from a relational perspective.

Morin (2008:96) distinguishes between programme and strategy. “A programme establishes a series of actions which are decided *a priori* and which must begin to function one after the other without variation”. A strategy, by contrast, “is the art of working in and with uncertainty”, he says. This does not mean reducing uncertainty, but working in a relational worldview where conscious, deliberate actions are seen as secondary to habituated practices that may be emergent, misplaced and temporarily uncertain.

In this section I compare the notion of strategy conceived as an activity concerned with building content and give representations to the contrasting notion that conceives it as a relational practice, thus opening the possibility of having a coherent understanding of strategy from a non-dualistic perspective.

Strategy has been questioned not just on how it is carried out, but in its very essence. The question that has become pervasive in literature is less about *what* the most effective strategies are and more about defining strategy itself and *how* it is performed. This then creates the distinction between “content” and “process” perspectives in strategy research.

Contrasting with the too “coarse-grained” (Tsoukas, 2005) elements of the “content” perspective – which has been criticised because of its difficulty in capturing the complex and dynamic relationships between strategy content and

its context – "the process perspective, which defines process as "a sequence of individual and collective events, actions and activities unfolding over time in context" (Pettigrew, 1997: 337), is underpinned by the premise that the basic strengths of everyday operations drive strategy process and emergence (Whittington, 2001).

Chia and MacKay (2007) suggest that there are five key analytical presuppositions to be adopted in researching strategy processes:

- Processes are deemed to be embedded in context
- Processes are viewed as temporally interconnected
- Context and actions are taken as interacting with one another
- Processes are linked to outcomes
- Holistic, rather than linear explanations of process are to be preferred

This trend is what has been termed as the "practice turn" in strategy research, which takes a closer look at the making of strategy from the perspective of practice theory (Schatsky, 2001; Schatzki, Knorr Cetina, & von Savigny, 2005; Hendry 2000; Whittington, 2003; Jarzabkowski 2005; Tsoukas 1996).

According to Whittington (2006), three themes define the concerns of this trend in researching strategy. The first is the concern of how the "social" defines practices – shared understandings, cultural rules, languages and procedures – that guide and enable human activity. The second theme concerns what people

actually do in practice, an issue not only with “what” is done but also on “how” it is done. The third theme concerns the agents of strategy, the actors on whose skills and initiatives activity depends. Whittington (2006) refers to these three themes as “strategy praxis”, “strategy practices” and “strategy practitioners”.

Practice theory seems to have an inclination for an integration of these three concepts and it is what most of the theoretical background of the practice theory reflects. Bourdieu’s (2001) concept of “practice fields”– structured social spaces which create a set of perceptual and somatic dispositions, or structuration – is based on an understanding of the relation between agency and structure of Giddens (1991) and represents the basic building blocks that inform practice theory (Schatzki, 2001).

Whittington (2006) proposes an integration framework for these blocks. For doing so, he first defines practitioners as “the prime movers of strategy”, “those who do the work of making, shaping and executing strategies” (2006:618). He includes into this concept not just top management, but middle managers, strategists, consultants and prominent academics. He defines that praxis is “...all the various activities involved in the deliberate formulation and implementation of strategy”. Embraced in this concept is “the routine and the non-routine, the formal and the informal, activities at the corporate centre and activities at the organisational periphery”. Finally, he defines practices as what practitioners typically draw on their praxis, which he acknowledges as tacit along with most of the practice theory advocates, but also includes explicit practices as “...playing an important role in organisations governed by formal accountability” (Whittington, 2006:620).

Whittington's (2006) integrative framework sees practitioners as the critical connection between intra-organisational praxis and the organisational and extra-organisational practices on which they rely. He sees practitioners as active in changing practices and praxis as "artful and improvisatory performance" (2006: 621). From the plurality of practices, practitioners change the ingredients of their praxis – by reflection, they are able to adapt existing practices, and by taking advantage of openness, they may be able to introduce practitioners and new practices altogether, he asserts (2006: 621).

Understanding this processual perspective of strategy presupposes an interpretation of what the social means – an interpretation that resounds with both methodological individualism and collectivism. The first claims, "social phenomena can be adequately analysed and explained only by reference to facts about, and features of, collections of people...as opposed to individuals" (Schatzki, 2001: 16). This position presupposes the existence of the social before and beyond the individual practice, so that the "individual is, for the most part, unconscious or unaware of the influence of deep social structures shaping his/her preferred choices, intentions and actions" (Chia and Holt, 2011:61). The individual exists and lives in a social world, with institutions and structures that are not of his/her own making, yet which influence his/her choices and preferences.

This position contrasts with a methodological, individualistic position that upholds the primacy of deliberate intention and conscious, purposeful action in its mode of explanation of the social. "Institutions and social structures can only be explained as resulting from decisions and actions of individuals" (Chia &

Holt, 2011:61). It is individual autonomy – the rejection of social structures and the central role ascribed to cognition and conscious choices – that defines its key features (2011: 63).

According to Schatzki (2001:14), methodological collectivism and individualism share similar presuppositions in that they both construe the fundamental unit of analysis in essentially static and entitative terms, so that collectivism is “just a more capacious form of individualism”.

However, as Chia and Holt (2011) point out, methodological individualism and collectivism have to be queried before their mutual rejection. Both methodological individualism and collectivism block an appreciation of the essential interplay between structure and agency because each considers the other a dependent variable – leading to either an upward conflation of structure or a downward conflation of agency.

This entitative way of considering social phenomena has been widely criticised because of its construction of individual, institutional and social structures as inert and “stationary objects”, making them appear as “pieces of matter, the same as rocks, trees or houses” (Elias, 1998: 43). This is regarded as a reifying way of thinking, in which the interdependency of social objects is ignored. Bateson (1936, 1972, 2000), Elias (1998), Whitehead (1985), Bergson (2005) and many others suggest an epistemology that sees social objects as a result of interaction, where the existence of entities is challenged.

Strategy as practice, whilst ostensibly seeking to differentiate itself from the strategy process perspective, seems to contain “residual consistencies” within it

(Chia and MacKay, 2007). This way of thinking gives importance to individual entities, interpreting practice as an epiphenomenon of individual and organisational agents, so that practices are what actors “do”. As stated by Whittington (2006), practitioners are the movers of strategy, instead of themselves being the products of social practices. This position, which favours categories and entities, highlights the primacy of individuals and makes it easier for us to grasp reality. However, it also “hides its underlying complexities” (Cooper, 2005: 1689).

Chia and Mackay (2007) review “strategy as practice” research, concluding that - even when it has concentrated attention on the daily activities of actors, on how these actors and their activities interact within a context, change their methods, change the units of analysis of strategy process research and produce a revised vocabulary for theorising strategy and other advances, (Whittington, 2003, 2007; Jarzabkowski, 2003) - “its main focus is on the micro-activities of individual actors acting in context”(2007:223) .

By overly focusing on the micro-activities, the micro/macro distinction remains intact and the subsequent problem of linking individual actions to macro-outcomes ensues. Such a theoretical approach is reminiscent of strategy theory (Pettigrew, 1987: 657), which attempts to make the same macro to micro distinctions. A reliance on the micro/macro distinction is intimately tied to the presumptions of methodological individualism explained previously, where macro-entities are construed as aggregations of micro-entities and a form of social atomism is implied" (2007:224).

STRATEGY AS PRACTICE: BACK TO PRACTICE

Chia and MacKay (2007) propose the term “post-processual” as a reference point for a view of practices, which deems events, individuals and the making of them to be obvious examples of practice-complexes. Here, ontological priority is accorded to an immanent logic of practice rather than to actors and agents. It is this immanent logic, emerging through practice, which constitutes what Chia and MacKay (2007) mean by strategy. As such, they suggest that a genuine practice-based theory of strategy emergence must place these practice complexes at the centre of the theoretical analysis.

As a post-processual perspective, this is underpinned by the attempt to overcome the need for a micro/macro distinction, which has motivated the “practice turn” in social theory and philosophy. The practice turn in social theory presents, according to Chia and MacKay (2007), an opportunity to focus on the patterned consistency of actions emerging from interactions rather on the micro-activities of individual strategy agents.

Practice theory acknowledges that internalised practices or schemata of action (as noted in Bourdieu’s “Habitus”, 1990) are the real “authors” of everyday coping actions. Chia and Mackay (2007) assert that practices are not so much the visible actions of actors *per se*, but culturally and historically transmitted regularities detectable through the patterns of activities actually carried out. According to Schatzki (2005:26), they are “temporarily unfolding and spatially dispersed nexus of doings and sayings” organised around “shared practical understanding”. It is the observed regularities of such activities, shaped as they

are by history and culture, and not the activities themselves, that constitute what is meant by strategy as practice. As such, Chia and Mackay (2007) add that this implies trans-individuality, cultural transmission, socialisation, institutionalised constraints and embodied mannerisms in explaining human actions.

In this perspective, according to Chia and MacKay (2007), deliberate intentionality is not a prerequisite for the articulation of a strategy: strategy may emerge as a consequence of the inherent predisposition of an actor to unselfconsciously respond to external circumstances in a manner that we may retrospectively recognise as being consistently strategic. Such a view, as with the practice turn in social theory and philosophy, puts the transmission of practices, rather than agency, at the centre of strategic analysis. What this means, to be consistent with the philosophical practice turn according to Chia and MacKay (2007), is that this position assumes a post-processual stance, which:

- 1) Places ontological primacy on practices rather than actors.
- 2) Philosophically favours practice-complexes rather than actors and things as the locus of analysis.
- 3) Makes the locus of explanation the field of practices rather than the intentions of individuals and organisations.

DWELLING AND BUILDING AS WAYS OF ENGAGEMENT

In seeking to formulate the primacy of unconscious background practices over the deliberate, conscious, intentional agent, Chia and Holt (2011) propose the distinction developed by Heidegger (2001) between two possible modes of existential engagement with the world. Heidegger calls these modes “building” and “dwelling”, emphasising the primacy of the latter. Dwelling involves an intimate encounter, “a “being-in-the-world” that suggests immediate, unreflective familiarity, habit and custom. As Heidegger writes, “Being-in-the-world...is an existential concept (where) “in” is derived from “inn” – “to reside”, “to dwell” ” (Heidegger, 1962:80, in Chia and Holt, 2011). More simply put, being-in-the-world implies the intimate familiarity that one feels by “inhabiting a home”. Heidegger (1962) believed that it is through this everyday dwelling activity that we achieve some form of intelligibility and not through representation or mental images of the world before us. Chia and Holt (2011) suggest that it is this insight on the primacy of “being-in-the-world” which better accounts for Bourdieu’s (1998) attempt to develop an internal logic of practice.

According to Bourdieu we need to “return to practice, the site of the dialectic of the *opus operatum* and the *modus operandi*. . . the incorporated products of historical practice”, which produce systems of durable, transposable dispositions he calls “Habitus” (Bourdieu, 1990: 52). What is distinctive about this concept of practice, and has important implications for the strategy as practice movement is that its agents and processes are subordinate to, and constituted from, practices and practice-complexes. Consequently, the primarily

and unconsciously acquired practice-complexes are what generate the possibilities for strategy, not individual consciousness, and intentionality (Chia and MacKay, 2007).

Strategy as practice – instead of a deliberative action from an individuated subject, which can stand aside and contemplate – becomes the practice of subjectivity constitution and of the subject itself. From this perspective of practice primacy, subjects and subjectivities become subordinate to the subjectification of practices, and particularly to what becomes emergent and new.

Conceived as the primacy of dwelling over building, strategy thus keeps tacit what is of relevance to cope with the situation and uses the basic wisdom and archetypical knowledge by which spaces of interaction become provided.

STRATEGY AS A RELATIONAL PRACTICE

When conceived in this perspective (instead of as a deliberate action constructed by autonomous and self-conscious agents), strategy as practice can be understood as a relational emergent process, resulting from interaction by the many actants, with no agent actually controlling a flow that has no clear physical or time boundaries.

It is the “tactical” approach described by De Certeau (1984) that cannot be counted as proper strategy, since it has no spatial and institutional location. It does not identify a clear “other” to which action is directed, signifying rather a

mere insinuation, not a takeover of the other's space. It is not accumulative and always uses small opportunities that present themselves to resist, innovate and transform. As noted by de La Ville & Mounoud (2002), it describes the strategy for the "weak", for those who will not use the institutionalised power resources to author a transformation process.

This "tactical" approach to strategy is similar to what Holt and Chia (2011: 201) define as "strategic blandness" – "a strategy-less strategy, in which indirectness, phronesis, metis, complexity, curiosity and spontaneity persist without any one dominating".

Strategic blandness is still confined to the pragmatic and theoretical frame of our ordering technology, but obliquely. This approach involves changing positions, refusing to remain in only one position and becoming seduced by whatever presents itself as fixed and thus distinct from the flow of what is emerging. Strategic blandness means abandoning the aim to have a general picture of the territory and the intellectual endeavour of codifying experience in an overarching knowledge.

As Chia and Holt highlight, strategic blandness means a reversal of the strategic intent, "it becomes a joining of things through movement rather than arresting or bracketing off experience: it is being in the intimacy between dwelling and building" (2009:203). They build on Jullien (2004), to whom efficacy is always discrete, and for whom good strategy goes unnoticed. For Chia and Holt (2004:204) "what carries greatest force is not what is most distinct but what is minimal and most invisible". Moreover, strategic efficacy is

found in creativity, where anything that dominates and produces fixations, which block the renewal of one's self, should be avoided.

Strategy blandness is the opposite of keeping positions, commitments and objectives. This represents, at the same time, the capacity of durability (Chia & Nayak, 2011), of change as the constitution of subjects and subjectivities. What becomes of importance is the transformation process, with its capacity to absorb opposites, produce contrast and experience the anxieties of being on the way to what cannot be codified and fixated.

Strategy implies decisive action, but it is not about fixed purposes – it avoids established truths that have to be achieved at all cost. This means experiencing strategy without separation, minimal representation and responding to what experience is showing whilst coping with everyday life.

In this chapter I have approached what I think are the basic theoretical topics to bear in mind when approaching an empirical examination of leadership from a non-dualistic perspective.

In this perspective leadership becomes a concept that avoids representation, which is brought into existence through difference, within the complex phenomena of interaction, from where subjects and subjectivities emerge as nothing more than epiphenomena of a broader forming process. Trusting relationships and strategy, as well as its leadership, belong to the same emergent phenomena, with no ontological privilege over the other.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the challenges posed by carrying out an empirical examination of leadership from a non-dualistic perspective. It exposes the arguments that justify the research methodology designed for this work. Three topics are treated in this regard: a) what the subject being observed is, b) what “observing” means and c) the “casing” of the observation.

Following this, I will explain the research case, the circumstances in which it was selected and the main characteristics of the “Sustainability Strategy” that was formulated a few months before I began my field research.

Finally, I will explain the research methods included in the design of this work.

RESEARCHING PRACTICES FROM A NON-DUALISTIC PERSPECTIVE

Carrying out an empirical examination of leadership in a non-dualistic perspective – within a copper mining company which has defined building trusting relationships with all of its stakeholders as high strategic priority – poses a number of challenges. I highlight three of the most relevant here:

First of all is the question of what it is that I am observing. It seems clear at this point, after my theoretical options, that what I am examining are practices. “The

purpose of research is to capture and describe practice” (Czarniawska 2008:7). Practices, consisting of heterogeneous materials in a relational ontology, are to be understood as products of fields of interaction.

A relational ontology (Bateson, 1972, 2000; Cooper, 2005; Czarniawska, 2008; Stacey, 2005, 2011) assumes that practices, subjects and subjectivities are secondary to the association of actions. Agency is the precarious product generated by a stable connection of what has been brought to existence by its relatedness, from a latent and unintelligible world, which “...avoids representation and the use of a language of categories and things” (Cooper, 2005:1697). Agency is always partial and incomplete as a “movement to being” (Bersani & Dutoit, 1998 in Cooper, 2005:1699) in the relativity of time and space.

In this perspective, agency is not given to actors or identities, but to interaction – where the dualistic distinctions of in and out, high or low, or any of such dichotomies are meaningless. They - the actors and identities - constitute subjectivities constructed through the same processes by which actants appear and disappear as precarious associations, in the forming process of organising.

Observing the forming process of interaction represents a task that seems impossible without bracketing and interpretation. The difficulty with bracketing and interpreting is to understand how we can gain a comprehension of what is taking place. To understand a relational ontology, we need to embrace an attitude that “entails recognition that all forms of knowing involve the simultaneous act of foregrounding and back-grounding: that there is an

inevitable blindness in seeing and an unacknowledged “owing” in our “knowing” (Chia R. , 2011, p. 183).

In observing what we know about the relational making of things, we need to accept uncertainty and confusion as part of living. Translated into research, Chia (2011: 193) suggests that, “action that is generally deemed peripheral to explicitly-stated ends may surprisingly prove more efficacious in bringing about the desired outcome sought. Indirect action, oblique action is often more *silently efficacious*. Action that is deemed *oblique* in relation to specified ends can often produce more dramatic and lasting effects than direct, focused action”.

Instead of direct action, Chia suggests the optional “silent art of discernment” (2011:196), the subtle sensitive reading and evaluation of the unfolding situation, as an oblique way of approaching events, which allows the momentum and potential of the situation to unfold itself almost inexorably towards its natural end. I understand this approach as presupposing the art of actively engaging in the action of observing observation itself, not as a neutral process, but by cultivating a relation which acknowledges the researcher’s self as a precarious, relational product of interaction with no privileged position in relation to the unfolding events and yet exposed to the same context as its observation.

Bracketing and interpretation often translates into representation and keeps us from understanding the experience of events – so cultivating this type of attention should place importance on giving special attention to the local, living present of experience of the interaction as the site in which a true practice research approach can be attained.

REFLEXIVITY AND PRACTICE RESEARCH

Maintaining a relational ontology coherent with research practices demands the examination of reflexivity, the concept that “the researcher is part of the social world that is studied” (Alvesson, 2011:106) – and, moreover, that everything in the social world is embodied in the observer’s language, from which it cannot stand aside.

Even when we can bear in mind that the “map is not the territory” (Bateson, 1972; 2000); a reflexive relation means that we cannot know the map, only our knowing of it. Everything, therefore, stems from some sort of interpretation. According to what we have established, only after accepting confusion and uncertainty as part of the human knowing in a relational perspective does reflexivity take a special meaning.

Intellectual features are not what will provide the intelligibility of relationally conceived phenomena. Rather, attention to the experience of the contrasting, surprising and often unexpected features that bestow reality with the attitude of “silent discernment” (Chia R. , 2011) act as a key practice of this research.

Alvesson & Skoldberg (2009: 9) define reflexive research as having two basic characteristics: “careful interpretation” and “reflection”. This implies that “all references – trivial and non-trivial – to empirical data are the results of interpretation, where any mirroring thesis between empirical facts and research results (text) has to be rejected”. This implies that a constant awareness needs to be achieved in order that every reading of a text has an alternative

significance, which challenges the chosen obvious meaning and confronts the researcher and its readers with alternative ways of knowing.

A reflexive approach to researching practices represents an effort towards averting a naïve understanding of facts and the adoption of assumptions that might otherwise prevent the researcher and the reader from arriving at the most interesting or unconventional interpretations.

The second characteristic of reflexivity in the research process, according to Alvesson & Skoldberg (2009), is reflection. This suggests examining the determinants of interpretations, such as theoretical assumptions, language and pre-understandings. In particular, reflection implies considering interpretation as being constructed by the double-sided research process of belonging to a cultural tradition, which generates dispositions and actions, and which configure the blind spots and the regularities of the inquiry process and simultaneously authoring research outcomes that can modify or preserve these same assumptions, language and pre-understandings.

The research action constitutes the researcher as an actant of the study and thus modifies the field and the researcher. This means that special attention should be given to the “authoring” process of research as never being a totally ideologically and politically free process, as well as the fact that the research question is always a reality-construction process.

From a non-dualist perspective of studying leadership, the researcher’s actions cannot be considered neutral. Their actions imply giving the practice of research no ontological privilege over the subjectivities formed and considering

it as part of the same emergent phenomenon. If leadership is to be scrutinised in the midst of interaction, it has to be considered as built with the same heterogenic materials as all other subjects and subjectivities, including those of the researcher.

RECORDING, ANALYSING AND INTERPRETING NARRATIVES

Since there is a thin line between representational knowledge and the lively knowledge of experience, the second challenge posed by researching leadership from a non-dualistic perspective is on how to discern between both. It seems that narrative research, as a hermeneutical tradition, offers the possibility of deciphering text as an analogical knowledge of the incomprehensible one provided by the flow of experience.

Narrative research is based on the solid background that follows a large and extended tradition in social research philosophy (Gadamer, 1986; Ricoeur, 1966; Geertz, 1973; Turner, 1982; Mangham and Overington, 1987; McIntire, 1990; Czarniawska, 2011), which draws from a wide range of disciplines. Literary theory, hermeneutics, formalism and criticism provide a rich set of practices and resources for addressing complex phenomena. However, the hermeneutical capacity of narrative research – with its access to deciphering the diversity of text manifestations as reflexive manifestation of practices – is what makes it a preferable approach for researching practices.

As we know, “study of practice demands a perspective that situates the agent, right from the start, in the context of an active engagement with the constituents of his or her surroundings” (Chia & Holt, 2011:131). Attempts to capture

practices in fixed and limited descriptions will be always resisted and we can only obtain provisional and oblique knowledge of them (Chia R. , 2011). Narrative research entails working with text, which has an analogic relation to action – the nearest we can get to the map.

HERNANDI'S HERMENEUTICAL TRIAD

Czarniawska (2008) proposes a specific hermeneutical approach following Ricoeur's work (1981, in Czarniawska, 2008), which suggests that meaningful action might be considered as text, and vice versa. From here she proposes narratives as a form of social life (2008) with both narrative approaches to research and knowledge becoming objectified by the inscription in a narrative.

The validity of a narrative – its truth-value – is not in the text *per se*, but in a situational, negotiated agreement between author and reader. Czarniawska defines this as a “referential contract” (2011:9), where the attraction of text is not due to the distinction between fact and fiction but by the locally situated, negotiated agreement of a truth proposition. To research, then, is to plot – a process of constructing descriptive and meaningful narrative knowledge that is objectified not because of its processual origin, but because of its referential, local and situated negotiated meaning.

Within narrative research the analysis and interpretation of data are dissolved into each other. Different modes and simultaneous ways of reading coexist and the basic raw data represent stories as they are plotted. These stories can be

written in many idioms, codes and media. The plot of the stories can be constructed around the dimensions of the “chronicle”, what is happening, the “mimesis”, how it looks, feels or sounds and finally, the “emplotment” – how things are connected to give a structure that makes sense of the events.

All this leaves us with a decision to make about how to approach the analysis of data. I opted for a fairly fine-grained approach, although this had significant limitations that I will discuss later in this chapter.

I decided to use Hernandi’s triad hermeneutical analysis (Hernandi, 1987) for my research. This analysis proposes reading the text on three levels in order to construct meaningful narratives from it. The levels can be described as follows:

1. Chronicles: the account of facts as they happen in a chronological sequence, which differentiate sharply when located in the temporality used to give accounts of them. For example, interviews – because of their retrospective nature – seem characterised by kairotic⁵ more than chronological time. Opposed to this is the registering of interactions as they happen, which can be interpreted either chronologically or by how the present condenses past and future. Short excerpts of interaction become chronological accounts and, if coded as relational communication, acquire meaning precisely because of their sequence and inscription in patterns.

⁵ While chronological time measures time in mechanical intervals, kairotic time jumps, slows down, omits long periods and dwells in others. It is a distinction which allows that within the chronicle what is reported is not just the chronology of events, but also shows that actions that happen in a time other than the present are highlighted as important.

Chronological accounts can reveal deep worlds of meaning not because of chronicity but because of the importance given to them by their author. Sometimes events are difficult to locate in time or space but become relevant and meaningful in the history of the event because of the emphasis given to them in the account. It is important to note that in chronicles there has already been a level of interpretation, where attention has decided what is to be kept in and what has been left out.

2. Explanation: semantic and semiotic reading – which tries to answer the question of what the text says. The researcher's interpretation gets "under" the text to decipher what is taking place in the event, whilst at the same time leaving traces of the polyphony of voices that can be brought into the event, also including that of the researcher. The semiotic analysis deciphers how the text is made to say what it says and to whom.

Distancing himself from hermeneutical traditions, which distinguish between the author's intention and the reader's translation, Ricoeur (1981) suggests that authorship and reading are two different modes of discourse, where the text "distances" itself from action, acquiring a longer life. Distance gives room to different interpretation by authors and readers whose frames differ widely from each other.

Meaning and action, then, are not equivalent – and they do not replace each other. As Czarniawska (2011:71) suggests, "a text does not "stand for" an action: the relation between them is that of an analogy, not a reference....meaningful actions are liberated from their agents; are relevant beyond its immediate context; and can be read as an open work." (2011:70).

The implication of this reasoning is that there is no clear-cut distinction between semantic and semiotic levels of analysis, since both belong to the same act in research: interpretation, which is always a bounded and context-based action.

For the presentation of the events, I will try to make the distinction between these two levels clear, as proposed by Hernandi (1987). However, sometimes the task can obscure a comprehension of the text rather than illuminate it, so I will not adhere rigidly to this practice throughout the analysis.

3. Exploration. In this third type of reading the reader represents the author and almost becomes the author (Czarniawska, 2011). It is here that the researcher exposes his way of reading each of the events, where knowledge about the subject under study is transformed as an action of observing observation. This level of reading is where practices can be reconstructed, reporting how the researching relation transforms the researcher himself, as well as the research object.

CASING AS A PRACTICE RESEARCH METHOD

The third challenge which I believe warrants discussion is the fact that practices are always located, and that researching them always signifies working on them as cases. In this section I will expand the notions of using case studies in my research methodology and explain how case studies can generate valid knowledge of a subject.

The use of “casing” needs to be clarified, since literature shows that the same term can have very different meanings depending on the assumptions underpinning the methodology. I will make the distinction by comparing two approaches, the complex realist (Byrne & Ragin, 2009) and what is particular to a relational ontology.

I will assume a critical perspective on complex realism (Byrne & Ragin, 2009) – a faction of the critical realist perspective (Bhaskar, 1997) – which maintains that the “social” emerges as the material nexus in which the symbiotic interplay of structure and agency takes place, assuming both agency and structure as different ontological entities which are irreducible to each other.

Complex realism (Byrne & Ragin, 2009: 30) has a realist ontology, which acknowledges “the existence of an objective moment of experience, some part of which stands over and against our attempts to understand and manipulate our world”. It assumes the possibility of a “natural science of society” “but if, and only if, that science is properly qualified so as to allow active human agency a

role in 'co-producing' its everyday institutional forms" (2009: 32). It also assumes that the world is ontologically stratified. Hence, the objects of scientific inquiry (either naturally occurring or as products of social construction) for a complex realist perspective, (2009: 36) "form a loosely integrated hierarchy of openly structured, evolving systems, which are themselves ontologically layered and hierarchically nested". Finally, complex realism assumes that the actual causal processes operating are contingently structured and temporally staggered. Consequently, "causal laws" in complex natural systems are tendential and are best expressed in normic statements or in counter-factual propositions" (2009: 38).

A relational ontology will challenge a complex realist ontology in the sense that what is not present is latent, and latency is not (yet) being or a pre-existence of what becomes present. Agency and structure are, in this perspective, part of the same continuousness of presence with none of them having primacy over the other, so that institutional forms and individuals are created and reproduced simultaneously and by the same processes.

The main generative capacity of form is not in individual entities but in its "betweenness", which displays its regulatory rules in a sequence of always-precarious connections and disconnections in the "movement of being" (Cooper, 2005). Here, causality explanation is of little importance, since what is significant is the immanence of movement over the rigidity of things.

In this perspective, the research process has no ambitions in creating generalisations. Thus, a case study is not used in this work as a research method with the intention of determining empirically how operating causal

processes are contingently structured and temporally staggered to feed theory and then transcend the empirical data, as is the aim of a complex realist perspective (Byrne & Ragin, 2009: 31). Rather, the aim of the case study is to produce text that illuminates different understandings of the phenomenon and the actions upon it.

CASING AND THEORY BUILDING

Despite all of this, there is still no reason to discard casing, in a relational perspective, as a valid source of theory building. Flyvberg (2011:302) refers to using case studies as like facing a paradox. On the one hand, he states that case studies account for a large proportion of publications in social and natural sciences and, on the other, they seem relegated to a secondary position in the creation of knowledge and theory.

Moreover, although case studies are used for teaching purposes they are not used as valid sources of knowledge in top graduate programmes either in the USA or Europe. Flyvberg (2004) highlights that almost half of the articles in political science journals have used case studies. He adds, “what we know about the empirical world has been produced by case study research, and many of the most treasured classics in each discipline are case studies” (2005:4).

Flyvberg (2011) suggests that the lack of interest in academic institutions is the result of there being some misunderstanding around what constitutes valuable

knowledge. At the core of this misunderstanding, he suggests, is the concept of what theory, reliability and validity are, which undermines the status of case studies as scientific method. He summarises this misunderstanding in five propositions:

1. General theoretical knowledge is more valuable than concrete case knowledge
2. One cannot generalise on the basis of an individual case, therefore the case study cannot contribute to scientific development
3. The case study is most useful for generating hypotheses – that is, in the first stage of a total research process – while other methods are more suitable for hypothesis testing
4. The case study contains a bias toward verification – that is, a tendency to confirm the researcher’s preconceived notions
5. It is often difficult to summarise and develop general propositions and theories within case studies.

The arguments that Flyvberg (2011) uses to challenge these misunderstandings are compelling. The aim of attaining predictive theories and universal knowledge cannot be found in the studies of human affairs due to the generally deep approach to single cases, which are the main sources of theory development. As a result “they point to the development of new concepts, variables necessary in order to account for the deviant case and other cases like it” (2011:305).

Case studies are regarded as especially well-suited for theory development because they track processes and are able to link actions, allow deeper explorations of relationality, allow testing of historical explanation and give a better acquaintance of context, whilst raising further original questions. At the same time, it seems that case studies “contain a greater bias toward falsification of preconceived notions than toward verification” (2011:310). Good studies should be read as narratives in their entirety, so that summarising is not always desirable.

Drawing on the previous arguments (which place case studies in a different status and allow ethno-methodology and ethnographic research to construe a different conceptualisation of social sciences), I agree with those who advocate that casing – as an ethno-methodological or ethnographic approach – is a valid approach for knowledge and theory construction and that researching practices with a relational ontology need not include any sort of causal process which explains the complexity embedded in the case.

RESEARCH METHODS USED FOR CONSTRUCTING THE CASE

For researching I mainly used shadowing (Czarniawska, 2007), a method that allows the researcher to follow moving objects in the field. This method is actually made up of a number of techniques, such as interviews (open ended and semi-structured), observation and recordings.

I used semi-structured interviews, which specifically allowed me to obtain accounts of the history of the events observed during my fieldwork and gave context to my research observations.

Two other methods were designed and implemented during my field research period with the intention of constructing narrative data. However, they did not provide the expected data for reasons that I will explain in the next chapter where I address how I conducted the research process.

The first of these methods used was the Abductive Research method for researching in complex domains as proposed by Snowden (2010), which allows obtaining and interpreting a large amount of narratives from the field. The other method used was the Complex Responsive Process Research (Stacey & Griffin, 2005), based on the self-reflective practice of agents writing stories of interaction from the field.

Before describing these methods, (Shadowing, Abductive and Complex Responsive Process Research and Interviews as research methods) I will introduce the case.

THE CASE

It was June 2010 when I contacted the Director of the Human Resources Department of AAC Plc., the holding company of a copper mining conglomerate, with operations in three continents. The director pointed me to MMC, one of their subsidiary companies, which was in the process of implementing the parent company's development strategy for the next ten years. MMC, in operation for ten years, works one of the largest copper mining sites in the world in central Chile.

MMC has been recognised as a benchmark for the copper mining industry, and has received dozens of national awards. It has created more than US\$8 billion in economic value⁶ in ten years and also operates with some of the lowest costs within the industry. In 2009, its production was approximately 400 kilotons per year (KTY, Thousand Tons per Year) of fine copper equivalent; it moved 175 kilotons of material per day (KTD, Thousand Tons per Day) and employed 5,390 people (890 direct employees and 4,500 contractors). The company directly influences the lives of at least 100,000 people, mainly inhabitants of the valley in which it operates; it creates an additional 8,000 indirect jobs and is responsible for 14% of the regional GDP and 1% of the country's national GDP. AAC Plc. is jointly owned by a consortium of international companies, which

⁶ Measured in EVA, (EVA, Net Operating Profit After Taxes (NO PAT) - (Capital * Cost of Capital))

holds forty per cent of the shareholding, and a UK incorporated company, which holds the remaining sixty per cent.

Even when succeeding in creating economic value and obtaining recognition in different areas of activity, the sense of pride and achievement shared by the workers of MMC began to shift and erode after a series of incidents that caused the pollution of the valley, together with a string of associated safety and operational issues. The most notorious of these took place in September 2009 with the leakage of dozens of cubic metres of copper concentrate into the valley's river following a rupture in the pipeline that carried it through the valley to the port.

The incident with the pipeline brought the first large-scale reaction from the inhabitants of the surrounding communities, who were tired of the company's perceived lack of care for the environment and who, for a couple of weeks, blocked the only road into the valley that gave access to the mining operations in demonstration. More than forty trucks per day, carrying supplies, and thousands of people that worked in the mine, who used the road to commute to work, were unable to do so, thus threatening the continuity of the company's operation.



Fig 1 Valley residents protesting

After a second environmental incident in the same month, the regional government called the company management to a meeting with community representatives, NGOs and government officials to face questions on the enforcement of safety and environmental regulations⁷. The meeting was very emotionally charged and, in the account of Karlos, the CEO, "...we were treated as delinquents and they shouted at us everything you can imagine..." (Interview to MMC's CEO, August, 2010)

This event fuelled the sense that MMC was losing what the company management and employees thought was a reputation as a socially responsible company, highly reliable in delivering on their promises. This, in turn, undermined the sense of belonging to a successful company so treasured by the workforce and eroded the pride of its people, in particular the pride of its management.

⁷ Chilean law allows the government to withdraw a mining operation licence when labour, environmental or social issues affect the surrounding communities.

MMC's CEO stated in an interview:

"The Company was a reference for the industry at a national level because of the way we were doing things, because we were always growing, how much innovation we were doing, etc. These were things about which we felt really proud. However, there was a change in our environment and this began to hold us accountable, so that these things began to be less valued, and there was a shift in what was considered most valuable. The company began to lose its pride. Before, we thought we did everything right, then we discovered we were not so good. We had a couple of fatalities. A lot of things began to happen to us".

This brought about the acknowledgement that something had shifted for the company and that there was a need to make sense of the situation as well as a need to "make transparent" the problems they were experiencing.

"Then we began to have a series of problems related to the company's operation ... the world was changing and there was a need to open up these problems and make them transparent. Before, we had environmental incidents that actually nobody cared much about. Today if we spill a drop of concentrate into the river, the scandal is of enormous proportions. Before we dropped litres into the river and it was unnoticed. Today, the communities react immediately. So we are placed in this very tough mining culture, having problems and with no other dream than to be successful, where (previously) to be successful was through the vision that we had and meant creating as much economic value as possible".

During the following months, part of the executive team and a number of middle managers went into a reflexive mode, trying to make sense of the situation and considering what to do about it. There were some “quick fixes” available, such as building a quality assurance process to “silence” the pipeline and make it more reliable, new incentives for safety practices and other measures that might resolve the immediate issues. However, they decided that a whole new way of doing business and a new strategy for the future was necessary: “business as usual” was no longer possible and the culture of the company needed to change in order that it might become a sustainable operation in the immediate future.

The team knew that the life expectancy of the company, originally estimated at less than 20 years, had grown by 500%, following the discovery of vast new mineral reserves. Faced with this, the team decided to develop a strategy for 2010-20 to reflect these new themes and replace the out-dated strategy developed in 2000.

In March 2010, the company invited representatives from all its stakeholders (communities, government agencies, NGOs, contractors, employees, managers) to what they called “Strategic Planning Meetings”, to formulate the company’s strategy for 2010-20. From these meetings a strategy formulation emerged, entitled the “Sustainable Relational Strategy”, from which there were three important highlights:

1. The vision and mission statement for the company changed from “creating *economic* value for the *shareholder*” to “creating *sustainable*

value for all its *stakeholders*”, which implied that corporate objectives would no longer focus on solely creating economic value but simultaneously creating social and environmental value, as can be seen in the following graphs from one of the CEO’s presentations.

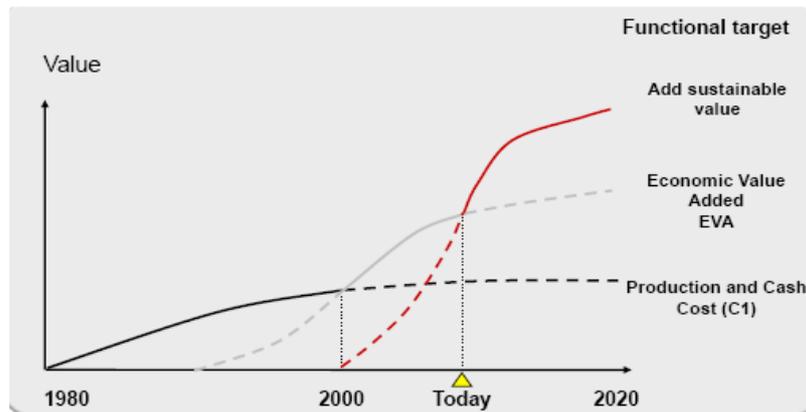


Figure 2

2. Secondly was the recognition that this change could be achieved exclusively by constructing mutual, beneficial and trusting relationships with all of the company’s stakeholders.

Defining trusting relationships at the centre of its strategy formulation became a new cornerstone to what sustainable mining meant to MMC. Instead of just defining value as an end product, it introduced the concept that the quality of the relationship was key to building the company’s success. Furthermore, by including all their stakeholders within this relationship, the company extended and acknowledged its business scope beyond just its own property boundaries to the whole network

constituted by its stakeholders. The following figure shows how the company’s executive team formulated this in the strategy presentations.

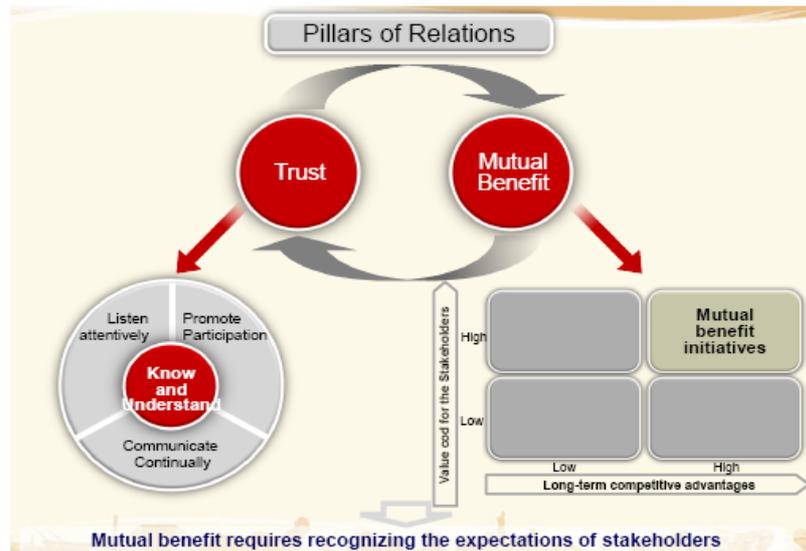


Figure 3 Trusting Relationships as a Strategic Intent

3. A third element of the strategy statement was the prioritisation given in the process of implementation of the strategy – specifically what came first on what MMC should do. First on the list of priorities was to “assure excellence and trust”. Second on the list was “to prepare for growing” – meaning an adaptation of the company’s organisational structure and culture to the challenges of growing. The third priority was “to grow”. This last point, clarified by Karlos, was that “the whole system grows – all of our stakeholders, and especially the communities, employees and contractors”.

The emphasis on trusting relationships, as a top priority of the strategy, led me to expect that attention to the practice of trust would come very early during the strategy implementation process in MMC. This motivated me to include trusting relationships as a key subjectivity and my focus on researching leadership in what seemed to be the complex domain of strategy implementation.

One of the results of these “Strategic Planning Meetings” was the formulation of a Sustainability Strategy Plan, containing the three elements previously explained. This plan needed to go through the approval of the board in order to have legitimacy for guiding investment and resource allocation.

During the Board Meeting of April 2010, the plan was submitted by the executive team and approved by the board, giving a green light to the plan contained within it. Perhaps the most instant change was the development of a new organisational structure, which led to seven (rather than the previous four) members integrated into the executive team. A whole new layer of management was also established, reporting to the executives. Previously, most of the managers reporting to executives were named “Superintendents”, with a connotation of operative management. The new layer was named “Gerentes” – or “Managers” – implying a higher level of accountability, not just for executing operational tasks, but also for designing and exploring solutions in their scope of influence.

By April 2010 a new organisational chart was put in place that reflected, just by counting the number of executives and managers and their roles, a shift in the priority of the strategy intention to produce jointly economic, social and environmental value. In the previous organisation chart, one member of the executive team took charge of all the operational function; a second had been in charge of finance, a third in charge of HR and a fourth in charge of new operational projects. The executive team had been composed of these four executives plus the CEO. Within the new structure, job titles were changed as well, to reflect the focus of the job positions: “Finance Manager” was changed to

“Strategy and Finance Manager”; “Human Resources Manager” was changed to “Talent and Culture Manager”. Two more executives were incorporated – a “Development Manager” and an “Operative Project Manager” – the first with responsibility over issues related to community relationships, sustainability and regulatory compliances and the latter responsible for quality and risk management in the operational sites.

The same diversification of responsibilities took place in the next layer of the management structure – the “middle management”. From being a layer where only five people carried management titles (“gerentes”), all of them belonging to the Operations area, it grew to 25, most changing titles from “Superintendentes” to “Gerentes”. All other management positions were called supervisors, and implied having responsibility for a team or a specific technical discipline.

Because of the numbers involved, the executive team called itself G7, while the next layer of managers became the G32 (including the G7). By the end of April 2010, almost all the new positions were filled. The new managers were recruited into the G7 after the board approved the strategy. Most came from companies already related to the holding group.

After the strategy approval by the board, a series of seminars was organised with the management, employees, contractors and community representatives, to share the details of the new strategy. The format of these communications was via presentations with little interaction between the participants, in which the new strategy was “communicated” in a linear fashion by the executive team.

This is the basic status of the strategy I found when I contacted MMC for the first time in order to plan my research. This research intended to make an empirical examination of leadership from a non-dualistic perspective in the midst of the implementation of this strategy process, especially focused on the interaction within the executive team and the company's stakeholders. In the next section I will present the research design I intended to use for this purpose.

RESEARCH DESIGN

For narrative research, the basic sources of data are stories, and stories can be told in different languages. What defines a story is that actions become inscribed in narratives, bounded and made meaningful by their account. Stories are not raw data – they are already interpretative features – so there is no distinction to be made between facts, construction and interpretation. One of the challenges of interpreting a story is, therefore, to recognise which is the voice of whom, and in particular, which is the voice of the researcher.

For constructing stories, I followed a number of methods, shown schematically in the diagram overleaf and which I will describe in greater detail later. I should highlight that some of these methods are superimposed on each other, since none of them can be considered on its own for the analysis.

Every research method should be considered as an interpretative device for constructing data. As we will see later, shadowing (Czarniawska, 2007) can be considered an overarching method for research using a narrative approach. As an example, the shadowing technique helped in the construction of data for Relational Communication Analysis (Rogers & Escudero, 2004) and in giving access to interviews.

Interviews were used for various purposes: as a source of data themselves; for the construction of data which helped to build context for shadowing, so that there were already some guiding principles when shadowing was set in motion; and to establish the first level of analysis for constructing the self-interpretation

devices of the micro-narratives to be obtained using the Sense Maker Suite (Snowden D. , 2010). The interviews were often granted during the shadowing process, as opportunities arose when being located within the company facilities or whilst tracking executives.

I adapted the Sense Maker Suite with the aim of obtaining micro-narratives from diverse sections of the company’s stakeholders (to include in particular employees and valley residents) and set a process for working with the self-reflection logs for managers recommended by the Complex Responsive Process suggested by Stacey and Griffin (2005). However, as I will show later, for different reasons their use was very limited, if indeed useful at all. Whilst there was limited take-up of these methods, and they did not provide data that I was hoping for, they both provided useful circumstantial data that I incorporated into my analysis.

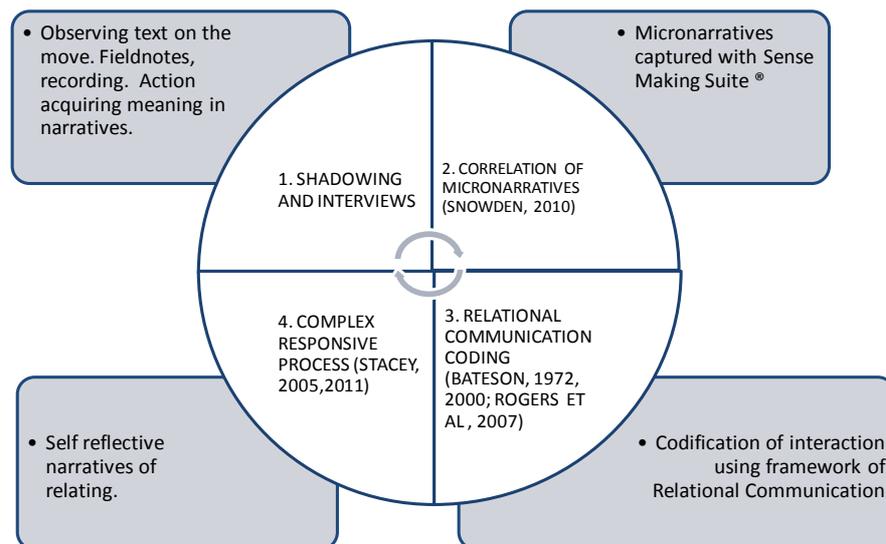


Figure 4 Data Sources in Narrative Research

As can be gathered from this diagram, I introduced four sources of stories into my research design, which I will name briefly and explain more extensively later. In the following section I will give an account of each of these methods, explain how they worked and describe the advantages and disadvantages I found with each of them.

SHADOWING AND INTERVIEWS

Shadowing provided the first source of stories. This method should be considered as a form of ethno-methodology (Garfinkel, 1967; Maynard & Clayman, 1991:102), whose aim is to focus research “on what people are doing” (Silverman, 2010:101) and which can be distinguished from the focus on understanding the “way people see things” of ethnography (Maynard, 1989 in Silverman, 2010: PAGE). Shadowing attempts to overcome a number of issues related to an essential trait of ethnographic research: the use of prolonged periods of participant observation. Czarniawska (2007:14) points out the difficulties of following a research approach that poses as a condition the use of large amounts of time in the field. Shadowing inverts the relationship between time and space, favouring the access to space over time – participatory time not being the essential component of its work.

Czarniawska (2007) addresses a number of issues related to the importance of time in understanding a phenomenon. The first of them is the “essentialist” perspective that suggests that time is relevant. She uses the following example:

“Suppose I studied Warsaw management for twenty more years. It would no doubt be a fascinating study, but I am not sure that there will be much in the management of Warsaw in 2015 that was of crucial importance for understanding management of the city in 1995. There is no “essence” that I could have revealed, given time. Specific persons may retire or be exchanged as the result of the next political coup, but the actions that constitute management will remain. On the other hand, the form and content of the actions may change drastically, even if the same people remain as a result of, say, a new information technology or a new fashion in big city management”. (2007:15)

The second issue to which she points out is the increasing “simultaneity of events” (2007, p. 16), so that the issue becomes not so much on how to deal with temporality but with space.

“Modern organising, on the other hand, takes place in a net of fragmented, multiple contexts, through multitudes of kaleidoscopic movements. Organising happens in many places at once, and organizers move around quickly and frequently”. (2007:17) Researchers need to be able to work with different temporalities, and in multiple spaces, if they are not to rely further on the hierarchical and sequential ordering of activities.

The third issue tackled by Czarniawska is how much the higher ranks of the organisational ladder are accessible to participant observation. It is not rare to discover that ethnographers often assert that organisational top ranks are distant from the ethnographer’s gaze. Gaining access with a high participation

level as a “participatory insider role” may become almost impossible to the researcher. As I will show later, “gatekeeping” (Silverman, 2010) of the intimacies and insider’s facts of the top executive groups gave me rarely accessible insight into what was going on between the executive team members.

I have no doubt that a prolonged observation enhances the possibilities of obtaining useful data, but this does not require the interviewer to be a full “participant”, as the external observer also has access to good data.

The fourth issue that Czarniawska (2007) highlights pertains to the visibility (of the interviewee) to the observer. There is a growing trend of people studied who are “already elsewhere” (Strannergård and Friberg, 2001) or from whom there is a “response presence” (Knorr Cetina & Bruegger, 2002) – when people answer emails which are not necessarily visible to an observer.

Shadowing does not address the issues of simultaneity or visibility – against which it needs to be complemented with other methods – but it does increase the chances of moving through the spaces in which interaction happens. Czarniawska (2007:18) suggests diary studies as one of the complementary methods.

I propose that shadowing is a form of relation, not just a method, by which access to different spaces can be obtained due to its attachment to a moving object, which may thus be at the same time the “gate keeper” of the research field.

Czarniawska (2007) argues that shadowing is external observation through accessing information that, from the inside, would be impossible. It is a symmetrical observation between the researcher and the object of research, assuming that “an observer can never know better than an actor; a stranger cannot say more about any culture than a native, but observers can see different things than what actors and natives can.” (2007: 19).

In the context of narrative research, whose aim is to describe practices, shadowing represents a method that contains a privileged possibility of doing so with moving actants, constructing knowledge not from the routines and details, but from the description of events, and using a different focus from that of ethnographic methods.

Czarniawska (2007) herself has shadowed heterogeneous materials in the field of research, as have several other researchers. Latour (1999), for example, follows the material samples of various botanists and pedologists from a specific location in Brazil to the sample coding and analysis in a French laboratory, from here to a working paper and then on to become a scientific paper. Frandsen (in Czarniawska, 2007:97) follows a report through many hands and transformations, demonstrating that, by following its trail, it is possible to observe the construction and the performance of heterogeneous agents in the construction of what could be seen and understood as a simple “accounting report”.

Every time that an entity shows its trail, it reveals its making, not just by human action, but by the complex interaction of materials that produce it. Even what we consider to be “natural” has this intricate performance, usually invisible to our

experience of entities or products that become organised as such. Simple, everyday actions, such as sending an email, eating a cake or experiencing emotions from observing a photograph of a loved one, for example, can be seen to be the results of the association of complex materialities that can be traced through shadowing.

I shadowed the CEO of MMC for six periods of two to three days within a time frame of twelve months, as well as the Strategy and Finance Manager, recording my observations in a notepad.

My choice to follow a person, and not another type of actant like a document or machine, was due to my interest in observing how the construction of trusting relations across different organisational stakeholders evolved – a central component of the strategy development I have researched. This phenomenon included human and non-human interaction, but I decided to follow managers instead of other materialities because I assumed that they are “gate keepers”, with much more freedom to move through the organisational space. An option could have been to follow an environmental report or a safety situation, which I considered but which seemed more difficult to follow due to the type of access I was granted and the restrictions that I found in moving freely within the operation site.

Shadowing means a permanent negotiation of access and at the same time a permanent construction of the relation of the researcher with the research subject. Even when shadowing suggests an active endeavour from the researcher standpoint, it seems to me that it is the field that defines what is to be shadowed. I had a privileged position to access a number of sites, people

and situations that otherwise I doubt would have been possible if I had not been following top executives.

However, I always had the feeling that for this same reason the “field” was substantially different from what it could have been if it had not been observed “over the shoulder” of an executive. Even when I played the humble role of observer, I was very quickly given a role as “the shadow” of these top executives, which raises doubts about how many voices have been silenced or changed to fit expectations.

I agree with Czarniawska (2007, p. 13) that a full organisation can never be staged for a researcher, but what is inevitable is that the presence of an “external” observer will modify the setting. This is even more the case if the research is believed to be a specific knowledge source in constituting the practitioner’s practice.

A project such as the one proposed in this work should use shadowing with different type of actants – those of the periphery, with less mobility, where issues of simultaneity, visibility, access and participation are of less relevance to the mainstream discourse. In this case, a fully-fledged ethnographic approach would have been heartily recommended, but was not the type of access I obtained.

Shadowing represents an interesting way of carrying out ethnology with moving objects, where the emphasis is not on how people understand their world but on how they construct their practices. It represents an overarching approach where a number of methods can be used to complement its capacity of work through

space more than through time. It presents as its main limitation the issue of constructing data from the perspective of only a few moving objects.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews are considered valuable tools in qualitative research (Bourgeault, Dingwall, & De Vries, 2010; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Holloway & Jefferson, 2000; Mishler, 1988), able to produce valuable (Geertz, 1973) and textual data (Bourgeault, Dingwall, & De Vries, 2010).

At the same time, they are social encounters where the roles of researcher and interviewee can be shaped by different levels of control over the structure and content (Murphy & Dingwall, 2003; Green & Thorogood, 2004).

Informal interviews in field settings – “conversations” – are to be classified at one extreme of the scale, while standardised and closed ones are positioned at the other extreme. It is arguable how possible it is for the researcher to gain levels of empathy, rapport and reciprocity from his/her interviewee, depending on the characteristics such as age, gender or ethnicity and on how relevant the “insiderness” and “outsiderness” of the researcher is in the research relationship to the interview outcome (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008).

Interviews are understood differently from various theoretical and epistemological perspectives. Alvesson (2011) makes a distinction between neo-positivist, romanticism and localism perspectives, which I find useful.

Neo-positivist assumes that interview responses accurately reflect the experiences and/or observations of interviewees, depending on how the interview is carried out.

Romanticism assumes that a close relationship between the researcher and interviewee will lead to access to better types of knowledge.

Localism means that an interview situation is an empirical situation similar to many others in people's lives and should be studied as such, so that interviews should not be treated as tools for the collection of data but rather something outside the empirical situation (Alvesson, 2011:19). "The products of an interview are the outcome of socially situated activity where the responses are passed through the role-playing and impression management of both the interviewer and the respondent" (Dingwall, 1997:56 in Alvesson, 2011:19).

Neither a neo-positivist, romantic nor localist position seems encouraging for the use of interviews in the research process. The neo-positivist position seems naïve and near to romanticism in the lack of awareness of the contextual nature of social intercourse, while localism seems to shut out the possibility of constructing any knowledge from the specific situation.

If reflexivity is considered, which says that it is impossible to get a definitive truth from social science, giving special attention to interpretation and the impossibility of controlling the outcomes of the research setting becomes particularly important – as it is within an interaction field where few possibilities of control exist (Alvesson, 2011:26). Interviews are to be considered as reflexively complex where their outcomes can be considered a product just as

any other from social exchanges. What can be said within an interview requires not just awareness of its limitations and skill requirements, but also recognition of what it conveys within a field of practice.

I consider interviews to be only marginally useful as a source of data for exploring the research question for this project, where I consider the present living moment of interaction as the main temporality in which data should be constructed.

If we are interested in taking hold of interaction in the living present, then interviews represent the opportunity to obtain data that refers to the sense-making process (Weick K. , 2001) of the interviewee, hence the reason that its experience is organised by an observer. Interviews represent data already composed in a narrative, a text that can hold its own life, not independent of the author or the reader, a key quality given to narrative research as interpretation (Czarniawska, 2011). Hence, accounts given through interviews can be a very partial account of the situation described.

However, at the risk of contradicting myself, interviews are included as part of my research design because they provide textual data to build context to what I am researching. The reconstruction of the past (as a present visit to it) by a specific agent gives light about how actions, facts and materials are organised by this agent, so that it provides important insights about its own subjectifying process. At the same time, as social encounters, interviews provide the opportunity to decipher the subjectification process that the interviewee is carrying out on themselves in front of the interviewer and how, according to his/her narratives, specific subjectivities are constructed.

A reason that makes an interview valuable is that, even when we witness all the actions that happen, there is no way by which we can decide which have importance. I can follow executives through their daily activities or set all types of technological devices to “capture” what is taking place. However, actions – even accounts of actions – do not have importance in themselves. “They must be made important” (Czarniawska, 2004: 776), and the place where actions become important are in their accounts – not just in anyone’s story but in the stories of people that have the power to edit the actions and events in these accounts.

When using interviews as a research method one has to acknowledge that a text acquires meaning in a narrative. I adhere to Czarniawska's (2011:47) comment that this is controversial, but we have to recognise the importance of “positioning”, where “there are no sole authors of our own narratives. In every conversation (i.e. interview) a positioning takes place which is accepted, rejected or even improved upon by the partners in the conversation”

As interviewer, we become a reader of the account. I “position” myself in relation to the account, and probably another researcher would give importance to different actions, facts and events of the same accounts. We are not an external observer – as interviewer, we become authors in the interview and share agency with the interviewee (Alvesson, 2011). Our expectations, frames of reference and interests get mixed up in the facts of the account, so that we become a stakeholder too, a research subject of our own research.

I am aware that most of my research interviews were carried out with the intention of obtaining a sense of topics present between the stakeholders, in

order to construct categories of self-interpretation into the Sense Maker Collector, and to make Abductive analysis (Snowden D. , 2010). There were also a number of conversations that came from informal encounters while shadowing executives.

During my field research I interviewed members of various groups of stakeholder. In the following table I show the number of encounters I carried out with each of them. To all interviewees other than executives I posed the same open-ended question "What is your relationship with MMC?" which kept opening a number of issues around the company. I will provide further details of these interviews in the next chapter. The interviews with executives, mainly with the CEO, were carried out during a period of around twelve months, and mainly as encounters during the shadowing periods.

Table N° 1: Number of Interviews by Stakeholder Group

Stakeholder group	Number
Executives	3
Middle Managers	10
Valley Residents	25
Contractor's Employees	10
MMC Employees	12

CORRELATION OF MICRO-NARRATIVES

I intended to use a method based on a web interface that invites people to tell their stories in relation to a topic and then asks them to interpret these stories using a set of preconfigured options. This method can be used to correlate a large number of stories and produce abductive research types of hypotheses around the themes being researched.

This was the third method incorporated to plot text in the hermeneutical approach proposed. It is based on Snowden's Abductive Research Methodology (2010) to research complexity, based on capturing what he calls "micro narratives". Using the concepts derived from Complexity Science (Anderson, 1999) and the study of so-called Complex Adaptive Systems, his approach recognises the centrality of narratives in the way people are shaped by, and shape their own, reality.

Snowden (2010) carries his approach further by proposing that the insights of complexity science – especially the notion of boundary conditions and attractors – constitute propositions that take the notion of discourse outside its limits, proposing that connectivity and interaction are the main processes that explain the nature of complexity.

Boundary condition refers to the limits of the environment that are of interest to the subject in question. Where the agent behaviour is located is not as important as how this behaviour is connected and influences others. In this

sense, boundary conditions are “the set of all the interactions that act or are acted on by components of the system” (Snowden, 2010). Here, the notion of “embeddedness” takes a specific meaning and is linked to the notion of feedback loops and context-sensitive constraints – contrary to efficient causality – which imports the past into the system’s present as it is enabled or constrained by it. Thus, actual behaviour is the source of future possibilities, but extremely sensitive to the initial, historical, past conditions.

As Boje et al (2001) acknowledge, there are two essential qualities in narratives: time and plot. In contrast with traditional discourse analysis, the use of concepts of boundary conditions proposed by Snowden (2010) brings not just the predominant time and plot qualities into place, but adds the notions of connectivity and the way in which the present state of organising reacts to the present conditions. Instead of researching organisation as seen in a unique space and time condition, the incorporation of a complexity science notion of boundary conditions proposes the study of organisation as “multilevel dynamical systems with emergent properties that are irreducible to their components” (Snowden, 2010).

The plot of stories is located in time and place in ways that, because of the connectivity and dynamic properties of the emergent whole, can only be grasped through this concept. In this way the constraining conditions can be seen and plotted in the narrative of the system’s description. Organisation, then, becomes a self-organised network described in stories and plotted in a time and space that are shaped by its boundary conditions.

“Attractors” is the second key concept from Complexity Science that Snowden (2010) incorporates into his research approach. These are typical patterns of dynamic, interdependent behaviours, of limited dimensions, which result from analysing trajectories at lower levels of granularity. A typical attractor is an equilibrium model, like the pendulum of a grandfather clock or a traditional economic model, which show the presence of the same dynamical behaviour.

Since the late 20th century a new type of complex attractor has caught the attention of complexity science (Anderson, 2002) – often used as a type of metaphor to describe how order exists in the midst of chaos. Snowden (2010) proposes the use of “attractor landscapes”, based on what has been used in biology as “fitness landscapes” – a way to capture and visualise the “switch and trigger mechanisms that precipitate a change in the system's trajectory” (2010:30).

With the concept that organisations are self-organised networks that can be described by the plotting of their multilevel narratives in the midst of their constraint boundary conditions, Snowden proposes that these narratives can be plotted and interpreted into a landscape of peaks and valleys. The deeper the valley, the greater the propensity of it being visited, and the stronger and more deeply rooted the meaning the attractor represents. In contrast, sharp peaks are unstable points that show where evolution is less constrained and subject to behavioural changes.

Mapping the constantly evolving, complex and multilevel storytelling that shapes organisational behaviour seems to be an intriguing process of research. Here, form more than substance comes into play, connecting and enabling a

sense-making process of emergent phenomena from a non-reductionist perspective.

Snowden (2010) suggests the use of a dynamical mapping tool, a software program named Sensemaker[®] 8, which allows the plotting of fragmented micro-narratives from the field, interpreted by the same people that tell these stories. These interpreted stories are then visually mapped as attractors or graphs, which can be used as a sense-making tool.

For the purpose of acquainting the reader with the method, and to show the uses of material derived from it, I give further details in Appendix 1. In the next chapter I will tell my story of the process of conducting research with this method. I will expand on the problems I encounter in using this method, which led me at the end to discard it as one of my methods in this research project.

⁸ Sensemaker is a registered trademark of Cognitive Ede Pte. Ltd.

CODING RELATIONAL COMMUNICATION

A third method used in this research was the use of data obtained whilst exploring the surrounding valley, witnessing meetings and conversations and shadowing the company executives. Data here was not in the form of the texts in their natural mode, but the coding of speech, acts and gestures and the positioning of the sequence of these acts into a broader range of interpretation – a hermeneutical process in itself.

Based on the work of Escudero and Rogers (2004) – rooted within an epistemology that shifts its attention from substance to pattern and process which gives “prominence to interaction patterns over individual acts and interrelationships over unilateral causation” (Escudero and Rogers, 2004) – this approach highlights the idea that self-identities come into existence only in the “I – Other” realm of interaction and social processes. It focuses on the “observable” behavioural process of communication itself, rather than in the cognitive, intra-psychic aspects of the individuals involved, setting a kind of figure/background reversal, repositioning the individual into the background and setting the relationship itself as the unit of analysis.

In Bateson’s work (Bateson, 2000:177), from the publication of *Naven* (1936) and *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (1958, 1972, 2000), we can see the development of the theoretical foundations of the concept of relational communication. I based an important part of my analysis on its implications for a relational understanding of how stories develop.

I have to distinguish the overall concept of relational communication and its implications in understanding patterns of interaction and its effects and how it can be used as a source of stories told with a specific calculus, a language of signs, which allow us to construct the stories in a relational narrative.

Although I have presented most of its theoretical underpinnings in the previous chapter, I think that it is worth presenting it together with the conceptual foundation, as well as the language with which it becomes a source of stories.

Two propositions summarise its main importance for the introduction of this methodology into the research design.

I said previously that all behaviour "... in an interactional situation has a message value, i.e., is communication" (Watzlawick et al, 1967). Then I added that all messages have a multilevel meaning, one at the informational or content level, and a "report" level, where representational and digital levels (meaningless unless inscribed in a code) of communication take place. These are contextualised and ultimately qualified by a simultaneous "relational" level. This "relational" level is where participants in a relationship negotiate identities or "offers" in interaction. It is important to caution the reader that, when talking about levels, this means not the presence of two different ontological levels but a pragmatic distinction, since what can act as a "relational" level, may just be the subsequent or antecedent utterance in the flow of interaction.

This relational level, what Bateson defines as "context", is the ecologically connected result of the iteration of actions that qualify and determine them and allow actions to acquire meaning.

To the previous proposition, I would like to add two more elements to clarify this approach, which contribute to the research design. The first is that message meaning is contingent on how the sequence of recursive communication events is “punctuated”. Punctuation frames and sets the limits and boundaries that define the meaning of actions.

As Bateson says (2000), “suppose I am a blind man, and I use a stick. I go tap, tap, tap. Where do I start? Am I bounded by the handle of the stick? Or by my skin? Does it start halfway up the stick? Does it start at the tip of the stick?” This defines the arbitrary boundaries of the movement of a blind man. “But if the blind man sits down to eat his lunch, his stick and its boundaries and messages will no longer be relevant” (2000: 465). He continues by saying that we will define the boundaries of the phenomenon depending on what we give importance to or find meaningful.

Punctuation is a relevant aspect of the process. It defines boundaries and this has consequences – the key of which is that it isolates what it is not from what does not exist. Punctuation establishes something as real in the narrative and it leaves in the background something that may later become important. In more general terms, punctuation leads to envisage the process of differentiation as opposed to the undifferentiated reference to the always present “becoming” of organising.

Punctuation signifies the presence of some kind of non-propositional categorical thought, whose consequences are always some level of differentiation – the possibility of building difference that makes a difference. Bateson (1972:67) suggests that the possibilities of differentiation “are by no means infinite, but fall

clearly in two categories (a) cases in which the relationship is chiefly symmetrical, e.g. in the differentiation of moieties, clans, villages; and (b) cases in which the relationship is complementary, e.g., in the differentiation of social strata, classes.”

Symmetrical relationships refer to patterns of interaction where the exhibition of a pattern of behaviour brings a similar categorical pattern. Complementary relationships refer to the opposite type of reaction to a categorical pattern, so that the exhibition of one set of behaviour brings a different categorical behaviour.

Differentiation is the outcome of a relational process where difference – either by categorical, symmetrical or complementary iterative interaction – can either construct subjects and subjectivities or destroy them. What Bateson makes important about both patterns is that they can lead to an increased level of differentiation “towards either breakdown or a new equilibrium” (2000: 68).

Bateson proposed (2000;1936;1972) – based on his anthropological observations of patterns of interaction that lead to schismogenesis⁹ and which he defines as the breakdown of the possibilities of interaction of differentiated entities – that some sort of combination of them could constitute the prevention of schismogenesis.

He did not elaborate much on how these two processes of differentiation could be reversed and from them he introduces his famous concept of second order learning theory which explains how context is learned and constitutes the

behaviour (Bateson, 1991). Bateson (1972) draws on the basic definitions of these patterns to introduce the concept of the regulatory sequences of “higher order” interactions, combining patterns of patterns – such as reciprocity. Reciprocity contains, according to him, both symmetrical as well as complementary interaction, and is thus able to keep some change and stability in the interaction. His concern was on understanding how cultures, families and groups prevent the disruption of their relationship and obtain a steady state.

Bateson did not explicitly elaborate on the pattern of reciprocity as a reversal of the differentiation process leading to complementary or symmetrical schismogenesis. Reciprocity, for him, is a balanced combination of both patterns, which acts to prevent schismogenesis or a disruption of the relationship. I suggest that we can think about these processes of differentiation in a two-direction stream, one that increases it and another that runs in the direction of dedifferentiation.

A relational perspective shows that in nature it is not differentiation that defines the behaviour of systems of interaction. Differentiation can only be prevented by a process of de-differentiation, which I will call *positive reciprocity*, where the presence of the differentiated entity is explained by the presence of the same symmetrical and complementary patterns but in which the categorical qualities of these exchanges are positive. In this sense, positive reciprocity implies a process of acknowledgment of the other as a legitimate other, not only different but in an interdependent relation for its mutual existence and evolution.

The leaves of a tree do not stand by themselves, but in a reciprocal relationship involving oxygen, sun, water, etc., which in their interaction make each other

possible in a flow where punctuation becomes just a perceptual quality of observation. Examples of this positive reciprocity are the symbiotic relationship of mother and new born, the loving relationship of friendship and couples that can lead to an experience of an ontic state of fusion or oneness.

Positive symmetry and complementary interaction seem related to ontic states, where the categorical thinking of differentiation becomes latent but not present. The dependency of the newborn and the escalation of demands in a couple both seem to represent this broken ontic state and the desire for its reestablishment. Certainly this is not the right strategy, since it can only lead to more differentiation and growing relationships of dependence but not of dedifferentiation.

It seems at the same time that when ontic states are broken there is no road on which to return – only a different type of ordering may emerge to replace it. Positive reciprocity seems to be an option, but what defines it is that it is an extra ontic state when it has become broken. The breakdown creates the introduction of a different, categorical and non-propositional thinking in the interaction¹⁰.

¹⁰ A good example of this positive reciprocity is a famous St Francis prayer.

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;*

In organisational studies I see that the furthest that positive ontic state research has gone is with trust¹¹. It seems that reciprocity requires introducing emotions that go beyond a care relationship to one that overcomes the differentiation process.

Punctuation seems almost inevitable in interaction and especially in its narrative. However, it seems that not every categorical behaviour brings along the construction of differentiated entities. Where there is negative reciprocity, either complementary or symmetrical, there is an option of positive reciprocity where the presence of a given type of behaviour constitutes a process, which instead of constituting a schism, constructs the confluence of differentiated parts in a unity. The more differentiated, the more novelty can bring along the creation of this emergent unity. Positive reciprocity can be described as the process of creation of the new, while negative reciprocity – when it does not lead to schismogenesis – explains the immanence.

Positive reciprocity recognises the presence of the other as other, providing with its presence a wider range of possibilities, opening interaction to broader sources of difference that make differences. I think that the concept of reciprocity has a great relevance to understanding patterns of interactions, just

*to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,*

¹¹ In a search in Jstor using ‘reciprocity and organisation’ or ‘love and organisation’ for the periods between 2007 and 2013, no entries appeared. Reciprocity is usually used in research in the relation between employee and supervisors as already-existent entities and not as a process of differentiation or dedifferentiation.

not as lineal sequences, but as iterations that construct simultaneously different layers of possibilities and contexts, giving the opportunity to subjectify a more diverse range of practices.

RELATIONAL COMMUNICATION CONTROL CODING SYSTEM

Punctuation of sequenced utterances used for establishing the presence of patterns of relational communication can be regarded as derivable from the observable properties of interaction in Rogers and Escudero's work (2004). This calls the need to clarify one more methodological issue; the use of categorical thinking in researching leadership from a relational perspective.

Bateson (2000) warns us about the use of categories, all typologies are misleading, "our categories...are not *real* subdivisions which are present in the cultures which we study, but are merely *abstractions* which we make for our convenience when we set to describe cultures in words. They are not phenomena present in culture, but are labels for various points of view, which we adopt in our studies. In handling such abstractions we must be careful to avoid Whitehead's "fallacy of misplaced concreteness"" (1936; 2000, p. 68).

It derives from this assertion that there are two types of risks in the attempt to describe patterns using categorical thinking. The first and most obvious, is that instead of dealing with these categories as *abstractions* we deal them as *real* phenomena, describing it through "as if" propositions and relating them as real, giving substance to what only can be defined by its categorical difference.

Categorical thinking is used text in the form of verbal utterances, gestures or whatever other action, acting as analogies of these actions. Narrative research serves itself from this conceptualisation.

We can hypothesise that if patterns form context, the later can characterised as symmetrical or complementary, as proposed by Bateson (2000) or differentiating or reciprocal as discussed in the previous section. Actions forming these patterns, which acquire its meaning only through its relation to each other, become meaningful by its inscription in these patterns, in a mutual and simultaneous forming process. This latter description cannot be regarded as real, but as an abstraction. However, at the same time, it becomes an explanatory principle, a map to the territory relation, from where we can have only “news of difference” (Bateson, 1991, p. 218). Coding relational communication is mapping, using a categorical system by which researchers can *make sense of difference*. This represents at least two levels of abstraction to the territory, from which we only get news of difference.

What makes this coding method especially relevant method for representing patterns is that what becomes of relevance in the coding process: the distinction between content and relational qualities of any interaction, to which special attention must be given. Relational communication coding means attending to this “news of difference” in interaction, by attending to the pragmatics effect of one action after each other.

Actions acquire their meaning by inscription in the sequence of other actions. What the relational coding system does is to note how it is that actions compose each other in the sequencing of interaction. However, we have to be

aware that is not only sequenced actions what configures the meaning of an action. While coding news of difference, we have to consider that “difference cannot be placed in time” (Bateson, 1991, p. 219). Difference remains across time and space. Trust remains even when I travel south or north and even if I disappear. Action belongs to multiple interaction levels, so that we should not restrict interpretation to the sequenced action, and should try always to access other levels of interaction that become latent (Cooper, 2005) and multiple (Mol, 2002). It is a complex thinking approach of “sustained resistance” (Chia 2011:183) which invites us to think about a set of ethics of observation that we should build in a complementary relationship with experience.

A “sustained resistance” implies the acknowledgment that experience is not a product of an external reality, but the outcome of the relation of the observer with himself while coping in the local present living dimensions of life, giving a provisional status to everything that is observed. This seems to be a set of ethics in which “we become painfully aware of our ignorance of our ignorance” (Chia, 2011:184).

Observing the observer through which we constitute our experience in an “I – me” relation of the self, introduced in the coding process, means the presence of a process that acknowledges simultaneously the partiality of experience and, at the same time, the “otherness” of it. Doubt is set in the centre of the observation process, not as a rational enquiry about objective subjects, but about our ethical relation to what we are experiencing about others and ourselves. This requires us to acknowledge that our actual experience is not

just partial, but deceives others and us, leaving static assertions about the self and others untouched.

In this sense, the coding process and results is not to be taken as definitive script, but an orientating one that should be doubted, challenged and give way to an ethics of observation that sets doubts in its centre.

Bateson himself derived this analytical conceptualisation from his field anthropological observations (Bateson, 2000; 1972; 1936). The reading of his texts shows that there are no coding systems in his work, only his ethnographic experience in the double relation of himself with himself and with the Balinese people. Borrowing his conceptualisation of differentiating process of complementarity and symmetry that the coding system was constructed in the seventies (Rogers, 1975), evolving to what has been transformed into an empirical research method (Rogers and Escudero, 2004).

It has crystallised into what is known as the Relational Communication Control Coding System (RCCCS) – a protocol of coding that incorporates the linguistic distinctions between the *content* of verbal intercourse and the type of *relational* mode relative to the prior message in an interaction stream, which I summarise in the following table.

What I have in mind is that whatever categorisation process we engage in, what we are searching for is the capacity to distinguish categorical distinctions which, as I have explained, should be able to identify not just news of difference within speech acts and sequenced signs but within the context within which this action is produced. In this sense, the coding process should only be understood as an

orientational process, where the capacity to infer the presence of positive or negative categories can only be established as a judgement from within the experience of the data analysed.

CODING PROCESS

In the following section, I explain the detailed process of coding and the categories used in it.

The first step in coding is distinguishing content from relational aspects of language action. This will be done using the following categories of speech acts' classification.

Table 2: Content and Relational Distinctions

CONTENT	DEFINITION	RELATIONAL	DEFINITION
ASSERTION	Any completed referential statement expressed in either the declarative or imperative form.	SUPPORT	Any message that offers or seeks agreement, assistance, acceptance, and/or approval.
QUESTION	Any message that takes an interrogative form (verb – noun, rising of voice, etc.)	NON SUPPORT	Any message that implies disagreement, rejection, demand, resistance, and/or challenge.

CONTENT	DEFINITION	RELATIONAL	DEFINITION
TALK - OVER	<p>Any interruption or verbal intervention made while another person is speaking.</p> <p>Talk - overs can be coded as “Successful” or “Unsuccessful”, depending on whether the first speaker relinquishes the floor during a conversation.</p>	EXTENSION	Any message that continues the flow or theme of the preceding message.
NON-COMPLETE	Any utterance that is initiated but not completed (without a clear format, or response mode).	INSTRUCTION	Any regulative message that is a qualified suggestion involving clarification, justification, or explanation.
OTHER	Any utterance that is indistinguishable or grammatically unclassifiable.	ORDER	Any message that is an unqualified command with little or no explanation, usually in the imperative form.
		DISCONFIRMATION	Any message that ignores or by- passes the request (whether explicit or implicit) of the previous message.

CONTENT	DEFINITION	RELATIONAL	DEFINITION
		TOPIC CHANGE	Any message that has little continuity with the previous message but no response continuity was requested.
		SELF – INSTRUCTION	Any message that reflects back on the self about what the self should do and feel.
		OTHER	Any message that has an unclear, unclassifiable response implication.

With this procedure, each speech and gesture can be double coded as content, a differential speech act or as “relational” mode, according to the relational meaning of the message value of actions as regarded by the previous action.

It is this distinction that justifies the use of this coding system compared with those by suggested by other authors, especially from the conversational analysis tradition. Conversational Analysis (Sacks et al., 1974; Sacks, 1992), follows a tradition from Ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967; Goffman, 1983) and should be considered as one of the most prominent methodologies for elucidating how is that social order “is contingently accomplished through the

skilled actions of subjects who coordinate their relationships with others through various tactics that establish or confirm the grounds of the communicative exchange” (Heritage, 1987).

Its main theoretical formulation, which follows some can be summarised in three claims:

Underlying this approach is a fundamental theory about how participants orient to interaction. This theory involves, according to Heritage (1998:105) three interrelated claims:

(1) “In constructing their talk, participants normally address themselves to preceding talk and, most commonly, the immediately preceding talk (Schegloff 1992, 1984; Schegloff and Sacks 1973; Sacks1987). In this simple and direct sense, their talk is ‘context shaped and context renewing (Heritage, 1984: 242). It assumes that if each utterance is produced with respect to the immediately preceding utterances, while simultaneously contributing to the framework to which subsequent utterances will be addressed, context is simultaneously forming and being formed by speech interaction” (1998).

(2) “In doing some current action, participants normally project (empirically) and require (normatively) that some 'next action' (or one of a range of possible 'next actions') should be done by a subsequent participant (Schegloff 1972). They thus create (or maintain or renew) a context for the next person's talk” (1998).

(3) “By producing their next actions, participants show an understanding of a prior action and do so at a multiplicity of levels - for example, by an 'acceptance ,' someone can show an understanding that the prior turn was complete, that it

was addressed to them, that it was an action of a particular type (e.g., an invitation), and so on. These understandings are (tacitly) confirmed or can become the objects of repair at any third turn in an on-going sequence (Schegloff 1992). Through this process, they become 'mutual understandings' created through a sequential 'architecture of intersubjectivity'".

Its applications in *Strategy as Practice* (Jarzabkowski & Spee, *Strategy as practice: A review and future directions for the field*, 2009) are numerous and have approached different subjects in the area (Samsa-Frederick, 2010). What is distinct of coding relational communication (Rogers & Escudero, 2004) is that attention to the 'relational' aspects of communication focuses in identifying 'news of difference' (Bateson, 1991) in interaction, without any reference to 'power effects' (Samsa- Fredericks, 2005) of the complex conceptualisation contained in CA. Instead of recurring to 'intersubjectivity' construct between agents for explaining the accomplishment of organisational facts, relational communication holds its explanatory capacity on the recursive association of actions. Instead of the densely conceptualisations of turn taking and repair, adjacency and structuration functions of conversation in accomplishing power effects in organisational phenomena (Samsa- Fredericks, 2010, 2005), coding Relational Communication, focuses in translating actions into a text representing the flow of interaction in a context, without cutting out this action of the context descriptions. Without disregard of the value of using the tradition of CA, which recur to a broader and rich conceptualisation for the accomplishment of organising phenomena, relational communication remains attentive to just the relational (Hosking, 2011) aspect of interaction, setting aside the more discursive considerations.

Thus, an attempt to assert a definition of the relationship represents a one-up movement (\uparrow); a request for or acceptance of the other's definition of the relationship indicates a one-down movement (\downarrow); a non-demanding, non-accepting, least constraining, levelling movement refers to a one-across manoeuvre (\rightarrow) (Rogers and Escudero, 2004).

The following table indicates the relational communication movements assigned to each of the combinations of content and relation.

Table 3. Relational Communication Movements Resulting from the Content and Relational Combinations

	<i>Support</i>	<i>Non support</i>	<i>Extension</i>	<i>Instruction</i>	<i>Order</i>	<i>Disconfirmation</i>	<i>Topic change</i>	<i>Self – instruction</i>	<i>Other</i>
<i>Assertion</i>	↓	↑	→	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	→
<i>Question</i>	↓	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓
<i>Talk - over</i>	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
<i>Non complete</i>	↓	↑	→	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	→
<i>Other</i>	↓	↑	→	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	→
<i>Assertion</i>	↓	↑	→	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	→

Combining the relational communication movements of adjoining messages results in three basic, interactional categories:

1. “*Complementary*”, where the definition of the relationship and identity offered by one of the interactors is accepted by the other. Here the movements are categorical opposites.

2. “*Symmetrical*” interactions, where the movement directions are the same and each interactor behaves towards the other as the other behaved towards him.

3. “*Transitory*” transactions, where the control directions express a neutralising, minimally constraining, one across message.

These three categories, combined as subsequent actions, develop in the following nine combinations as basic exchanges. As I have discussed before, Bateson’s formulation regarded both patterns of symmetrical and complementary interaction as leading to a potential differentiation process (Bateson, 1972, p. 68). In the following chart (based on (Rogers & Escudero, 2004)) the names assigned to the pairs of exchange follow this same concept.

Table 4 Relational Communication Pairs of Exchange as proposed by Rogers and Escudero (2007)

	<i>Movement Direction of Consequent Messages</i>		
<i>Movement Direction of Antecedent Message</i>	One Up ↑	One Down ↓	One Across →
↑ One Up	↑↑ (Competitive) Symmetry	↑↓ (Complementarity)	↑→ Transitions

↓ One Down	↓↑ (Complementarity)	↓↓ (Submissive) Symmetry	↓→ Transitions
→ One Across	→↑ Transitions	→↓ Transitions	→→ Neutralised Symmetry

In the next figure I propose a shift in the names of the exchanges to represent the presence of the dedifferentiation process where, instead of using negative categories as “competitive” or “submissive”, I propose the use of “one upness” and “one downness” exchanges in neutral form. What becomes more relevant for establishing a dedifferentiation pattern is not the presence of symmetrical or complementary interaction, but (a) the categorical qualities of these exchanges and (b) changes in the origin of the one upness and one downness positions in the flow of exchange.

If we expect to see a dedifferentiation process we should be able to observe that the categorical exchange becomes one of *positive reciprocity* and the exchange origin changes, so that “one upness” and “one downness” have different origins in the flow of the exchange. For coding purposes, I have added the signs (-) and (+) for defining negative and positive exchanges.

Table 5 Relational Communication pairs of exchange reflecting Positive and Negative Reciprocity

	Movement Direction of Consequent Messages		
Movement Direction of Antecedent Message	One Up ↑	One Down ↓	One Across →
↑ One Up	↑↑ (One Upends) Symmetry	↑↓ Complementarity	↑→ Transitions
↓ One Down	↓↑ Complementarity	↓↓ (One downs) Symmetry	↓→ Transitions
→ One Across	→↑ Transitions	→↓ Transitions	→→ Neutralised Symmetry

Constructing these types of data, which represent a language of interaction, gives primacy to the relational meaning of action in the context of interaction, allowing an analysis of actions not from a semantic meaning as belonging to actions themselves but to a context that pragmatically gives them meaning in the interaction process.

It is this process, where each response is shaping a pattern and at the same time been shaped by it, what gains importance. Determining an action as

registered in a pattern of symmetry or complementarity means simultaneously determining that the context becomes a difference that makes a difference, where actions become meaningful not just because of their previous exchange, but because of belonging to these wider patterns of interaction.

ESTABLISHING RELATIONAL COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

The simple coding of the frequency of relational movements is problematic – as seen by Rogers and Millar (1997, in Escudero and Rogers, 2004), who identify levels of domination as the number of attempts of one of the members in the interaction to gain control of the interaction through “one up–ness” attempts.

It can happen that just one interaction can be the antecedent for a change of the whole pattern. These interactions have been named “markers” – events that change the quality of the interaction in a very brief period of time (Escudero and Rogers, 2004). Kindly serving your enemy a cup of tea can better serve the cause of winning a conflict than a thousand tons of bombs. A tennis competition between very redundant complementary interactions can change the boring pattern of predictability.

So, what is the relationship between the turn-to-turn interactions with the defined patterned interaction, which defines identities, and the relational patterns? Rogers & Escudero (2004) proposed the application of the Chi-Square test (χ^2) – a simple measure of the level of association that exists between two variables, calculating the marginal frequency expected for each result. This allows establishing the level of association, but does not explain

how the relational communication pattern is being configured. Yoder and Feurer (2000) suggest the *Yule Q* value – a measurement of the association in a sequential analysis which calculates the probability of a subsequent behaviour – as the most appropriate method for analysing the sequences of behaviours and inferring the patterns of interaction that are present.

For establishing which type of interactional pattern is present in the relationship, something different is needed than just a measure of association compared with an expected frequency. Patterns of interaction are context, and learning them is not a matter of mathematical calculation but of immersing oneself in the experience of it. There is no doubt that representation in a coding system can become useful with the process of constructing an analogy of these patterns, but this will not replace the deeper experience of learning the context. Bateson argues that living organisms (and many will suggest not just these) have a special capability of learning this context – what he names “deutero learning”. Researching patterns of interaction in a narrative perspective means first identifying the subject and then the pattern in which it emerges.

I suggest that the analysis should be carried out line-by-line. One should immerse oneself in the text, first standing “under the text” to understand how each speech and gesture, in the process of the sequential interaction, constitutes a symmetric or complementary interaction pattern and which sign (+ or -) relates to it. Then one should stand over the text to understand what these patterns are creating.

There is no action capable of constituting a pattern – patterns emerge relationally and it is in an iterating double reading of actions in the context

created by these same patterns that gives the possibility of interpreting the meaning.

In the experience of using a narrative approach to research, following the distinction between explanation and explication suggested by Czarniawska (2008) where plotting is just a part of the interpreting process, it seems appropriate to adopt the conceptual foundations exposed, e.g. coding, analysing, whilst giving data a much freer reading than the one suggested by Escudero et al (2004).

My interest in using this research approach, then, is not to infer the relational patterns of interaction as great numbers. Instead it is to consider interaction as the ongoing behavioural stream, based on regarding difference as the building block of self-organised patterns of interaction, which requires more than just a mechanical process of coding and rather demands reading the context of actions according to which meaning is given to them.

COMPLEX RESPONSIVE PROCESS RESEARCH METHOD

I decided to introduce what Stacey (2005, 2011) calls “Complex Responsive Process Research” as a source of stories. Complex responsive processes are defined as “responsive processes of relating paradoxically enabling and constraining processes of communicative interaction and power relations between human bodies” (Stacey & Griffin, 2005, p. 17). This method, characterised by the detached involvement of the people actually participating in interaction, requires them to keep logs and reflect on various aspects of their daily interactions.

This provides a different source of stories than the ones described previously. I will expand on this in the following chapter in which I will describe how I approached the development of this method in my research project.

CHAPTER 3: CONSTRUCTION AND EXECUTION OF THE FIELD WORK

FIELD RESEARCH

My field research period took place between July 2010 and January of 2012. In the following section I will analyse the research methods used and describe the research actions performed during this process.

GETTING ACCESS TO MMC

As a previous consultant with the AAC Holding group within the areas of personal/personnel development and organisational change management, I already held some acquaintance with managers of the holding company, as well as with the operational companies' management, including that of MMC.

I first started working with the company following an introduction with the Strategy and Finance manager of MMC. During a short meeting in early June 2010 with a group of high-level managers, I introduced my interest in researching the strategy implementation process with a “narrative approach” – observing the “practice” of strategy development, from the stand point of “how strategy forms itself in the everyday working environment of staff in this

particular company”. I explained to them in detail the research objectives, the type of data I intended to construct, the timing, and the specific nature of the research project.

It caught their attention that this approach opened the possibility of learning about the strategy implementation “as it was understood” by the stakeholders involved, rather than on what was promoted by the strategy declarations and execution of an action plan. As a result, they transformed the aim of the research output to become more of a consuming device – a “narrative barometer” or a way of understanding “how the strategy was permeating through the organisation’s practices”. I have not made any theoretical claims about the language I used for explaining my research objectives, so they used “narratives”, “practices” and “strategy” terms loosely.

About a month later, in July 2010, I outlined the research aims, the methodology to be used, how I expected to utilise their time and the resources required from them in order to accomplish my task (specifically logistical issues). There were concerns about the confidentiality of data and who would have access to specific information. I assured them that all the information would be available to all of the stakeholders, with a discretionary clause for confidential information and the protection of the sources of sensitive information¹². We also agreed on what data could be published and the levels of anonymity that they would receive, both as a company and as individuals.

¹² It was defined to keep confidential any information about the management team’s discussions as well as conversations where I was explicitly asked to keep an account “off the record”. All interviews, unless from managers are anonymised.

After this meeting I met with MMC's CEO and his executive team. In this meeting I explained again my research aims, research methods and the type of analysis I was expecting to make. One of the key outputs that I needed from this meeting was their approval to be shadowed and for them to agree to work on their reflective logs. All of them confirmed their agreement to participate and to provide the resources (transportation and lodging) for me to travel to the site of the company's mining operations – a trip of 40 minutes by company charter plane (or eleven hours by land), which I made every other week during my field research period. I also visited the headquarters of the company once a week in Santiago.

From these meetings, and with their agreement, I began to construct the Sense Maker Collector and Reflective Logs as described in the previous chapter that I needed to set in place most urgently in order to free my time to shadow the managerial staff on their working days. When I visited the site of the mine, I would usually stay for two or three days, depending on the possibilities I had to shadow the manager and to carry out field observation and interviewing. There was little free movement within the site for me, as I had not been granted a general pass with which to move freely around the site¹³. So, when I went to the operation site it was for a specific reason, and I couldn't just wander around freely. As a result, most of my interviews were pre-arranged by someone

¹³ The safety regulation granted access for certain members of staff throughout the operation sites only after completing a training programme and gaining necessary certification. During my stay, I was given the status of 'visitor' meaning that although I was allowed to pass through the site, I was only ever allowed access when escorted by another MMC employee.

appointed to do so by the Talent and Culture Manager¹⁴, previously chosen to carry out the role of liaison between the company and myself.

RESEARCHING PRACTICES IN MMC

In order to carry out my empirical field work of shadowing and interviewing, I first decided to build first what would become two research devices which, once in place, would provide me with guidance across the rest of the research process. The first was a blog-style website in which managers could write reflections of their daily experiences of interaction, as suggested by “Complex Responsive Process Research” (Stacey & Griffin, 2005). The second device was the construction of a Sensemaker Collector © for “Correlating Micronarratives” – the abductive research method developed by Dave Snowden (2010).

BUILDING RESEARCH METHODS

Despite spending a large amount of time and resources developing these methods as part of my research, they did not work as methods to collect data as intended. I will reflect on the use of them, but because they do not provide much useable data for the purpose of my research I have decided to relegate

¹⁴ The decision to appoint a facilitator was taken after a few weeks, under the recognition that the S&F Manager and the Strategy Manager were too busy to work out the coordination of resources needed to continue with the research. I will refer later to the issue of trust that was to arise from this.

the description of the development process to the Appendix. I will, however, reflect in the Analysis Chapters (4 and 5) about how this failure can be understood in the context of the case and in the context of researching practices.

SHADOWING EXECUTIVES

I shadowed two executives, the CEO and the strategy and finance manager. By following these executives I was able to witness a number of events listed below:

- One-to-one conversations with various members of the executive team.
- Meetings of the executive team (G7) regarding subjects of strategy development, governance, budget, planning and performance assessment.
- Meetings with the executive president of the holding company.
- Mock board meetings, where various members of the holding group's board were present.
- Meetings with small groups of middle managers and professionals, relating to specific issues.
- Meetings with the whole group of around 300 supervisors of the company's operations.
- Meetings with contractors and vendors' managers.
- Meetings with governmental and non-governmental agencies.

- Meetings with the national and foreign members of the board.
- Visits to the operating sites and reviews of specific projects.

I was able to interview my research targets on a number of occasions whilst travelling between the operating sites (spread over three valleys where the mine, plant, tailings (waste material dumps), pipelines and port were located) and from the site to Santiago, where various meetings took place.

The duration of these shadowing periods was typically of one or two days in duration, between September 2010 and October 2011. On some occasions I was present for only a few hours whilst during others I shadowed for a full day. The CEO – Karlos – was the executive I shadowed the most, over six periods of two days each. I was only able to shadow the second executive for two one-day periods.

To provide a better understanding of the shadowing process, I will recount below one of the events I was able to witness during one such session.

Karlos collected me from the hotel in his light truck just before half past seven in the morning. I had arranged the meeting via his assistant in Santiago a week beforehand after he had told me that he would be in the Santiago office some of the week and would spend two days visiting various operating sites. I preferred to shadow him while at the operation sites, so it was arranged that I would travel to the town near to the site the previous day and that he would pick me up there.

We drove to the company's office in the town, where various specialists and the executive in charge of operational projects and risk and safety management, were based. They had arranged a meeting that morning at 8:00 AM. We arrived at the office five minutes early and I installed myself at a table in the corner of the room. Karlos sat at another table and we waited for around ten minutes before the operations director (who I shall call David for the purposes of this account) appeared. He offered coffee and biscuits. The atmosphere was quite relaxed, with Karlos taking notes on a tablet computer. David used a note pad and seemed slightly less relaxed than Karlos.

The meeting lasted for about an hour and was mainly concerned with technical projects and the subject of risk management and process performance. At the beginning of the meeting, David had given an account on the status of various projects, in particular a metallurgical project that consisted of validating a new technology for the treatment of molybdenum. However the mood of the conversation changed once they started discussing the way that the G7 were addressing projects that needed their involvement and resources. The conversation heated up when Karlos confronted David, telling him that he had not addressed the main issue around process performance and risk management, neither did they have a risk management plan or a team creating one. David mentioned issues of pride and face-saving between the G7 members as an explanation for the situation. I was feeling quite uncomfortable at this point, listening to these executives discussing a subject that was clearly embarrassing for David. He had clearly resorted to issues of respecting

other executive's responsibilities as a reason for not having implemented a very sensitive process for this type of company. Karlos confronted him in a way that left him without a valid argument other than he had failed to complete a task. David's arguments for explaining his failure had been previously described by Karlos as not being valid, even if they were commonplace within the organisation.

When the meeting ended, Karlos shook hands with David, who showed by his response that the meeting had been tough for him but that he was leaving with a sense of having learned something. They had faced the issue that the G7 was not working properly on very key issues and agreed on a number of action items.

I coded their interaction as I felt that, even if their interaction was complementary, there were instances of symmetry, which would be interesting to analyse.

From the outset, this appeared to be a quite unusual type of interaction to witness, because usually at this level on the organisational ladder it is difficult to gain access to observe this type of conversation. During the confrontation I had a feeling that, after some minutes had passed and because I was sitting at an angle where I was not that visible for either of them, the two men had "forgotten" me – that I became invisible in the room.

My uneasiness about some passages of their exchange was at the same time accompanied by a sense of being very careful not to show my presence. I would have preferred not to be present in such an embarrassing

situation to David, but I think that I was invisible to them after a while. I remember different passages in different situations in which I had the same feeling, and I always thought that my presence, even when unwanted, was not disturbing at all, as the people involved just saw me as part of the furniture.

This contrasts with the other occasions in which I had found myself present in a meeting where I was previously known to them from my work as a consultant in organisational development or where I was assigned an identity due to the quite “undefined” role I had in the situation.

At one such event, when the meeting was almost over, the Talent and Culture Manager turned to me and asked, “that was a rather annoying meeting, wasn’t it?” I had the sense that any response I gave would take me out of my shadowing role and confuse it with the one of a consultant. As a result, I remained silent and attempted not to show my uneasiness with the question.

Shadowing is different to participatory observation, and requires an active stance to become as invisible as possible – something that is possible only when people become used to your presence and identify you as a shadow. This relationship is then inverted in shadowing compared to participant observation, where the researcher becomes a participant not because of active engagement in having an insider view, but because it is carried out invisibly – with the researcher becoming an object with little or no role in influencing the situation. Acquiring and keeping this role is one of the key challenges I experienced whilst I was shadowing.

As I have stated previously, shadowing seems to be an overarching method where a number of other methods are used once access to the subject has been secured. Many of these methods become paradoxical with the fact that shadowing is best performed when the researcher becomes “invisible”.

Because of the long periods of shadowing, where sharing a dinner table or car journey with the subject becomes commonplace, the question “what are your observations?” became unavoidable. One way of responding to this question was turning the question back on the subject: “tell me about your thoughts of what happened during this period”. In this way, the situation was converted into a casual conversation that resembled an interview.

Because of this break in invisibility, reflexivity of the research situation changes into a different type of context. It becomes active, where the choices of answers from the researcher become key in configuring the situation.

After a session of shadowing, I was confronted with a number of different types of text such as my notes, recordings and a quick coding of their exchange. First were my notes in a diary where I annotated the events of each session. In the margins, I registered the minutes shown on my recorder so that I could have a sense of the use of time at each of the milestone events during each session, and also so that I could easily locate them afterwards.

When I returned to my notes after a shadowing session, I found that I could often distinguish a variety of content that had little or no order at all. This

would have occurred as a result of me writing not my thoughts about what I was observing, but my observations transformed into writing. Observing my own observation became an interesting experience, since I became aware of issues I had not really noticed during the writing.

As an example, reading my notes of an event where I was observing a conversation of the CEO with one of his fellow executives, I discovered that I registered that during the meeting someone entered the room and interrupted the conversation several times. However, I did not remember this at all. The excerpt that I presented previously from the conversation between Karlos and David took about half an hour. This fact may or may not be important for what was taking place in the relationship between the two executives, but it can surely be given more significance if I was interested in the nuances and details of the peripheral relationships with other people and other events that were occurring.

During my field research, I noticed how I was setting boundaries on my observation, focusing only on the executives' interaction and very little on the surrounding of their setting. Since my research question was related with the construction of trusting relations I could have used these notes to observe the construction of this type of practice between executives and employees, which at this point in time I was ignoring. Reflecting back on this incident, I recall that the CEO had little or no exchange with other employees other than executives and various middle managers – a fact that, I can speculate, had some importance in the relationship between

leadership and constructing trusting relationships across a wide range of identities related with the company.

The second type of text that I had available to me during my research was the recording of the situation, the majority of which I transcribed when I decided it would provide me with data to support my analysis. This involved reviewing all my recordings of the six occasions I shadowed the CEO and the two occasions I shadowed the Strategy and Finance Manager.

The first action I took with these texts was to code the interaction, using the RCCCS methodology described in the previous chapter. This was especially true during meetings where there was interaction between two or more people. This interaction produced a different type of text, which allowed the interpretation of it in the relational context of each act of speech. Once the transcription was completed, I plotted the text, converting it into a chronicle and telling the story of the meeting as I was able to observe it. This represented a first level of interpretation where facts and actions emerged from the text.

A third type of text available to me was interviews that, once transcribed, became text to be analysed. I had the opportunity to interview the CEO and the Strategy and Finance manager in order to get their retrospective views in relation to how the Sustainability Strategy emerged.

From here I made the next level of interpretation: a semiotic reading, in which I highlighted the symbols and meaning of the text already plotted – the most crucial process in the interpretation process, since it shows me

how the text is saying what it says. At the same time, I found this process to be the most challenging, since it required me to be aware of the interpretative patterns that I was using with this text.

I decided to highlight the longitudinal unfolding of events, related to the executive team and its relation to the company's stakeholders, rather than give an intensive focus on a specific event. As will be seen in the Events Analysis chapter (Chapter 4), I cover a number of events, each of them providing an insight into leadership and the process of constructing trusting relationships. One of the consequences of this approach was that, instead of taking a broad approach to the event, simplifying it into a few components, each of them is analysed by reading almost every line of dialogue and interaction in turn.

This very detailed way of semiotic reading provides its rewards after one had read a large amount of text, where it is possible to see the emergence of themes around which the organising process and practices emerge.

CODING RELATIONAL COMMUNICATION

As well as attending meetings, conversations, talks and site visits, while shadowing executives I was also able to attend a number of committee meetings of the corporate governance of the company. I was, quite reasonably,

excluded from some meetings (such as the PMO¹⁵ – the committee in charge of conducting the change process associated with the strategic development) but was able to attend many others, such as the “Process Excellence Committee” and the “Sustainability Committee”.

Observing these committees provided an excellent opportunity to experience the interaction between managers belonging to the G7 group as well as to the G32 (the most senior manager) group and other MMC employees. These provided sources of data for making relational communication analysis, as described in the previous chapter.

In the following chapter, devoted to the analysis of the events constructed during the research process, I will explain the analysis of different episodes, which include interviews, shadowing, attending specific meetings and my personal reflection on a number of events I experienced during the research period which I found to be relevant for the purpose of this research.

As mentioned in the previous section, I was able to obtain text from interaction between two or more people and used the Relational Communicational Analysis (Rogers & Escudero, 2004) using the methodology previously described. This analysis allowed me to describe how acts of interaction form patterns and how, at the same time, these patterns seem to form interaction.

¹⁵ This is an event, since I asked specifically to be present in this committee. I will return to this in the analysis

An example of the process used follows, in order to provide the reader with an illustration of the process by which I constructed this source of narrative for the analysis.

I used the guidelines presented on page 110 to classify the specific interactions, which were always qualified as an answer to the previous *iteration*. For coding, I used the transcriptions complemented with my field notes, listening again to the recording and the speech syntaxis . This enabled some variation in the interpretation of the direction (↑ or ↓) of the coding, which can be justified by the relevance that a gesture or other non-verbal action had on qualifying the response. An interaction is qualified as symmetrical when the direction of the arrow has the same direction, and complementary when they have opposite directions.

I first coded each response as shown in the following table, establishing the combination of content and relational levels. I then decided what the direction was and, looking to previous action, decided if the action could be qualified as “symmetrical”, “complementary” or an “extension”.

Table 6 Coding Interaction

<i>Text</i>	<i>Speech Combination</i>	<i>Direction</i>	<i>Interaction type</i>
Karlos: A very important	1.5	↑	N/A

<p>part of the PMO's job is to manage the speed of the change process. And this is related to how the company strategy is implemented. Today operational problems are hurting us, because these are the issues we had during the previous period of operation. Tomorrow, we will have the "Relationship Model". After tomorrow we will be faced with some ethical problems that are going to impact our values. In this sense, one man who has a privileged vision, in sync with how the process is advancing, is Felix.</p>			
<p>David (laughing)..., right, but what happens to be...</p>	1.3	→	Extension
<p>Nicolas: if we want to make it short, let's make it short.</p>	1.7	↑	Symmetrical
<p>Karlos: At least here hierarchy does not work. What do you want, that I</p>	1.2	↑	Symmetrical

give you my opinion and then I walk out?			
Silence.	1.3	→	Extension
David: what is clear is that there is not a clear leadership.	1.4	↑	Symmetrical
David: What I do not share is that the natural (leader) is there (in the PMO).	1.1	↓	Symmetrical
Nicolas: Here we are in a discussion, about the caring of the process.	1.3	→	Extension
Karlos: The man we assigned with the job responsibility for the pace of change??? was Felix	1.4	↑	Symmetrical
Nicolas: Now the mess is greater.	1.2	↑	Symmetrical
Nicolas: You are facing...	5.2	↑	Symmetrical
David: Nobody is going to hold Felix accountable.	1.3	→	Extension
Karlos: the coordination between this team and the PMO is the task of Felix. He will show us how the change process and the strategy are performing within the	1.7	↑	Symmetrical

<p>company. We are the owners of the change process. We are not inside. The man who will act as the liaison between the PMO and the G7 is Felix.</p>			
<p>Nicolas: I do not want to go into the discussion about the name. I want to discuss what is needed to do this job right. I think we put Felix in a very uncomfortable position, over him we are a number of pig heads and under him pig heads. Above him lots of miles of experience. From the perspective of adding to the process I cannot see how he can be the advisor of people that have far more experience than him.</p>	<p>1.2</p>	<p>↑</p>	<p>Symmetrical</p>

Counting the relation between the total interactions we can observe that most of the interactions are symmetrical, which can be correlated to what actually happened with the topic they were dealing with. A negative symmetrical pattern

of interaction meant the presence of amplification of difference in the relation, conflict and an unsettled relationship definition. The subject matter could not be settled and the shared practice created an experience that, instead of constructing trust in their competence to deal with this sort of issue, became the source of a very uncomfortable sense of disagreement and instability.

Table 7 Interactional Codes

<i>N°</i>	<i>Interaction Type</i>	<i>Interaction Code</i>
2	Extension	0
3	Symmetrical	1
4	Symmetrical	1
5	Extension	0
6	Symmetrical	1
7	Symmetrical	1
8	Extension	0
9	Symmetrical	1
10	Symmetrical	1
11	Symmetrical	1
12	Symmetrical	1
13	Extension	0
14	Symmetrical	1
15	Symmetrical	1
	Symmetrical	71%
	Complementary	0%
	Extension	29%

In the next chapter I will show the analysis carried out on text of different events using these methods.

Using this methodology, coding poses challenges like any type of classification. Like any taxonomist, I found myself in the difficult position of deciding which of the relational meanings should be assigned to each line of text. Classifying means providing an unequivocal meaning to a term. As I discussed earlier, meaning is acquired by inscription, the aim becomes to classify in such a way that a sign has a singular interpretation in the context of the whole process. This is not an easy job, since what actually qualifies an interaction are the subtle and often contradictory signs of what was said and unsaid. This includes the non-verbal signals and silences, the shared codes that a group has been developing over time and which are almost impossible to grasp by an outsider. It is not just *what* is said, but *how* and *when* it is said and heard what can become important to code interaction. Contrary to analysing content, analysing relational communication has a greater ambiguity because of its analogical nature, and classifying becomes a mayor task of interpretation. The possibility of being in the situation, observing its subtleties, the body language of people and silences, whilst helping in this difficult task, also puts observation as the main phenomenon being researched.

This is probably the most important challenge and at the same time the most relevant limitation of this method, whose original intention was to code text. It can reveal in itself the type of relational communication pattern that constitutes context for interaction.

Text stands for action as an analogy – not as an equivalence – so the reader has to be aware that its reading becomes a suggestion, a way of making the

empirical useful in the movement of things, but not a description of what actually happened. It is not a map of the territory, only of its observation.

Moreover, we have to be aware that a language of signs does not replace the fact that its meaning comes not from itself, but from how it becomes inscribed in a narrative (Czarniawska, 2011), a grammar (Wittgenstein, 1973) or context (Bateson, 1972; 2000). Symmetrical or complementary interaction are not constructs derived from interaction, but a way of describing patterns which have no importance in themselves unless understood in a wider context. As I have discussed earlier there is no reason to favour the presence of one or the other – what makes them important is the context they construct in the different situations.

Thus, when coding I am looking not so much for a calculus for establishing a pattern but a sense of the context created by interaction, in a multiplicity of signs and symbols present in interaction. Sometimes, there is a correspondence of speech with this sense of context. Other times it is difficult to explain why the rule for coding has to be amended to allow the experience of the situation to come into the coding process, bracketing experience instead of the rigid methodological resource.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHILE RESEARCHING PRACTICES

Each of the methods used to conduct this research involve a number of ethical issues that should be highlighted and discussed as part of the integrity of the research process.

Silverman (2010:317) highlights five “ethical pitfalls”, all of them related to the relation with people in the research process.

- Exploitation, where people are asked to do things that, under the subjective conditions of the research process, they may feel forced to comply with, but are ill-Informed (or completely deceived) regarding the consequences. I think that during my research there were people who felt that they were asked to participate, but were hesitant and did so only because of whom was asking them.

This was the case with some of the executives who resisted being part of the research process. However, as they were present in many of the situations in which I was also present as a researcher, they became part of the data collection process.

Even when explicit and voluntary consent was asked of these executives and very detailed and written explanation of the research process was given to them, they probably would have refused to participate if not

asked by one of the top executives. I am necessarily stating that the executives felt exploited, but that covert exploitation may have taken place, where the subject does not feel necessarily feel exploited, but that his participation has not been completely voluntary, and in compliance to something otherwise difficult to refuse.

I think that even when there is a process of seducing people into the domain of the research process, the subjective conditions that operate to persuade people to participate can act subtly on the giving of consent.

- Deception, where people are exposed to situations where, in exchange for their collaboration in the research process, they are promised something in return, which is not accomplished; or that as a result of participating harm is caused. It is also deception when people are inadequately informed of their condition as research subjects or the use that the information derived from the research process will have.

Obtaining the collaboration of people within the research process was, for the most part, achieved in the manner of simply an exchange for the sake of the conversation – sometimes a result of curiosity and other times simply because people were keen to tell their stories to someone that would listen with attentiveness. In several cases the interviewees directed me to other people to talk with whilst I was in the valley. I believe that, most of the time, it was a completely open conversation where there was no other expectation than the conversation itself. In other cases,

where people were asked by others with some power over them to participate, the conversation flowed easily after establishing a rapport with the interviewee. Where I think there was real deception, totally involuntary from myself, was that I promised to come back with the analysis of information to the people who participated using the Sense Maker Suite Collector, which I could not do because all the information collected through this method was lost due to a computer failure.

- Identity protection. Even when consent is given, the implications for the reporting of people's identities are always problematic, especially for two reasons. One is that the image that people carry of themselves can differ broadly from that accounted for in the research report and be a source of deep disappointment. The second is that text produced by the research process can be interpreted in many ways, setting the person in a public arena where he or she has no intention to be when consenting to participate in the research process.

Even when names have been omitted and the company anonymised, it is very difficult to prevent this risk altogether. There are very few companies of this type in central Chile, and there are enough clues for people that know the industry to identify the company and name the executives. I asked for consent in relation to the level of anonymity and there were not many restrictions placed.

- Fraternising with groups that clash with the researcher's values. As researchers we can be drawn into situations that we dislike and even may find repellent. The question that arises around this situation is if we are compromising our own values if we do not do something that makes the people involved know about our position. Marvasti (in Silverman, 2010:321) suggests that a benefit, for the researcher, to be involved in situations like this is it that brings intellectual flexibility. A different perspective than the one of the researcher is that it gives the possibility that people that we dislike or even repel us have a voice in the context of what we are researching.

I cannot say that I found myself in situations with people I disliked, but I found myself in situations where I saw, in my opinion, great mistakes being made and that people were being deceived. I was always tempted to have some kind of conversation about it with the executives, which I did not, understanding that my role was not in any way to give advice and that if I did it, my role as researcher would be compromised.

- Bargains related to the research process or outcomes. Access to research cases could be easy, but obtaining full cooperation for the sake of "academic knowledge" could be difficult, so there can be bargains in by-products that can benefit the "gate keepers", or the organisation involved. These commitments can bias the type of participation and data provided during the research process. At the same time, such commitments can direct the type of data collected. More important is that

the people providing data may not be aware that information provided by them will be passed to people that could use it to their advantage.

When I presented the project to the executive committee, I offered to comment on the outcomes of the research process. While I was describing the methods I was going to use for data collection, some of them commented that, since they did not have at that time a way of measuring the level of implementation of the strategy, it could be useful for them to construct a “narrative barometer” for doing so. I agreed that the Sense Maker Suite could provide interesting data for making sense of what was going on with some of their stakeholders (especially the communities and employees), but that if I had to share information from this method, I would do so with all the stakeholders at the same time and with the same level of detail. They agreed to this. Unfortunately, I could not share any analysis because I had to interrupt the service provided by Cognitive Edge, the company that provided the software and the hosting service, because all the information that was provided through their web based system (an estimate of about 100 stories) was lost.

I think that most of these pitfalls can be overcome by “informed consent” defined as “research subjects have the right to know that they are being researched, the right to be informed about the nature of the research and the right to withdraw at any time” (Ryen, 2004, in Silverman, 2010). In all my contacts with people while researching, consent was made explicit. However, as I have explained previously, I think that even when I follow this definition it is not enough to assure that there will be no exploitation, deception, identification

of subjects, fraternising and dubious bargains. I suggest that to this definition should be added the need to question what actually is consent, since saying “yes” does not mean at all that it is really informed, and even when it is informed, it is common that in most of this type of research we find unexpected situations. Whilst shadowing executives across their agendas, I met with people that, even when I was introduced as a researcher, the situation made it impossible to give detailed information of my research project without stopping the flow of events. The way I handled this was by asking the same executive I was shadowing that if there was any activity foreseen where I should not be present, I would be advised to leave. This happened a couple of times during the whole process.

I refrained from acting in an action-research approach in this case, where I should go back to the research subjects and show my report and ask them to make sense of the material, adding new insights to it. I can imagine the number of ethical issues that moving a project like this to such an environment could pose.

CHAPTER 4: CASE EVENTS AND FINDINGS

This is a case study of the attempt to implement a deliberate corporate strategy into which I study leadership from a non-dualist relational perspective. This implementation failed and the eight “events” presented in this chapter demonstrate a number of ways in which this failure came about.

In this case, what seems most relevant is that almost everything that was intentionally and openly declared, failed in its intent. After eighteen months from the approval and communication of the so-called Sustainability Strategy, even the executive team, the protagonists of this story, was forced to leave the company. At the same time, leadership failed to emerge; i.e. and form the subjectivities and institutional arrangements that might allow a formulated strategy to be converted into company practice. The case study is, therefore, the story of a failure to form what was intended. The case findings, from the events presented in this chapter, will be analysed in the next chapter in the light of this “failure”, which, as we will see, has important pragmatic, theoretical and research implications.

In this chapter I have selected a number of events, which I describe to take stock of what we can learn from the empirical examination of what led to this failure. In so doing I will present some of the events in reverse - telling the story from the end and then presenting events in their chronological development.

Before presenting the events, I will explain what I understood to be the status of relationships of some of the key stakeholders with the company (the valley residents and employees) when I began my field research process.

This includes a description and analysis of interviews and conversations with valley residents, employees of MMC and its contractors during the process of constructing some of the research methods.

CASE EVENTS

Each event presents a unique contribution into the empirical examination of this case. In this first section I will present a short summary of each of the eight events and the type of contribution each of them make to the research question.

EVENT 1: THE DISMISSAL OF THE EXECUTIVE TEAM

Twenty months after the approval and formulation of the sustainability strategy, five of the seven members of the top executive team (G7) were dismissed from the company and the strategy declared “a failure”. I will report the interpretation offered by some of the dismissed executives and MMC employees, however, its main contribution is on the indirectness and tacit ways by which trusting relations become valid as a strategic intent.

This event establishes trust as an ontic state (Solomon & Flores, 2001), the need of trust is defined when it is missed – most of the executive team gets dismissed and the argument is a lack of trust – either in their capacity to deliver on their promises or in telling the truth about the company situation.

EVENT 2: THE COMPANY'S STRATEGY EMERGENCE

Based on a number of interviews with Karlos, MMC's CEO, this event shows two types of simultaneous story. One of these stories is about facts, as he narrates his chronicle of relating with MMC during a twelve-year period. It constitutes a chronicle that shows how a "new environment" was constructed as an object, leading later to the process that concluded with the formulation of the so-called Sustainability Strategy.

The second story, which unfolds between the lines, reveals how through his narrative, Karlos' ethical stand and his practices of the self are constructed simultaneously out of his chronicle in the social encounter, i.e. the interview setting. This event provides a description of the relation of the self (the I – me) with the self of this key agent in the formation of the sustainability strategy, and provides key insights for the analysis of the subsequent events.

Constructed through the almost 12 years he has been part of the holding company's executive team, he can recognise shifts in his identity, emerging from the interaction while coping in the present situations of his different posts during this period. His self-description can be correlated with the actions that concluded with the formulation of a Sustainability Strategy for MMC. This event

shows a practice of the self in the construction of an ethical and aesthetic project, for himself and the company's future.

This event shows how his own practice of the self becomes a governmentality practice, which begins to emerge in the interaction between well-differentiated and conflicting stakeholders. This "truth" becomes objectified through what he called a "new environment" and a "new relation" with the company's stakeholders. Hopes and expectations are set at this moment.

EVENT 3: SUPERVISORS DINNER, JULY 28TH, 2010

This event provides evidence on how expectations for the strategy intent are contradicted by the rhetorical design of communication activities. It shows how leadership and strategic intent of forming trusting relationships becomes a rhetorical artefact contradicted by the interaction established between the actants that constitute the event.

The annual supervisor's dinner, used as instance of strategy communication, just happening a couple of months after the formulation of the strategy – shows how quickly what began as a process of constructing the company as a different subject is transformed in a rhetorical device with almost no implications to the practices of communication and interactions between company leadership and middle managers.

Instead of the parrhesiastes (Foucault M. , 2010; 2001) practice which makes coherent truth logos and bios¹⁶, we observe a rhetorical practice, which whatever the good being offered, is gathering people to be persuaded about what is good. We see here the absence of the actions that constructed the subject about which the strategy was formulated. If we follow Foucault's argument that the governmentality power comes with the truth=telling practice of parrhēsia¹⁷, then we see here how the project of the self that came along with the strategy formulation distances from the strategy management practices at this point. The becoming of company practice takes over the immanent habituated practices of hierarchical and differentiating relationships.

EVENT 4: DEFINING PMO'S LEADERSHIP

This event shows MMC's Executive Committee interacting for long hours, facing a decision to be made about the conduction of the company's process of change process. The event shows how a number of non-propositional "offers" to subjectify a different interaction pattern in the group fail to be subjectified. In

¹⁶ Foucault (2001:137) quoting Plutarch, define two criteria for distinguishing a flatterer from a true parrhesiastes: "there is a conformity between what the truth-teller says with how he behaves... The Socratic harmony... There is a second criterion, which is: the permanence, the continuity, the stability and steadiness of the true parrhesiastes".

¹⁷ Aletheia bestowing the piece with life by asking of purpose—what are the shoes for? What world do they open up and belong to?

particular, they do not enact actions that reflect the construction of a caring relationship practice within the group. Moreover, it presents how a multiplicity of action nets takes over these “offers”, reinforcing the immanence of hierarchical and functional roles which are deeply embedded in the company’s practice. This event shows for the first time how deeply a negative symmetrical pattern of interaction within the top executive team has become habituated practice and how difficult it is for new intended subjectivities to emerge within this context.

At the same time, “offers” of a different interaction are made through this event, but they are ignored and a differentiating pattern of interaction takes primacy constructing two subjectivities: the distanced cynical relationship with the proposed strategy practice; and the emergence of a sort of “dark times” as explained by Arendt (1978), where there is no common ground (interesse) to which people can hold together.

EVENT 5: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING: A YEAR
LATER

This event shows the Executive Committee examining the progress in the strategy implementation, which I have selected because it gives the opportunity to observe, for the second time, this same group interacting and becoming aware that the intended “implementation plan” was not going as intended. It is possible to observe how they remove themselves as agents from their narratives about this process and avoid a reflective mode in relation to their practices.

This event provides the opportunity to observe how they engage in a cynical emotion as opposed to a caring one, distancing themselves from the possibility of constructing the basic engagement required by their declared strategy intent.

The event also shows that, although a number of “episodes”, where the sequences of actions confirm Karlos’ (the company CEO) “offers”, they are not enough to endure a “contract” able to subjectify trusting relationships nor a leadership practice of this subjectivity. This event, the longest presented here, provides rich data on how habituated practices take over the “offers” to subjectify a different type of relationship. These “offers” become incomprehensible, thus unintelligible in the midst of a discourse that favours negative symmetrical relationships.

Strategists fail, through their own practice of interaction, to construct themselves as agents in the strategy development. Actions which could have meant a leadership “offer” seem to make no difference although, as we will see, they construct an unintended subject with potential leadership capabilities to progress matters: the figure of a pariah. However, a pariah that is not elevated to a “conscious pariah”, a vigilant self to its self that is asking the crucial question of “what are we doing?” (Arendt, 1998:123), does not constitute the “parrhesiastic”, an assemblage of practices of truth telling (Foucault M. , 2010), with the capacity to form specific subjectivities around truth.

EVENT 6: DRY RUN BOARD MEETING, AUGUST 12TH 2011

This event was selected because it gives the opportunity of analysing interaction between the Executive Committee, Board Members and advisors of the holding company, AAC plc. . Through the analysis, it is possible to observe a negative, complementary interaction, which locks interaction into a rigid pattern of growing differentiation. A submissive question and answer mode prevails in a codified type of interaction, which replaces the very much-needed truth-telling practice for building trusting practices of parrhēsia. This event gives the opportunity to examine how the presence of this rigid pattern of interaction acts in contrast with the reciprocal context that could have allowed truthful content to be present within interaction between MMC executives and board advisors.

In the rigid complementary pattern (Bateson, 2000; Rogers and Escudero, 1996) present in the interaction between the executive team and the board members and its advisors, all subjects remain the same, increasing the categorical differentiation between these two groups in an unsatisfactory dominant-submissive relation that prevents the emergence of the solicitous care present in trusting relationships. No wonder why trust is not emerging between the board and the executive team, which resulted later in the dismissal of almost the whole executive team.

EVENT 7: THE PEC MEETING

This event shows some of the Executive Committee members interacting with middle managers on issues of safety and risk in the operation during one of the Process Excellence Committee (PEC) meeting. The event shows how accountability and trust is destroyed through an openly rejected executives'

hierarchical approach to middle managers. At the same time it shows how a negative symmetrical interaction pattern reduces the possibilities of building a safe environment in the company's operations.

The interaction pattern between members of the executive team and middle managers keeps the same pattern of rigid differentiation; in this event it is negative symmetry, causing the very key issues of the strategy intention are neglected (safety and risk management). Habituated practices of a hierarchical interaction take over the most needed attention to prevent accidents and reduce risk.

EVENT 8: MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MMC

Giving attention to the determinants of interpretation, from theoretical assumptions, language and understandings are of great importance when reflexivity is considered in research. In this section I explain my reflections in relation to the research process, how I conducted it and how I interpreted different situations during this period. I pay special attention to the type of determinants that can have led my interpretations of leadership and trusting relationships in one direction or another, trying to prevent a naïve or “romantic interpretation” (Alvesson, 2011) of the events.

I observe the same interaction pattern I observed within the executive team, between them and middle managers and board members. I became a “data miner” in the same symmetrical interaction that differentiates me as researcher and objects of research. The lack of trust found within their interaction is not

different from the lack of trust I found myself within my interaction with the people I met during these 18 months.

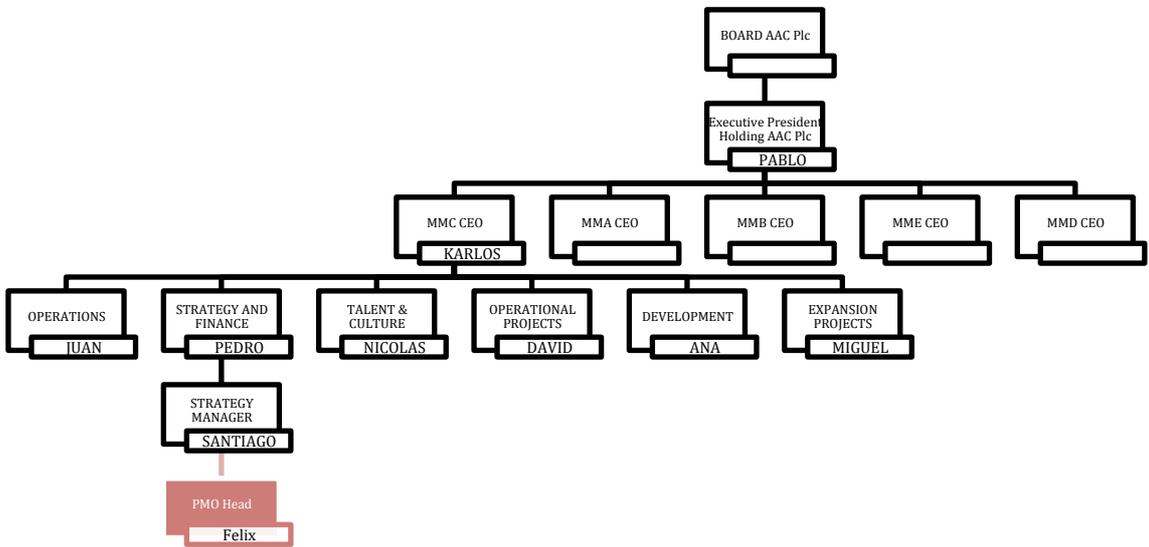
MMC ORGANISATIONAL CHART

So that readers can be aware of the names and assigned roles of the characters most frequently named in this chapter, the following is an organisational chart, with the job title and the first name (pseudonym used) of these protagonists.

Table 8. Organisation Chart

Company	Job Title	Name
AAC Plc.	AAC Plc. Executive President	Pablo
MMC G7 Executive Committee	MMC CEO	Karlos
MMC G7 Executive Committee	Operations Manager	Juan
MMC G7 Executive Committee	Strategy and Finance Manager	Pedro
MMC G7 Executive Committee	Talent & Culture Manager	Nicolas
MMC G7 Executive Committee	Operational Projects Manager	David

<i>Company</i>	<i>Job Title</i>	<i>Name</i>
MMC G7 Executive Committee	Development Manager	Ana
MMC G7 Executive Committee	Expansion Project Manager	Miguel
MMC Strategy and Finance Department	Strategy Management	Santiago



VALLEY RESIDENTS AND EMPLOYEES RELATIONS WITH MMC

This section describes the type of relationship that two groups of stakeholders – the valley residents and company employees - have with the company, what concerns them and *the type of expectations they seem to have about the relationship.*

This section contributes to the main focus of the research project by reporting the apparent status of trusting relationships between the company and these groups of stakeholders.

MMC AND VALLEY RESIDENTS

The first time I went to the valley was July 2010. I visited three of the villages nearest to the operations site, located five or six miles apart. I walked through the dusty village's roads, approaching people as I met them on the streets or knocking on the front doors of houses. I was immediately spotted as an "outsider" and related to the company. Why should someone like me be wandering around in the village? In some way or another I had to be related to the company presence in the valley.

Mobile phones, paved streets replacing dusty roads, drinking water in all communities, hotels and lodgings for the company's contactors - nothing seems to be strange for them now. Everything new can be related to the company's presence in the valley. The same can be said of the hundreds of trucks circulating every day up and down the valley and hundreds of people swarming the landscape when the annual major maintenance to the plant takes place.

From the past of a silent, agricultural valley and a slow pace of life, where little happened through its dusty roads and a foreigner could be spotted from miles away, they have been transformed into villages of a very different profile. I have the sense that I have been incorporated into this new landscape. My questions are not strange for them, even before I pose them.

The first person I met was a man mending the small wood and mud bridge that allows him to go into his property crossing a narrow stream that runs along the road. I told him I wanted to have a chat with him about MMC. He refused, excusing himself at the same time as showing me his distress about my interest. This was my first experience of talking with a villager about his relationship with the company. His response showed me that he did not feel free to openly disclose his evident negative feelings and thoughts about the company.

In this same way I met more than twenty people during a number of two-day stays, which included walking, sitting in bars and benches in the town plazas or travelling using shared taxi between locations.

My question always was the same: "Tell me about MMC". Some people showed extremely negative emotions about the company. They considered the company as the source of contamination of air, soil and water, a risk for their children and women, because of the amount of strangers around, the speed of trucks along the main road, the deterioration of the health of their livestock; the loss of ancient customs, such as horse-riding or animal-pulled carts that could no longer travel on the main road safely.

Other people showed some sympathy with what was going on: the paved roads which meant less dust, jobs for the young, new sources of income for the local small shops and businesses, the improvement of health and education infrastructure, diversification of their livestock because of the loans and the “seed capital programmes” initiated by the company, the support to local organisations such as clubs for the elderly, sport clubs, firemen and others.

People in every village I visited had a different type of comment in relation to the same subject. In one village there was a general sense of mistrust with company commitments because they had promised to contribute to the pavement of the main street and this had not yet happened. People from other villages were grateful on how much the company had contributed to pave their streets. In one of the villages people only talked about the contamination of the air with dust coming from the nearby tail dam and how they no longer trusted the promises of the company’s managers who had committed, some time ago, to solve this problem and had not yet done so.

In some villages, the company, as a topic of conversation, was a source of conflict between them - fights had arisen between neighbours, organised in different associations that constitute the village. This was especially notorious in one of the villages, strongly divided between the people fighting for compensation because of the construction of the nearby tail dam and the ones who wanted the company to leave the valley altogether.

Another source of division within the villages was related to people who had jobs in the company and those who did not. Those who had jobs, especially the younger ones, made this obvious in their ability to purchase cars and electronic

appliances. What became evident at this stage was the change of status: the have and have-nots - those who had company jobs expressed indifference and arrogance to those who did not.

On other occasions I visited two of the valley's larger towns - one of which located by the coast, near to the port where copper concentrate was shipped to Japan for refinement. On these occasions I acted as I had in the villages - I wandered through the town, talking with people in the streets, eating in small food stalls, sitting in cafes, chatting with the fishermen while they prepared their equipment, with shopkeepers, taxi drivers, bus passengers and shoppers.

As I talked with the locals I was given stories that pointed me to other people, trails, which I followed, which gave me access to more people within the towns. My experience in the towns was not so different to that in the villages: I was able to sense very contrasting moods in relation to the company. I learned that nobody was indifferent to the company - it had changed their lives in one direction or another and the company presence has created a new context for everyone.

In appendix I explain in detail the topics that appeared in these conversations, presenting what people said in relation to each of them. It is pertinent here to identify what was of value for them, either expressed as a complaint or as praising. If trusting relationships are defined as a practice of caring for what is valued, it is important to identify what is valued as an important step into understanding what trust meant in this situation.

One of these dimensions was related to the effects of the mining operation and how the valley's environment was preserved. The concern was how the process

could be reversed by which a peaceful, agricultural valley with little pollution or risks for their inhabitants had become a place where the future was uncertain.

The company had installed air and water pollution monitoring systems across the valley and in the sea as a way of constructing a trusting relationship with the residents, providing real time information about this issue. The residents could visit the company's website and check for the numbers of air and water pollution indicators in real time. However, trusting relations for these people were not based on a number, nor on a promise. Trust related, for many of them, in keeping their environment unchanged, something that already seemed well beyond the point of return. Repairing trust for many of these people was concerned with getting their lives back, not looking on a website every day to check if pollution was better or worse than the day before - something the company could not do for them. The company's presence was a form of violation and the company became "undesirable" in the valley "whatever it does", as someone told me.

For other people, change was what was valued. New roads, better health and education infrastructures, jobs and business opportunities were valued. This perspective did not exclude the previous misgivings, but seemed to have a different priority in relation with the company. For them, the more of these contributions to their lives the better.

The company had been listening to these voices and working with them in building a relationship where the company provided "to them" in an unequal relationship. The company management had worked hard to mitigate any environmental cost that the operation unavoidably brought to the valley,

introducing all sorts of technology and resources to face the always increasing social and environmental cost of the company operation. This meant positives for a lot of people looking for better infrastructure, but at the same time had increased the escalation of dependence on the company as provider of these types of resources. This, in its extreme, had led some groups to establish a relationship with the company, expecting it to provide for their livestock at levels which were so high that it was considered unacceptable by the same company representatives, placing in danger the whole relationship.

Some groups had become locked in this negative, symmetrical relationship of dependence whereupon it was perceived that the company should provide whatever they asked and, if it did not, then they reacted in various ways against it. Perhaps the extreme example of this was a hunger strike, which ran for thirty-two days in October 2010, where a group of villagers near to the tail dam demanded financial compensation for allowing the tail dam into their valley. This type of compensation had been provided before to other groups but, since the formulation of a new strategy, where the declaration of the company was that they would build mutual value “with them” and not “to them”, the strike was resisted and finally brought to an end without any of its members gaining any sort of compensation.

Alternatively a number of working groups with the communities of the valley were created to work “with them” around the issues of their concern. Most of them failed, since they transformed into more “organised” meetings where the villagers attempted to set their escalating demands and for the company managers to attempt to find out how to cope with these demands. Trusting

relationships seemed not to be able to emerge, since there was always one or other domain in which these demands could not be met.

MMC AND ITS EMPLOYEES

In order to interview the company's employees I had to ask their managers for appointments. Most interviews were carried out on the site, although I was not allowed close to the mine works because of safety issues. The questions I asked were the same as those I asked whilst walking through the villages and towns of the valley. "Tell me about MMC". I was looking for what they valued and how their moods were reflected in their responses.

I interviewed four middle managers, four supervisors and six other members of staff, ranging between machine operators and different type of professionals. In appendix I include excerpts of these interviews related to the topics that became most salient during our exchange.

One issue that was constantly raised was that of how valued their relationship was with their supervisors, when comparing their experience of working with other mining companies against working with MMC's contractor companies. MMC represented, for most of them, an unrestrictive environment and gave them freedom to innovate. They valued the practice of an egalitarian relationship and the possibility of being accountable for improvements in what they were doing.

What they miss are "concrete forms of recognition" as an action of communication between their efforts and their supervisor's reaction. Recognition is difficult to define, but their narratives referred to a practice more than to content: actions were what was missing. An example of this can be

seen in the following response, when one manager responded to the question of how he felt:

“...It is the feeling that nobody really cares for what I am doing”.

Recognition is made important as a form of visibility, not for every type of action but for what they saw were contributions to the company progress. So it seems that two elements become most valued by the employees in relation to their supervisors: the visibility of their contribution through very concrete actions and the openness of their relationships with their supervisors.

A third type of value was named: belonging to MMC as a source of advancement in their professional development and career progress. This was related to the relationship with their managers, but also to an attitude that distinguished between MMC's employees. “Your attitude not your aptitude will make your altitude” is remembered by one of them as an aphorism coined by Karlos to highlight that they “have almost free access to improve whatever is needed”.

A fourth source of value for the employees was feeling proud to work for the company, which “will become a world reference in copper mining” as someone said. It is well known how people relate their own identity to the group to which they belong (Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2010), even giving primacy over other basic sources in daily family relations. In this case, belonging to the company as a company that raised their reputation was what was valued. However, some of them reported that they also felt shame, especially with what had been happening in the relation between the company and the villagers.

The relationship with valley residents, was also valued - not in the way intended in the strategy formulation, which sought the formation of trusting relationships, but as a form of compassion because of their mistreatment.

In the narratives of the MMC employees it became relevant to highlight that everything that was held as being of value was related to the relationship with MMC as an entity. A central role in defining this relationship was played by their direct managers practices. These managers were seen as key for providing an egalitarian relationship, access to personal improvement in careers and learning and even in learning to self-lead. It is the relationship with the direct manager that seems most important in constructing the employees' identities and experience with MMC. This seems to be part of the habituated practice of MMC well before the formulation of the sustainability strategy.

MMC AND ITS CONTRACTORS' EMPLOYEES

For the employees of MMC's contractors (which constituted nearly eighty per cent of the direct labour force of the company) what was valued was not so different than for the company employees, although it is interesting to note how much they valued being treated as equals with MMC's employees. Most of the interviewees recognised the relationship of MMC management and its contractor's employees as being very special, with many of them doing jobs, which were rarely outsourced in the industry, such as major plant maintenance or ore transportation.

A supervisor of the transportation company that carried people within the site and to their hometowns around the country commented:

“In any other company someone like me will have very little access to high level management of the client company. Here I can knock on the door of anyone I need in order to do my job - there is no sense that this is wrong.”

A supervisor of one of the companies involved in the maintenance of the concentrator plant machinery stated:

“We share the same information system - I can see what MMC employees are doing over the system and they can see what I am doing. This is special, because we do not have to go knocking on doors to know what the decisions are about - everything is very open here and information flows easily.”

Another supervisor of a different contractor’s company added to this topic:

“We have been growing at the same pace of the company. We are treated as partners and I feel myself a real partner with MMC”.

Asked about the relation with his actual employer, the interviewee said that the relations were good, but that there were inequalities.

“We clearly have a different treatment than an MMC employee - especially in how much they pay us. Every one of us is looking for the opportunity to get a job within MMC”.

An employee of an engineering firm, which was involved with the maintenance of the pipelines, stated:

“With MMC we have a relation person to person - we treat each other as equals when working in something. It is very unusual that we receive instructions as orders - I feel that we are respected in what we do, even when I am aware that they are our client.”

A manager of a company who participated in the maintenance of the plant commented:

“When there is a ‘major maintenance’ we have to bring up here no less than 1,500 people, and we have to train, logistics support to everything we do. I feel that we work as one with the company’s management to ensure that everything works ok. Here, if one of our employees needs to speak to a superintendent, there is no trouble. Here the superintendent shares everything with our employees - he participates in our meetings and invites everyone to be part of the success.”

A bus driver that transported people from the operation site to Santiago two hundred miles away, commented;

“We are invited to talks and training just like every other MMC employee - especially in relation to safety issues, but also when it is about what the company is doing in relation to their contractors. I feel very well treated - the facilities where we sleep and eat are the same as every other MMC employee and that makes me feel good.”

It was of some concern to the contractors' employees that there seemed to be a renewal of their client management, and these new managers:

“...do not share the same culture we used to work with.”

A supervisor of an engineering firm that works in maintenance commented;

“We do double shifts, even when we do not need to do them. This is because he does not trust what we are doing - which I am pretty sure is well done - but because of his mistrust we have to work more and this is tiresome and makes us take risks that are not necessary”.

A new generation of middle managers has been introduced in the company since the organisational structure changed, as a result of the new strategy but, as one of the contractors' supervisors stated:

“...it is still in the black and white and in Karlos' talks”.

“We see the 'new podium' as not really working - if you see what is going on on the ground, the priority is production and efficiency. If they see that we can do it in 1000 hours, they will ask for 990 for the next job”.

Probably the most striking topic in every conversation I held with contractors' employees was about the stability of their jobs. They were very conscious that the contracts of their companies had a fixed date of termination with MMC. Most of them were renewed every three years - others were renewed annually, - which was usually translated into a feeling of uncertainty in their job stability. Their stability for some was a matter of chance, for most of them a matter of performance.

“We have no option other than do things well”.

There were many differences between the employees of the contractors and the employees of MMC. Perhaps the most obvious was that the contractors' employees held contracts that had an explicit end date - they lived with a “sword of Damocles” over their heads and it was difficult to know exactly how much of their motivation came from a fear of losing their jobs. However, there seemed to be a common thread amongst the workers in that many of them showed that by “doing things well”, they would have “continuity” as a way of securing their jobs.

The contract seemed to be an important disciplinary device in the hierarchical relationship between contractors' employees and MMC. However, it was in their daily interaction, where the workers shared their lives, that the middle managers and contractors' employees found ways of constructing an egalitarian relationship.

It is interesting to note what the contractors' employees said about their relationship with MMC compared with their own companies. If there was an egalitarian relationship with MMC, when they compared it with their own managers then this egalitarianism was lost, especially when related to wages and development opportunities. It was the aim of almost every employee of a contractor to hold a direct contract with MMC, as a result of these differences.

If we analyse the narratives of the valley residents alongside those of the employees of MMC and its contractors, what becomes most notable is that what is valued cannot be generalised. There are many voices that express very different values. However, it has to be noted that when interviewing an

employee or valley resident their voices are related to their identities as valley residents or employees - they speak from the action net to which they belong, not as representatives, but from their own living experiences of it. This is relevant because it points to the fact that we are listening to action nets themselves. These are not macro-actors (Latour 2005; Callon, 1991) and there is no voice that represents them - each of them speaks with his/her own voice subjectified as a valley resident or employee.

There are two practices that keep constructing trust in the relationship between employees (both from MMC and the contractors): openness and the egalitarian treatment of supervisors. These belong to the habituated practices that have been in the company's background for a long time. They are not an outcome of a deliberate action of the sustainability strategy implementation.

Summarising what I found as the status of the relationships between the company and some of its most salient stakeholders, valley residents and employees, is that they seem to display quite contrasting characteristics. Regarding the valley residents, there seems to be an ever-escalating negative symmetrical relationship between MMC and them.

Employees cultivate a very hierarchical relationship with MMC, where a sense of egalitarianism and openness is subjectified in a sense of partnership and complementarity with their managers. What it is interesting to note here is that most of the experience with MMC, as an institution, is subjectified through the relationship between employees and middle managers, even when there is not such egalitarianism (for example concerning the more pecuniary aspects of the

relation, such as contracts). This has defined their relationship, especially with contractor's employees, as an "asymmetric partnership".

EVENT 1: THE FAILURE OF STRATEGY

In December 2011, two months after finishing my fieldwork in MMC, I learned that there had been important changes in the company's executive team. I include this section as an introduction to the analysis of the case because it emphasises the lack of trusting relationships between the executive team and the board, especially with regard to the chairman of AAC Plc., and the ratification of how little the strategic intent had been subjectified in the relationship between these two groups. At the same time, it shows how the absences of Karlos, seen by some as a sacrifice, make the strategic intent act in a quite unintended way.

In November 2011, Pedro (strategy and finance manager) was asked to resign from the company and a couple of weeks later Karlos (MMC CEO) was given the same instruction. By March 2012 only two of the G7 members I knew remained in the company. When I heard about this I went back to my practice of being present at the site, and had the opportunity, in a quite informal way, to gather data/stories about what was happening. I will describe the circumstances and the stories I gathered from these "casual/deliberate encounters".

Karlos is a smoker and the corporate building is a non-smoking site, so he often was seen standing in the nearby street, smoking and chatting with various other people. I met him there, few weeks before he left and after he received notice of dismissal, and asked him about what the reasons were for his immanent departure. He explained to me that the Executive President (Pablo) had called him asking for his resignation from the job and offered him a vice president

position in AAC Plc. He had refused the offer, arguing that he would not be able to live with such levels of mistrust, referring to the relations within AAC Plc. He explained to me that he understood mistrust to be the reason of his dismissal. That year had been the best financial performance of the company in its history, but there were targets that had not been achieved and this has fuelled the mistrust between the chairman, the board, Karlos and the G7.

The audited financial statements of MMC¹⁸ show that MMC obtained a growth in its profits before taxes (EBIDTA) of 10% compared with the previous year, from US\$ 2,200 in 2010 to US\$ 2,423 million. Informally I knew that the forecasted numbers had not been achieved in the amount of refined copper equivalent. Even when the forecast showed a three per cent drop in fine copper equivalent, this was not accomplished either.

I managed to meet up with Pedro one last time before he left, over coffee in a nearby café. He explained that his resignation had been requested a month before that of Karlos, after the presentation of the last forecast to the board of MMC in early November. During this meeting, they had presented a forecast below what was forecasted in March of the same year¹⁹. This generated a sense of surprise in the board, especially in the Chairman of AAC plc. A week later Pedro was dismissed from the company. His explanation for this was that they failed in building trust with the board and because they had not complied with their promises in the last two years the levels of mistrust had grown to a

¹⁸ Obtained from the SVS, the government regulatory agency of incorporated companies.

¹⁹ A discussion about how they arrived to this decision is presented in Event 5:

level at which the chairman thought the team was no longer capable of running the company.

I succeeded in talking with a third middle manager of MMC whom I met during my visit to the corporate building. He told me that the Chairman visited the operation and met with all of the remaining managers and explained the decisions taken. He had stated that AAC plc. was in a process of “internationalisation” - acquiring new companies and building alliances with new partners with whom to operate worldwide. One such project had been decided four or five years ago, but this would not be possible if “...at home we are not up to our promises”. He told the managers that he “was not able to recognise them - never before has MMC been a company that did not achieve or excel in what we promised”.

By May of 2012 I learned that the Executive President of AAC (Pablo) had also been dismissed along with most of his reporting staff; the CEO and part of the executive team of all the other companies. The official statement was the same, “they did not achieve what they promised”.

I held one last informal conversation with the Community Relations manager of MMC. I asked him how he was feeling about what was going on in the company. He told me that there were a number of things happening. He told me that “the Sustainability Strategy” was “on hold”, and he had the feeling that it was “dangerous” to use the language of the relational model (for building trust). He stated, that they were doing the same type of things that they had planned to do, but that now it was happening as a sort of “underground” activity – carried out from a “deep conviction” and that even though Karlos was not in the

company any longer, he had become a “mythical figure” of inspiration for many employees.

EVENT 2: PRACTICE OF THE SELF AND STRATEGY FORMULATION

This event tells two types of stories. The first is Karlos' account of how the Sustainability Strategy emerged. The second is the story that he tells between the lines about himself during the strategy emergence. This latter story is constructed by reading his account in relation to who he is and the relationship that he has with himself and his world - searching for his ethics, the way he dwells in his constructed world and specifically the world constructed around him whilst building the formulated strategy.

Discerning these types of stories is not a new practice. Most of Foucault's analysis of the concept of the care of the self (Foucault, 1988) is made via a reading of Artemidorus' interpretation of dreams, which tells us about "the subject's mode of being in reality, and tells it through a relationship of analogy with the mode of being – good or bad, favourable or unfavourable – of the subject as an actor...One does not look in this text for a code specifying what should and should not be done; what it reveals instead is an ethics of the subject..." (1988: 16).

I am treating these stories - collected from a number of interviews I held with Karlos between July 2010 and January 2012 - as social encounters, in which different sorts of text can be deciphered.

The first sections of this mini-chapter tell Karlos' story and chronicle the facts that, according to him, configured the conditions that lead to the strategy

formulation. The final three sections present my reading of his relation of the self with himself.

This event contributes to an understanding of how Karlos' project of the self works and interacts in the process, and helps to explain the failure of the Sustainability Strategy as an intentional and deliberate practice of subjectifying trusting relationships with its stakeholders.

BEING DISCOVERED: VALUING PEOPLE

In my first interview with Karlos²⁰, we were sitting around a table in his office on the 17th floor of the Santiago Corporate building. It was an austere office, with no more space than the nearby offices of the top executives and other MMC managers. Most of them were empty, probably because their occupants were all at the operation site. He showed himself keen to carry out this interview, and seemed excited by the opportunity to talk to someone from outside the company about the strategy and its story.

I asked him to tell me how the Sustainability Strategy was formulated. He replied that he wanted to give an account of his experience with the AAC Plc. group well before the strategy was formulated. All in all, he brought more than twelve years of experiences to the meeting.

He told me that he came in contact with the mining group (AAC Plc.) and the industry in 1997, before MMC was formed, as an advisor for building the financial scheme needed for the construction of the operation's facilities. At that

²⁰ We had three more meetings - two in the same setting and the third whilst travelling in his truck from the operation site to Santiago.

time, there was an approved investment of nearly US\$ 850 million, but without the proper financing. Later on, when the construction began, he was invited to join the management team as its finance manager. A close relationship between him and the MMC CEO began to emerge.

“When I began working at MMC, the CEO at the time asked me to get involved in the business. He said that I had other capabilities that I should explore. He asked me to be in the field, with people. He began to use me in a number of other functions, including the coordination of the management team. After many years I realised what was he doing: I should get involved in the business, not just around numbers and operations but also with people. He asked me to discover how miners think and feel, and to explore what was going on with people.”

From a technical financial advisor, to a finance manager, and then to explore “other capabilities”, he offered an account of what was “discovered” about him in the relationship with his manager, who instructed him to explore an understanding that included not just “numbers and operations” but people as well. These “other” capabilities meant progress for him too.

“I think he discovered something in me that he relayed inside the company and convinced the chairman that I should be the CEO of MMB²¹”.

²¹ Another copper mining company of the same holding group.

Karlos regarded how he became the subject he was as important, and related it to the formation of the Sustainability Strategy. He showed that he had been forming a relationship with himself and other's self from this type of experience.

When he arrived at MMB, Karlos found himself in a company formed under a concept which accommodated him; with a business model centred around people, using the "Gung Ho" principles suggested by Blanchard et al (1998), as a management-through-values approach. However, he referred to it as a very troubled company.

"I arrived at a company that was hurt, where the management team was being questioned because of this same value-based management system. They had been successful, but it was a kind of depressed company, with low levels of energy. I began looking to why it was so. Contrary to MMC, which was like a tractor with very high energy and an enormous capacity to execute everything, I discovered that in MMB there was a lot of criticism of what was being done, a lot of conversations around what was missing, the inconsistencies and nothing about the future. They talked a lot around fears that the mine would last for only a few years. None of the conversations were about the people's future projects. So the first thing I did was to demand for value consistency. I began by challenging the people's interpretation of what they were doing about their espoused values."

Karlos recounted how he showed the MMB employees that they were talking about respect, but there were strong signs that their actual practices did not reflect it. As an example, he showed how the safety ratios were well behind

what was acceptable. They claimed tolerance as a value, but it was easy to observe how it was intolerable for them to accept people's different views.

“It is difficult to work with values...my experience is that there is no such thing as management *by* values, it is different to management *from* values.”

He then told me that he related to the people's fears and saw that fears were associated with the foreseeable end of the company, when the mineral reserves were finished. He asked people to give attention not just to the mine and mineral reserves, but also to people's capabilities and processes. They began to search for opportunities and discovered that they had a lot more to do in the geographic district where the operation was located. He highlighted that the lifetime of this company was calculated to be ten years and that a few days before this interview they celebrated its tenth anniversary and that there was no end to the operation on the horizon.

A NEW ARRIVAL AT MMC: LOOSING VISION, LOOSING PRIDE

Karlos arrived at MMC from a company (MMB) that was transformed by building a present that attended reflectively to narratives of what their business can be - one that is not based on mineral reserves or the size of the pit, but on people's capabilities and processes.

Karlos explained that he arrived at MMC with high expectations but that a number of things happened and that he began to feel “trapped and frustrated”.

He arrived at MMC in late 2006 and there were a number of critical issues to sort out that were threatening the continuity of the operation. The most

important one was to unlock the negotiations with surrounding communities to allow the construction of a new tail dam, as the dam in operation was coming to the end of its useful life. They were locked in legal disputes with the landlords and nearby villagers, who were asking for compensation to allow the construction. By the end of 2007 an agreement was reached with the landlords and some of the villagers' representatives and the new tail dam was almost constructed. A second issue was the expansion of the concentrator plant needed to exploit the huge new reserves recently discovered.

Coming from a company that was having trouble and had found its energy by valuing people's knowledge and technology processes (as human and non-human coordinations), Karlos felt trapped and frustrated in a company that seemed to have only operational challenges and shortcomings. His first two years, he said, were frustrating and pressures came from everywhere, building a sense that he was "trapped in a company whose only sense was the production of profits".

A NEW ENVIRONMENT FOR MMC

2009 comes at a time when, according to his account, MMC was a company with an outstanding record in creating economic value. During the previous eight years more than US\$ 8 billion was created. The company became the direct employer of more than 8,000 people; received a national quality award, the best national sustainability report, and another award for the quality of its labour relationships. However a new "environment" began to unfold.

“We began to have a series of problems related to the company's operations. I began to feel trapped, trapped in a company that had an incredible history of success, but that at the same time had a lot of shortcomings. Those deficiencies had become established a long time ago, but had gone unnoticed. MMC did what it wanted and nobody in the company was aware of how much harm we were doing. The world was changing and there was a need to open up these problems and make them transparent. Before, we had environmental incidents for which *nobody cared much about*. Today if we spill a drop of concentrate into the river, the scandal is of enormous proportions. Before, we dropped cubic meters into the river, and it was unnoticed. Today, the communities react immediately. So, in this very tough mining type of culture we are having problems and without any other dream than to be successful, through the vision that we have to create as much economic value as possible”.

Karlos began to “join the dots” and see a different environment emerging for the company, that had previously been “unnoticed and nobody cared much about”. The company “environment” (i.e. local communities, NGOs, government agencies, etc.) was holding the careless culture accountable. What was once a story of success had begun to become one of shortcomings.

“The Company was a reference for the industry at a national level because of the way we were doing things, because we were always growing and how much innovation we were using. I felt really proud because of it. However, the change in our environment began to hold us

accountable - those things began to be less valued and a shift in what was most valued began to emerge. The company began to lose its pride - before we thought we did everything right, but then we discovered we were not so good. We had a couple of fatalities. A lot of things began to happen to us".

ENVIRONMENTAL ACCIDENT

It was September 2009 when MMC experienced an environmental incident. The pipeline that transported the copper concentrate through the valley to the port broke and poured tens of cubic metres of copper concentrate into the valley's river.

The investigation revealed that insufficient monitoring and the wrong specifications were the cause of the accident. For Karlos, it was more a case that they were not looking carefully at what was occurring with the valley communities and what mattered for them. The river was the source of life for the towns and agriculture of the valley and this accident had made an enormous impact on the residents' sense of living in a healthy environment.

The accident led to a huge reaction from the communities, authorities, NGOs, and the media. Some of these reactions were quite violent, such as the blockade of the only road that gave access to the mine for almost two weeks, posing a real threat of stopping the company's operations, with great damage to the company's reputation and finances.

Karlos reported that they faced the anger of many of their stakeholders: the valley residents blocked roads, raised placards, mobilised authorities, the press

and political parties. Board members became concerned about the loss of reputation and employees began to feel that they no longer belonged to a successful company in which they could work with pride.

He then stated that a specific event made the whole management team of that time to go into “a reflection process”, where “a new vision began to emerge.”

Other environmental incidents became evident and the reaction of the communities grew in intensity, instead of being appeased by the actions taken (repair and development of sophisticated monitoring system for the concentrate pipeline).

Karlos: “...I finished in the COREMA (the regional environmental government agency) with all the regional authorities and the communities that used to treat me as a delinquent. It was during this time that we used to send the water from the bypass tunnel into the river. In the conversations we had with the communities, they told us: “please do not tell us that you are going to fix the school, or the health centre or the street pavement. We are concerned about the tail dam - the water quality - and while you do not solve those issues, we will not talk of anything else”.

“And we were talking about development programmes. We were giving them resources so that they could become more productive in their land lots. It was all right, but it was not their concern. We learned that we had been blind. We learned that the solutions to the water issues or of the tail dam should not have been carried out by us, but with them. Through

these types of experiences we convinced ourselves that this was the road, and we felt more empowered to follow it.”

“From here we begin to discover that we had to see people we had not seen before, we begin to realise that we had to stand in the other's shoes, “cross to the other's side of the tennis court”. We had an image of an inclined tennis court, where the miners were playing downhill and the rest uphill. We decided that we had to change ends and see the situation from uphill. From here the [phrase] “I see you” was established. We began to see what we were doing in a very different way - we discovered what type of things really hurt people, and what mattered to them. We discovered that we were acting in a completely condescending way, defining and deciding ourselves what they needed.. The truth was that they were thinking differently.”

FROM PRACTICING STRATEGY TO THE PRACTICE OF STRATEGISING

According to Karlos, the collective reflectiveness amongst the executives, prompted by the 2009 community protests, gave rise to a number of actions - but the most relevant was the formulation, with mandate from the board, of new strategy to guide the company into the future for the next ten years.

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY BECOMES OBJECTIFIED

In March 2010, Karlos convened a conference that was called a “Strategic Planning Meeting”. At this conference, representatives from the communities, agricultural associations, landlords, fishing unions, members of the political

sector, contractors, NGO's representatives, middle managers, union representatives and employees of the company were invited. They met for three days to produce a strategy that they defined as a sustainable company working practice for the next decade.

According to Karlos, from this conference, a new strategic intent emerged. He reported that the formulation of the strategy arrived with a kind of relief:

“...I think a dream was established for a company that had with no hope, that was carrying out its everyday activities, but with no sense of future. It was like living in a very dark place....”

Karlos, who seemed unable to see any promise in a working relationship with no sense of future and value of people, began to see hope in the possibility of enrolling the company managers and employees in a different type of relationship with its stakeholders.

This same steering committee codified what they called first a “relational strategy” because, at its centre, this formulated the need to change the relationship with all their stakeholders. According to Karlos, the new strategy articulated a number of topics, the most important of which was the concept of what was valued:

“what was valued emerges within a relationship.”

It is interesting to note that this strategy crystallized a number of activities that were already happening during the previous years, but were not as visible or assembled as a dominant organisational narrative. Karlos recognised here the

appearance of a different understanding of the “other” as the company’s stakeholders, especially the valley resident.

The strategy codification was not just a product of one event or just a weekend workshop. Karlos reported on a consulting process that was carried out with one of the most recognised environmentalists in the country as central to the crystallization of the new vision and mission of the strategy.

Even against the advice of some members of the board and of the executive committee, this process acted as a catalyst to the process of reflection in which he and other members of this team became involved. The environmentalist expert advised them to think of sustainability and, to do that, they had to think of *all* of their stakeholders. They could not anticipate or control the type of value the company will be demanded for. This only can be known as emerging in a relationship.

After this, the strategy was renamed the Sustainability Strategy, in recognition of what Karlos acknowledged as the main challenge for the next ten years,

“to grow and create not just economic but simultaneously social and environmental value and enough to make our growth sustainable.”

He described how the strategy formulation went through a process of editing with the participation of the executives and other groups of stakeholders, and was then presented to the Board in April 2010. He claimed that this constituted a rite of passage for it, so that following its approval, it became not just the way some of the executive team members and other managers were making sense of their own practice, but also an objectified artefact with its own life.

Following that point, it is possible to trace in their documents and accounts how managers and executives referred to the strategy as "it." The strategy became a text with its own life, "distanced" (Czarniawska, 2011:70) from its authorship. This contrasts with what seemed to be the embodied strategy practice of the initial stages when, according to Karlos' own account, a reflective mood prevailed and a shared examination of company practices took precedence, especially with regard to what they were "blind" to.

Once approved by the board in April 2010, the Sustainability Strategy became "something" to be implemented, and a vast amount of actions were initiated. A whole new organisational structure was displayed, which meant recruiting/promoting nearly 28 managers and establishing a new governance structure, which included the organisational structure plus the creation of six committees - integrated by executives, middle managers and professionals, focused on the key strategic priorities (Change Management; Process Excellence; Finance and Budget; Sustainability; Executive; Services).

A second important action initiated during this period, Karlos said, was a "communication process" to "involve" the company employees, contractors and vendors with the strategy implementation. This was carried out through a number of seminars and other initiatives, which they (the PMO - the steering committee assigned with the responsibility of the strategy implementation) designated as "alignment meetings."

DECIPHERING KARLOS' ETHICAL POSITIONING

The interview, as a social encounter, gave Karlos the opportunity to articulate a chronicle of the developments that had led to the formulation of the Sustainability Strategy. His account of the facts was of interest, but not from the point of view of my research project, where I wanted to see the role of leadership and trusting relationships within interaction, and not a chronicle.

A story, told “between lines” and related to my research interest, was how he positioned himself as an actor “on the stage”. This account, that needs to be deciphered in the text, tells the story of his relationship to himself and to others, as well as his ethical positioning in this narrative. This story tells us about his intentions and wills.

This ethical position is not owned by him - results secondary to so many events that have shaped the primacy of a way of governing his self. It is not a conscious and deliberate process and is accessible by observing the trajectories of his narratives in a reflexive relation.

A GOVERNMENTALITY PROJECT: THE RELATION OF THE SELF WITH THE SELF AND OTHERS

What, then, is this account saying about Karlos' conduct, the relation of the self with the self?

Twelve years ago, he was apparently “discovered” by his new boss who saw “other capabilities that I should explore”. What is it that he began to explore in the presence of his boss? His answer gives us a clue: “not just around numbers and operations but also with people”. He began to relate to himself as someone

with a “special capability” to relate to mining in a broader perspective that embraced mining not just as numbers and operations but related to people and relations. In this interview, when he spoke about his second appointment at MMC, he described his aim: “...I wanted MMC to be a company of happier people, a cosier place for people, instead of this very hard mining culture I have helped to create in the beginning...so my first intention was to humanise the company.”

The shift in what he was giving attention to took place in the relationship with his boss. He also began to enact a different self in relation to his fellow managers, transcending the functional role, and beginning to relate to himself as a “transversal” manager. His orientation was “not just to numbers and operations”, and opened the door to a new self concept. Obviously he was no longer a financial advisor nor a finance manager - now mining for him was now primarily concerned with relationships with people.

A second element in this role was his acknowledgement that he had little relation to power represented by the AAC Plc management. He needed to be spoken for by someone else – and the appropriate person was his boss. To please and surprise his boss became an important element of the self he begins to enact.

Karlos saw himself as capable and he developed an ambitious relation to job positions and occupational opportunities. After five years in the group, beginning as a financial advisor, he became the CEO of the second largest operating company of the holding group. He saw himself as able to see and do what other people were not capable of. In other words, he related to himself as

capable of being something else other than a miner or a financial manager. What distinguished these capabilities was that he was not someone who related only to numbers and operations but also to people, which seems (in his account) a rare orientation in the mining management culture of MMC.

The proof of this capability was his role as MMB CEO where, as he says, he found himself in a company which was created under a concept that accommodated him: “with a business model centred around people” but which was “depressed” and full of conversations about what was missing along with fears about the future of the company. He himself was not part of this “depressed” mood. He gave attention to people and discovered the reason for the lack of optimism and the criticism that pervaded the people’s conversations. He saw that there were inconsistencies with their orientation to other staff, reflected in a number of issues (safety ratios and tolerance to different opinions) but that the key issue was that people were afraid of their future because they were paying attention, as miners do, to the pit and the mineral reserves and not to people’s capabilities and processes. Karlos saw a projection of himself as paying attention to what a valued staff’s demenaour might become within the company and, at the same time, he saw himself as different - he was not just a miner.

Going back to his first experience with MMC, as the Finance Manager who is “discovered”, nothing changed much in his way of relating to people other than having some sort of far-sighted relationship – which gave him an advantageous position to observe not just the productive process but the ethical stand of people in their interaction. He seemed to have acquired a great rhetorical power

in relation with his fellow managers and employees as he articulated a new reality for the company, represented in a number of future possibilities.

When Karlos arrived back at MMC, this time as its CEO, he showed a relation to himself as one invested of great confidence to change the “hard mining culture” he himself “had helped to create”. He wanted to “humanise” it, creating a “cosier and happier” company. He was not happy with it being a company of economic successes, but as successful based on what its ethos became as well. He said: “there was a need of something more than just crushing stones - there had to be a softer thing in the middle of a very hard company.” He was experiencing a prophetic relationship with the company, but it seemed that he had to invert the relation subjectified in MMB to the one he was bringing to MMC. His prophetic self became trapped in a “successful company with shortcomings”. Huge operational challenges, like expanding its processing capacity by almost fifty per cent (to be the largest copper concentrator in the world) was not a source of satisfaction and reflected how strong his project of the self as a manager “humanising” the company had become. MMC did not need a prophetic leadership, it was already “successful”. It was Karlos who was now “depressed” in the company.

Then an event occurred that was translated in a very different way: the September 2009 environmental accident. Karlos found himself in the middle of a situation and began to connect events that became familiar. This was no longer a successful company - it had received every possible recognition, but had lost its pride, reputation and was risking its operational continuity. All this was familiar to Karlos and had taken place in a very short period of time. What

was new for his relation to himself was that he had no advantageous position from which to prophesise what to do. He and his fellow managers were dwelling in a field of doubt, ignorance and vulnerability. In this position, they reexamined their practices in relation to their stakeholders, who positioned themselves according to their interests - especially the valley residents, whose legitimate aim of living in a healthy environment was being threatened.

Karlos saw himself trapped in “a company that was not aware of how much harm it was doing”. He was “in” the company, but saw himself as different and not identified with what the company was doing. He presented himself as a different type of being, one that opened up problems and made them transparent, who related to a different way of being successful. His espoused values, up until this moment, were showing him valuing what people brought to the business and he now showed that he did not share being successful by economic means alone. He was showing himself as having an outward-facing perspective as interpreter and that he was able to “timely punctuate” (Munro, 2009) the company behaviour and environment.

The perspective in himself shifted from been “trapped” to challenged to install a new vision - he “discovered” a blind spot from which to construct a different type of company ethos: including in it the valley residents as a new “other”. The way he was treated (“as a delinquent”) after the September 2009 environmental accident made him shift his relationship with himself. First, he discovered that he was “blind” to the real concerns of the valley’s inhabitants and then he began to observe what he and his fellow managers had become “blind” to.

Karlos saw himself as having a shift of priority, perceiving a different possible relation with the communities. He reported that he uncovered the way in which the company was threatening the communities and how he was able to listen to “what mattered to them.” From this point, there was also a shift in the way he that began to talk about himself. He used the pronoun “we” to talk about the subjects and it was difficult to distinguish between what he and his fellow managers could be seeing and feeling at that time. It seemed that in his narrative he equated what he and others were dealing with as a shared version of truth. His relation to himself as prophesising a truth to others was not present in this situation any longer.

What this use of the pronoun “we” presupposes is an “other”, separated from “them”. Karlos articulated that they had been able to recognise their blindness to these “others needs” and replace the practice of making solutions “...not by us, but with them.”. It is this presence of an other as different and distinguishable from them that kept being pervasive in his narrative. In MMB, company employees who were not seeing their value and processes were now the valley residents that had been “discovered” as different “others” after the September environmental accident.

His project of the self seemed to be consistently reflexive to the presence of an other, especially an other in need of a solicitous caring position. In MMB he resonated with the “depressed” company; in MMC he felt trapped, because there seemed to be no other to care for until the communities were subjectified as a relevant other for the company operation. His relation to his self became,

in front of me, subjectified as existing from a solicitous caring relationship with a new other.

This revealed, at the same time, that his care of the self, according to his narrative, was related to the omnipresence of a discursive practice. He used the pronoun “we” as a spokesperson, as a legitimised other for whom he wished to speak on his behalf. On occasion he separated himself from the other, yet sometimes became the same with his fellow executives and sought this perspective to become legitimised by a wider other. What was kept constant was that he kept his difference as belonging to a group, namely the company’s executive group, or the company as a whole.

It is from this division of him and his fellow executives as different that the executive team received pressure from stakeholders. These stakeholders started to represent, at the same time, his possibility of enacting his practice of the self and a source of constraints. It is in this context that two other events took place. The first was the mandate to construct and approve a ten-year strategy for the company; the second was the advice of an “authority” in sustainability. The relation with the board needed the codification of what they and he had been experiencing and “discovering” and to find a broader sense of what they were doing.

Karlos answered to these demands unreflectively, with a representational planning process formulating a 2010- 20 strategy. What was in its beginning a conduct of conducts process, fuelled by a number of conditions, became an exercise of representation, a “strategy” that needed to be approved by the board and “implemented” as if was an artefact, a piece of furniture, in the

following months. Karlos' relation of the self with himself became the conduct of a project, and a habituated practice that had made the mining company very successful over the previous ten years of creating economic value.

There was an important difference between the previous projects the company had conducted and the one that it finally formulated and gained approval for from the board in April 2010: at the centre of its priorities was the construction of trusting relationships with all their stakeholders.

The care of the self is not a cult of individuality. It is a practice of interpreting the self in the presence of the other. The care of the self is at the same time "a practice of possessing oneself, being its own master" (Foucault, 1988: 51), and governing ourselves according to what we take to be true.

In the development of the MMC strategy it is possible to observe the way that the "conduct of conducts" shaped Karlos' own personal life project. What was seen and made visible, the vocabulary and forms by which truth became produced and the rationality in which action became embedded are part of the way he saw himself and later became formulated as a company-wide governmentality project. However, as it became an objectified project, it lost the relation with his own practice.

In the following three events, shadowing Karlos, he showed his presence, but in the midst of interacting with other company agents, especially middle managers and executives belonging to the executive committee. This provided an opportunity to observe how the relationship that he seemed to sustain with

himself became enacted in the practices of relating with the company management and the executive team.

EVENT 3: SUPERVISORS DINNER

This event concerns Karlos presenting to a large group of company managers, with a sophisticated set of rhetorical resources, key components of the recent formulated strategy. Specifically it shows how “they” intended to convert the occasion into a company practice.

This event shows how the strategy implementation becomes an unreflective rhetorical activity that contradicts what the codified strategy is declaring, showing a form of interaction between the executives (including Karlos) which reproduces the habituated company hierarchical practices.

During my first research visit to the company’s operations I shadowed Karlos who had invited me to be present at the “Supervisor’s Dinner”. This was an event, organised once or twice a year, where guest speakers were invited, a well-served dinner was presented and which was intended to be a gathering for enjoyment rather than adding a specific purpose. I travelled in one of the chartered planes, so it was a short trip from Santiago. I was not allowed to shadow Karlos outside of this specific event, so I planned to stay in the valley from the next morning for two further nights.

The location of the dinner was a large auditorium. It was the 28th of July 2010, there were approximately 300 people with management and supervisory responsibilities in the room. The guest speaker was a well-known sociologist, known because of his involvement in advising political figures and through his participation in the media via his writings and debates. His talk was about how society was changing from “care” as a definition of “corporate social

responsibility” to an age of personal responsibility where change and novelty could stem from any source - giving special importance to courage and technological advances of social networks. His talk lasted for about half an hour, and I had the sense that, even if it was full of anecdotes and examples, it was uninteresting for most of the audience.

The food was served, and people began to interact noisily in the room. We were, sitting at round tables with white tablecloths and vases of flowers - a very unusual landscape in a mining operation usually characterised by its austere setting. I sat at a table not far away from Karlos, but with no opportunity to observe him while dining. The guest speaker and other members of the G7 were sitting at his table. On my table were a group of supervisors but, because of the noise of the room, I was only able to talk to one of them sitting next to me. The menu was based around two courses and wine and beer were served (something completely forbidden in a mining operation). A few minutes after dessert, Karlos stood by his table and took the microphone, calling for people’s attention. A total silence fell on the room.

Karlos began his speech by recounting that in December 2009:

“A new objective function for the company appeared, above and beyond the objective of adding economic value for the company and shareholders, the border conditions of society and environment are no longer border conditions and have become part of the objective function of the company”

He added that at that time they defined a new concept of the company,

" The company is not an isolated entity, but part of a system, where it has to work in equilibrium, requires a systemic vision to understand all of whom are participants of this company, this system, to which we are going to add value."

Then, he says that they have done a few definitions, like the values and style by which they want to manage the company

"We stated that there was a permanent need for the company to grow, for the people in the company to grow, to have integral growth, for there to be an aspiration to be happy in the job and to achieve the opportunity to transcend";

Then he went on to remind the audience that they had also defined their strategic priorities:

"First, assure the operational excellence and trusting relationships with all our stakeholders, then reinforce the system and go for the growth of it."

From here he reminded the company's management that they had stated a new vision and mission as well as the definition of four strategic pillars that:

"Will take us to achieve our objective of adding value to the system."

"So, we have a clear view from where we come from and where we want to go...we come from a successful management system where we have attained excellent results...but we are changing *how* we obtain our results. By the end of the year all our supervisors should be leading the

quality assurance of our base line and have a good knowledge of the strategic definitions and how these should be implemented”.

Then he talked about priorities, saying that these priorities had changed,

"This happened in September of last year (2009) when we defined the new podium."

Referring to an image of a sports podium, he explained the change as:

"...the 'performance agreement' before April 2010 had three lines that were production-related, where more than fifty per cent of it was production related...from May of this year on, production is measured in only one line, the ROCE (return on capital equity), and with a weight of only a fifteen percent in the total bonus calculation. So, if someone is concerned only with tons he can lose almost an 85% of his bonus."

He emphasised that this was the new focus, and these were the strategic priorities. Then he stated that *operational integrity* continued to be key.

"It allows us to establish a new level of risk management to our operation, establishing a new standard of security in our processes. There is no possibility that we can achieve what we want if we are not able to manage our processes with a better standard of risk management. We are advancing in the definitions of how we are going to organise for making decisions and assign its responsibilities, and we will announce it by next month"

I could hear only silence in the room. Nobody seemed surprised. I looked at the faces of the people around to find out if they had said something to me. There seemed to be no reaction at all - a non-reaction that constituted a reaction. What seemed to be presented with great enthusiasm by Karlos was new, challenging and placed them into an unknown territory, but nothing said to me that he had been successful in persuading them.

If this was good news, I expected to see smiling faces. If it was bad news, I expected gloomy faces. But this 'no reaction' indicated to me that they did not trust themselves to show any emotion. What became most evident here was that it did not matter if they expressed an open reaction: there seemed to be no expectation of a reaction, and it seemed that what was expected was that the audience would think, feel but do not express their emotions. What is important is what is said, not their reactions.

His speech seemed to have no impact on the room, which, from the way that people were sitting at the tables, according to hierarchical status and in a passive position, showed no reaction to the content of the speech.

The reference to the 'new podium' - a management incentive system intended to focus the attention given to community relations and to health and safety as regards the company production - demonstrated the use of institutional power elements to keep the organising process on track. This appeared to be one of those situations to which De Certeau (1988) refers where active consumers can 'insinuate themselves' using the thin opportunities to resist, transform or simply ignore the intent to impose a predominant narrative into their daily lives.

I was observing a speech full of goodwill. Karlos was “inviting” the audience to share “a vision” with far-reaching consequences for everyone in “the system”. His audience were a group of people who shared most of the institutional power of MMC and so, if enlisted, might have far-reaching consequences for the fate of the strategy. However, the audience was composed of “readers” who were constructing their own narratives of the world they lived in and where the company’s strategy, if it ever became a dominant narrative, would be resisted, transformed or even ignored. My sense was that there was no sign that the strategy content and the subjects offered through Karlos’ speech had been confirmed at this point.

Karlos interrupts his speech to show a fragment of James Cameron’s film *Avatar*, where the character of Neytiri, the “Navi” girl assigned by the village chief to train Jack Sullivan, the “reincarnated” ex-marine in a Navi’s body, greets him with “sawubona” (I see you) . After all that has happened (the “company” trying to destroy the sacred wood of the Navi for exploiting the rich mineral reserves that lie below the surface), she “sees him now”, in an act of confirmation of his “offer” as caring for preserving the untouched environment of the Navi’s sacred woods.

After showing the film fragment, he continued with his speech, explaining a need for a new attitude.

“Related to this ‘I see you’, .is an attitude that begins with ourselves, seeing, not on the surface, but deep into the other. It begins with seeing what is in the surroundings, our fellow workers and our neighbours. We want a company that sees, a company that understands how everything

it does affects what happens around it, affects people, affects the environment. We want it to be a joyful company, a company where everyone can understand each other, where there is tolerance, where there is humility”.

The silence in the audience deepened. People were listening with attention to a deep mythological artefact to “communicate” a strategic intention. The reference to *Avatar* was a powerful image in itself, but this image was just the background of what Karlos was implying. He made the action of seeing important, “ not just in the surface but in the interior” - representing a call for the introduction of the “other” which is so central to the “care of the self” (Foucault, 1988 ; 2005) and on the formation of identities (Gordon, 1999).

Keeping the mythological message of the *Avatar* film in the background (Cooper, 2005) of his speech was quite surprising. The film’s main themes concern the effects of mining on a native community and strives to show the conflict of interests between the community and mining company. This analogy showed that a trusting relationship seems almost impossible to accomplish without becoming an avatar of a villager.

The value of this analogical language has been well documented in the creation of new knowledge (Cornelissen, 2005), sense making (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and in organisational change efforts (Alvesson, 2010); (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008); (Jordan & Mittrhoffer, 2010). It seems that If the short fragment showed from the film is used as an analogy, it should have meant that the audience was invited to ask themselves questions in

relation to how they are interpreting “others” aspirations and feelings, acknowledging and caring for what is most valuable for them.

In this case the use of metaphors has a double interest in that it also represents a highly symbolic myth. Joseph Campbell (1968), the prominent mythologist, suggests a number of reasons why mythologies become relevant. Perhaps the most pertinent is that it “lines our interior system of belief, like shards of broken pottery in an archaeological site” (1968: 64). He means here that mythology is not just about old stories, but part of reality construction, through mystification and ritualising action. Myths enact patterns of meaning that help us to cope with the unknown and uncertain.

In fact, Campbell (1988: 64) goes further when asked about why we should care about myths: “...I think that what we’re seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical planes will have resonance within our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive, and that is what these clues help us to find within ourselves.”. He gives an existential value to myths in people’s lives.

Myths, as storytelling, give coherence to facts in a continuum. In this sense, myths are interpretative devices that help to construct the connection between the present, the past and the future in the imagination. This takes place not in a sense of prescription, as if myths were facts, but for constructing new realities in ways that could never have existed if they were not prompted in the imagination of those who use them to give meaning to a given situation.

If we understand strategy “communication” as “authoring”, as de Certeau (1988) does, it becomes an action which, as Foucault demonstrates, “when translated to organisation, revolves around discipline” (Linstead & Grafton Small, 1992:349). In this same line of reasoning then, the use of the film results to be another resource with an instrumental use in discipline.

The use of the *Avatar* film, which is contemporary with the strategy formulation (released in December 2009), became a powerful rhetorical device in the meeting. My sense was that I was in a room that was offering little in terms of “opportunities of resisting” the narrative that was being presented.

However, it can be noted that what Karlos did was to extract just a small part of the story, leaving in the background the fact that the complete *Avatar* film, leads to a battle between the company’s armed forces and the native villagers - similar to what some of the executives experienced after the September 2009 environmental accident. As a complete metaphor, the *Avatar* film shows that the consequences of “listening deep into the other” leads to changing sides, but not to any change in the negative symmetrical relations of exploitation of mining.

Karlos then asked:

“...to what are we inviting you?”

and he showed footage from a rock concert (this clip is available to view on

YouTube

at

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnOtLbYtGL0&feature=youtube_gdata_player²³) - known as a flash mob because of spontaneous process by which it is instigated, highlighting how change begins with an individual's action. He showed that when

"We do things with that aim, and really committed to this, we will be able to achieve marvellous things"

The footage showed an enormous crowd of people moving together to the rhythm of the music. It constituted a message of what was expected for the audience - that (instead of what actually happens in the footage, where the movement is initiated by someone dancing) in Karlos' speech it became a prescription, setting an expectation so that what was expected of the staff of MMC was not that they took the initiative in being "committed" to what has been formulated, but that they followed a leader.

His speech was an open call for obedience and "active passivity". What Karlos had done was to "offer" a contradictory frame by which the company's managers found their way to be rewarded and make sense in the domain of the company's operation.

At the same time, he was offering them a way of defining their priorities, making explicit his expectations about how they should subject themselves

²² An alternative version of the footage
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QnJ49hv5Rho&feature=em-share_video_user

²³ An alternative version of the footage
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QnJ49hv5Rho&feature=em-share_video_user

as people that see deep into the other, its surroundings and how they should understand how everything they do would affect people and environment around them.; All of this was a rhetorical practice that could convince them about a given truth but, at the same time, it reproduced the habituated practice of “being told” what to do in a prescriptive, hierarchical relationship.

What Karlos was expecting from his audience was that they constituted different subjects, initiating a deep transformation process. However, at the same time he was prescribing, through quite powerful rhetorical devices, a contradictory subject expectation for the company’s management which stated “be obedient, let us move to the same rhythm spontaneously”. The company management were trapped in the voluntary/involuntary paradox (Ricoeur, 1966) of strategy authoring and tactics so beautifully exposed by de Certeau (1984).

Karlos then handed the microphone to the Talent and Culture executive, Nicolas, one of the G7 members, who went up onto the stage (whilst Karlos stood by his table) and asked the audience to express their feelings and thoughts about what they had just seen and heard. It was a quite tense moment, because nobody answered and a long silence ensued.

After a while, a few people in the audience took turns to comment. One said that if their bosses were not showing the way, then it would not happen. This was an open reference to the role of guides in subjectifying regimes of practice. Foucault (2005) makes a specific reference to the importance of being guided in subjectifying the practice of care of the self: “Everyone who wishes to conduct themselves properly in life needs a guide” (2005: 398).

The “other” can have a number of forms, such as specific symbols and rituals, but here we find a very specific reference to their “bosses” as guides. Foucault refers here not to the practices of the guided, but to the moral qualities of the guide to be chosen as such. Frankness (*parrhēsia*), the exercise of speaking freely and truthfully, becomes of key importance. The intervention of this person in the audience was an example of what he was representing. “Make sure that we have within our bosses a guide that, with frankness and truthfulness, guides us in care for ourselves”, he seemed to be saying.

This is central to the mystery that I am searching to solve through this research. Were they constructing an image of leadership that “guides” them through exemplifying the practices of trusting relationships expected by the strategy intention? How does this process look in this case?

Another member of the audience said that he felt proud of being part of a company that was trying to do what was intended. This showed, at the same time, what the types of feelings and expectations were in the room. Feeling pride means showing how identity and preferences are inscribed in a discourse. It is an action of self-recognition, of seeing and naming oneself, which has important implications for the construction of the self (Fitch & McElduff, 2002).

Showing pride for being part of a company’s intention shows that there was certain alignment between the manager’s expectations and the strategy intention. What can be resisted is not the ideal, but the practice of strategy as a process of conforming to this prescription.

The scene had been carefully designed using a set of rhetoric devices: the space for sharing and enjoyment for the “management team” was built as the location for strategy communication. The CEO has referred to the strategic priorities and then worked through “how” these strategic intents were to be introduced in the company’s practice. However, the location had little space where the content of the speech could be reflexively experienced. Managers were “invited”, constructed, as passive participants and, at the same time, told that the strategy was about personal responsibility.

There was a call to constitute themselves as specific type of listeners, through seeing each other, but none of them were seeing each other in the room. They were “invited” to become persuaded, which was a way of inviting them to build the opportunities to resist, transform or ignore the dominant narrative of the strategy formulation.

Karlos’ leadership practice apparently met all the traditional canons of charismatic leadership (Avolio B. J., 1999). Charismatic leadership is usually associated as a behavioural tendency to provide inspiration “to motivate collective action, behaving in ways that result in being role models for followers, sensitivity to environmental trends, unconventional behaviour, personal risk-taking, and formulation and articulation of a vision”. (Avolio B. J., 2002; Sosik , Avolio , & Jung , 2002).

Some authors distinguish what is termed as “socialised charismatic leadership” (Howell, 1988), which empowers others to promote pro-social

and ethical collective action, from personalised charismatic leadership, which manipulates others for self-serving and unethical purposes.

Karlos looked charismatic and provided of all the rhetorical devices, but the “design” of the event in which his actions became embedded, showed little reference to the intent.

This event expressed the contradictions between what was said with practice itself. I have shown how this event, in spite of a powerful rhetorical design, contained little reflexive power into the formation of the intended subjectivities.

Hope (2010) highlighted the importance of middle management sense making and sense giving as a key factor in the implementation of change process, but the activity design reveals a practice of paying attention to the speech content and very little to the practice of interaction as a subjectification process.

EVENT 4: DEFINING THE PMO'S LEADERSHIP

This event showed the executive committee debating decisions concerning the leadership and orientation of the PMO²⁴ - the governance committee responsible for conducting the change plan associated with the strategy implementation.

This is one of two events I will present, in which we can see how the habituated company practices of hierarchical relations have primacy over what look like secondary narratives. One of these secondary narratives marginalises Karlos' offers to subjectify a different type of interaction.

In this event, we can observe how the lack of common ground erodes the possibilities of trusting relationships within the executive group and, at the same time, constructs Karlos as a sort of Kafkian pariah as analysed by Arendt (1978:84), the protagonist K. of *The Castle* (Kafka, 1974), who seems to be non-existent in the domain of interaction where almost all of his offers become ignored in the interaction of the executive team. Interaction becomes "agency-less" and it seems that the group is living in the dark, where there is no common ground to allow them to subjectify what their intentions are. I relate this type of practice to *parrhēsia*, as described by Foucault (Foucault M. , 2010; 2001), and the construction of trusting relationships.

The G7 meeting took place on April 2011. They met at around seven o'clock in the evening, in a convention centre on the outskirts of one of the valley's towns,

²⁴ "PMO" is the name given to a governance committee (Project Management Office). It is a name given by McKinsey & Co. to a standard governance design, integrating managers of different divisions.

on the eve of a seminar intended to assess and boost the process of the organisational strategy development. The seminar would start the following morning, involving around a hundred staff in various governance committees. The G7 were invited to the meeting by Karlos, who wanted to listen to the outside consultants explain how they would facilitate the following day's seminar, how it would be conducted and which the executives would contribute to it. The consultants presented the proposed design, which was elaborated with the Strategy and Finance manager and part of his team. There were few comments and, after about an hour, the consultants left the room and the G7 stayed to dine together.

We sat for dinner quite late - it was around eight thirty - and during it there was little conversation around subjects related to the company. My sense was that there was a tense calm - many of the executives seemed tired after a long trip and the end of a working day.

When we finished dining, Karlos started a conversation:

“We have an unsolved issue...about the PMO.”

The topic of the issue was the assignment of the leader and what “orientation” the G7 would give to the committee, whose mission in the corporate governance was to conduct the change process associated with the strategy implementation.

Karlos expressed his concern about the type of “direction and functionality” that the committee would take in the future. He established his preference for whom

he thought should lead the committee: Felix. He gave the reasons behind his choice strongly:

“Felix understands that things have to be done in a different way. That everything has to be thought anew. Running risks is important. We have to do things that nobody else is doing... do very different things... he is a guy who can understand this. He has to motivate us and imagine different worlds. He is a guy who has all the capacity to play a controller role. He’s a guy who dreams, who imagines. He’s a guy who interprets me right - that is why I want him in that position”,

Before continuing with their conversation I will first explain my the Relational Communication Analysis of the interaction between the G7 members during the two hour conversation Through this, I aim to show how a pattern of negative symmetrical interaction becomes predominant in the conversation and how it is related with the subjects constructed during this interaction.

A relational communication analysis of the conversation shows 249 turns between the seven people involved. From these only 56 (22%) can be classified as complementary while 154 (62%) can be classified as negative symmetrical interaction. The rest are shown as transitional.

An excerpt of the initial dialogue can help to see the pattern that develops from the initial stages of their interaction.

DIALOGUE

RCC

CODE

DIALOGUE	RCC	CODE
1. <i>Karlos: We have an issue unsolved...about the PMO.</i>	↑	1.8
2. <i>Karlos: Where we talk about the natural leader...the one that only H. knows.</i>	↑	1.3
3. <i>(Laughs)</i>	→	5.10
4. <i>Karlos: And tomorrow we are going to meet for breakfast with them. I want to know, what our position will be in relation to the PMO.</i>	→	1.3
5. <i>Ana: I think we don't need to establish a leadership within the</i>	↑	1.2

DIALOGUE	RCC	CODE
<i>PMO.</i>		
6. <i>Ana: There is a coordinator...</i>	→	1.3
7. <i>Karlos: So...?</i>	↑	2.2
8. <i>Karlos: Is the PMO going to be managed without any leadership?</i>	↑	2.2
9. <i>Nicolas: I think we have here a quite strange thing. We will see that a supervisor (lower level in the management hierarchy) will manage managers.</i>	↑	1.7
10. <i>David: Nooo!!! Felix will be a technical assistant.</i>	↑	1.2

DIALOGUE	RCC	CODE
11. <i>Pedro: This is about technical criteria.</i>	→	1.3
12. <i>Nicolas: Let me tell you that it is strange thing.</i>	↑	1.2
13. <i>(Lots of laughs and comments)</i>	→	5.10
14. <i>Nicolas: I look from the standpoint of the people that are in the PMO, where the idea is that they add efforts and put focus on what is needed and not locked on absurd dynamics...</i>	→	1.3
15. <i>Pedro: However, do not ignore how much has been done.</i>	↑	1.2

During this exchange, there is no complementary interaction; they dissent from the beginning of the conversation, where each intervention adds a new action, of the same type as the previous (↑). In turn number 9²⁵, *Nicolas says: I think we have here a quite strange thing. We will see that a supervisor (lower level in the hierarchy) will manage managers.* This is an assertion (1.)²⁶ that answers (.4), the previous question (2) posed by Karlos: *Is the PMO going to be managed without any leadership?* Showing non-support (2) and challenging the previous answer from Ana: *I think we don't need to establish a leadership within the PMO.* In just three turns, actions of the people involved show disagreement, not following one thread of themes, but introducing at least two more: a) the need for leadership in the PMO and b) the organisational position in the organisational ladder, which the leader of the PMO committee should have.

Further on I will make a chronicle of the content of the whole conversation and the type of interaction that goes through the whole meeting. The meeting finished with a compromised conclusion that disappointed everyone, after two hours. What becomes very important is that, at the same time, a construction of an unintentional subjectivity is taking place, contrary to what all of them have declared, which is relevant to analyse.

²⁵ (23 in the appended document)

²⁶ The “content” level is inserted with a dot ‘.’ behind the number which represent the type of speech act; and the number is represented with a dot ‘.’ in front which shows the code given to the ‘relational’ level of the interaction. So (2.) means a ‘question’ as a speech act ‘content/report’; and (.2) means ‘non-support’ at the ‘relational’ level. Combined they look like this: (2.2). For examining the Relational Communication Coding Chart refer to page 87.

Thus, the relational communication pattern shows that interaction in this group is predominantly governed by negative symmetry, which seems to be the habituated practice of this group over a positive symmetrical or complementary interaction. It is built on little common ground. Negative symmetric interactions, as shown here *in extremis*, are of an opposite nature to care for what is most valued and characterised by disagreement, contestation and conflict, and it seems that it can only interrupt the breakdown of relations when there appears some level of complementary interaction of whatever sign (+ or -).

It is important to note that it is not the absence of symmetry that is expected. Actually it is recognised as a pattern, which means amplification and change, bringing unforeseeable possibilities, either in its negative or in its positive categorical forms, hence the possibility of the emergence of the new. However, when it gets to levels of predominance, as shown in this case, negative symmetry becomes surprisingly dysfunctional. There is little research using this type of methodology in organisational settings, so there are no references to what constitutes a normalised pattern for this type of group²⁷, but it seems that the ratio of negative symmetry to complementarity should be at least the opposite to what I observed in this case.

The conversation initiated by Karlos, whose proposal was rejected in its content, producing a pattern of negative symmetry, escalated to a greater level of rejection when his "offers" were rejected as well. Karlos insisted on the role

²⁷ Could be a further line of research, relate different patterns of relational communication with the creation of given subjectivities. Most of the research explored referers to interaction in couples or family settings (Rogers & Escudero, 2004).

and the person to lead the PMO, and received a response which not just contested his proposal, but his right to make the proposal altogether:

“Ana: What is the relation between PMO and our Strategy?”

We have to remember that Ana, the development manager, was hired after the strategy approval by the board, so she was not involved in the conversations about the governance design. However, what she is showing is that even on common ground such as the governance design, there is little in the way of shared assumptions.

This type of interaction, which at the “relational” level becomes negative symmetrical, is interesting as an issue about authorship and reading in strategy practice. In previous events I witnessed the G7 spending long hours discussing the role of each of the governance committees, in an atmosphere where it was not difficult to contest and challenge the definitions offered by Pedro, the Strategy and Finance manager, who conducted the meeting. There were a lot of observations and amendments to the proposed structure. Those meetings were about agreeing the corporate governance at quite abstract levels of definition. They had no direct implication for their local living present.

After a few months of running the strategy, there was much more at stake, because the executive team (G7) began to hold the PMO, one of the key elements of this governance structure, as responsible for the strategy success. As we will see later, it was not working as expected. So, Ana’s reaction was important (*“Ana: What is the relation between PMO and our*

Strategy?”), not because it showed ignorance but because it contested the “identity” offer of Karlos, who constituted himself as someone who could make a specific type of offer. In this case he was “offering” that Felix would be the advisor who would control the pace and coherence of the strategy implementation. This was an action reinforcing what for some of the G7 members was unbearable, because they conceived it as a “very strange thing” and were not eager to accept a “controlling” role over them of someone belonging to the middle management level.

Karlos’ proposal was rejected, giving way to a long string of interaction between the G7 members, where instead of what was shown in the previous event, where there was certainly a hierarchical relation between Karlos and the audience, in this event it was negative symmetrical interaction that became dominant. The G7 interaction during these passages showed the presence of deep disagreements, conflict and mistrust of each other. In this context, Karlos’ proposal (“He is a guy who has all the capacity to play a controller role... He is a guy who interprets me right, that is why I want him in that position”) gets rejected. What is rejected is not just the proposal, but at the same time Karlos is also rejected as someone who can submit proposals as any other one in the group. They deeply disagree (except Pedro, the S&F Manager and boss of Felix), with Karlos’ proposal and, at the same time, they challenge his relational “offer”. Moreover, instead of confirming or rejecting the previous identity offers from the CEO, some members of the G7 challenge the “democratic” identity offered by Karlos. They ask him to “dictate” to them what they should do. He tries to construct himself as someone that participates as an equal in the group, but they (in

the voice of Nicolas and David) reject this. Hierarchy must prevail as shown in the following dialogue.

Table 10: Coding “Hierarchy must prevail”

173. Karlos: So, what results are we looking for (from the PMO committee)?	↑	2.2
174. Nicolas: You say. What you say is what everyone will do. What you say is done by the 50 people that are with you.	↑	1.5
175. Anna : How do you do it? (laughing)	→	6.3
176. David: I bet you that will happen. (Laughing)	↓	1.1
177. Karlos: We know we have the capacity to do that...	→	5.3
178. Nicolas: I think it is much more honest to say what we want.	↑	1.5
179. David: right	↓	1.1

- | | | |
|---|---|-----|
| <p>180. <i>Karlos: if the question is that we make it or not, we have lost 1,5 hours of discussion. Are we going to decide, or we are going to set the PMO free to define its governance?</i></p> | ↑ | 2.2 |
| <p>181. <i>Nicolas: I think that the talk you had with them was a talk of orientation. Let us tell them you have a time limit to organise yourself.</i></p> | ↑ | 1.5 |

The conversation about PMO leadership is then set as useless, because previously Karlos has “given orientation” to the members of the committee, setting a hierarchical context. The conversation then reaches a deadlock, with no resolution taken, even about what to say to the PMO committee, or whom to appoint as its leader.

What becomes noticeable from this passage is how equivocal Karlos’ position is. He seems to go from exerting his CEO hierarchical position of power to a more “horizontal” one, inviting shared decisions and points of views. On one level, he is always in control of the relation, since it is he who decides when and how he moves between these positions. This sets a paradoxical dilemma to his fellow executives, where they are always set to respond from a hierarchical “one-down” positioning. If they accept sharing decisions and points of view they

are obeying his hierarchical mandate. What becomes interesting here is that both Karlos and his fellow executives are locked in this type of interaction. However, what we see is that this “offer” is rejected, opening the possibility that within a negative symmetrical interaction a positive complementary interaction could emerge. Karlos insists in sharing the decision with the group opening up this possibility.

Interestingly, this can be seen as a sign of weakness of the CEO’s leadership who, in the discursive practice and expectations, is expected to make these decisions as a sign of his power to make things happen. Contrastingly, he sets a difference, a dislocation of the shared practice. He refrains from making a decision and insists on his proposal with more arguments:

“A very important part of the PMO's job is to manage the speed of the change process. And this is related to the connection with how the company strategy is being implemented. Today, operational problems hurt us, because these are the pains we had during the last period. Tomorrow there will be the relationship model, after tomorrow there will be some ethical problem, which is going to impact into our values. In this sense, the person who has a privileged vision, in sync with how the process is advancing, is Felix.”

The response to his arguments and his identity “offer”, where he states that the basis for this decision should be shared, are rejected. They have been arguing about the subject for one and a half hours and Nicolas, the Talent and Culture executive responds:

“If we want to make it short, let's make it short.” In a subtle but quite aggressive way telling the CEO that the shorter way to decide is not arguing with his executive team, but making the decision himself.

The answer from Karlos is swift:

“At least here (referring to the executive team) hierarchy does not work. What do you want? That I give my opinion, and then I walk out?”

With this response, he offers a dislocation of the habitual practice of the executive team and with the rest of the company employees, where the power to make decisions is actively assumed in top management and usually practiced by most of the G7 members. Instead, he casts himself as part of the group, as someone who has the same status in the discussion, and dismissing the “right” offered by some members of the G7 members to make decisions.

Nicolas: “...make it short.”

Even when they have gone through an exhausting journey, it is late at night and there is pressure to decide before the morning meeting, Karlos refrains from confirming the identity offered to him by the other executives and makes a new offer:

Karlos: “We are the group who can appoint and give orientation to the PMO, not me”

Karlos’ offer, always hierarchical, is rejected. His refusal in the face of Nicolas’ outburst creates a new context. Now the executives confirm that they can make decisions and reject Karlos in a hierarchical positioning - exactly what he was

looking for through his “offer”. Now they can discuss the issues based on mutual accountability and out of the dilemma of responding obediently to Karlos’ proposal.

It is a practice of trusting in the sincerity, competence and responsibility of the team to make such decisions instead of shifting the pressure and giving the “boss” the right to decide. The practice is a form of guidance that invites them to subjectify this expectation.

The relationship that Karlos establishes with his fellow executives and with himself is revealed in this situation. He has declared a number of times that the “how” they do what they do has primacy over “what” they do, and what they are doing strategically is not “to them,” (specifically referring to the valley residents) but “with them”, as a central element of the strategy they have formulated.

As I have suggested, this becomes part of Karlos’ project of the self (Event 2), which is not necessarily the practice of the self of the rest of this group. Thus, even when they have declared that they pursue a common interest, this has to be read carefully because of what we have seen in relation to hierarchical practices in MMC.

The G7 and Karlos have declared that they are constructing trusting relationships, and this means that trusting is not to be defined as giving others the power, but inviting them to care for what is valued. This brief dialogue reveals how Karlos makes an offer that embodies reflexively the practice of building trusting relationships. Building trusting relationships, which means in some way or another a shared interest, shows that even within the strategy

“authoring” team, building a leadership offer becomes as complex as this, since both subjectivities are one and the same. It is in this subjectification process that strategy unfolds. Karlos represents, in one intervention, the type of subject that he is expecting for his fellow executives, the whole strategy intention and the complexity of what is to be practiced.

The executives, probably with no articulated thought about it, have untied the knot in which everything coming from Karlos is read, in this context, within the habituated practice of hierarchical relationships and is subsequently followed. Symmetrical interactions, either of negative or positive signs, are moving in these contexts or producing new interactions. This cannot continue forever since they do not construct any intended subjectivity but, as I have shown in this short excerpt, it becomes fundamental for unlocking habituated practices.

Unfortunately, what I saw at the end of this event, is that instead of establishing a positive reciprocal interaction, where the “one upness” and “one downness” could have been alternated, Karlos finishes by surrendering to the rigid “one upness” of Nicolas and compromising the quality of the decision taken.

In the name of efficiency, under conditions that will be completely acceptable by everyone present in the situation, the CEO acts in this very paradoxical way: on one hand he did not facilitate the decision locked in the executive committee and, on the other hand, he favours the aesthetics and ethical aspects of the relationship to the team. The making of a decision is not separated from the action doing the decision that, as discussed by Chia and Holt (2011:107), is associated with Aristotle’s notion of Phronesis, which “...characterises a person

who knows how to live well. It is acquired and deployed not in the making of any product separated from oneself but rather in one's actions with one's fellows."

However, it is the responsive processes in interaction that render an action as meaningful. The confirmation, rejection or unconfirmation of the "offer" is what can constitute meaning. The responses of rejection, which also constitute an offer in the endless iteration of interaction, constitute the subject. Karlos insists in his "offer" of a shared practice of discussing decisions in the G7 group, which is not "confirmed", so that there are no expectations converted in preferences and it is the sense of near failure in the relationship that takes primacy in the interaction between the G7 members.

The dialogue exposed here is followed by a long silence by the G7 members. This is then followed by the acceptance that they should discuss the PMO's leadership. Thus new variances are introduced into the criteria for making a decision. This seems an acceptance of the identity offer.

"It is our role to make a responsible decision on the appointment and orientation of the PMO committee work"

Someone asserts.

David says: "what is clear is that there is not a clear leadership (in the PMO)".

Then, Ana adds,

"What I do not share is that the natural leader is there"

By this, she is referring to Felix, the person proposed by Karlos. Afterwards, Nicolas, the T&C executive, tries to frame the discussion in a different perspective than just the “right leader”, introducing a different type of argument:

“Here we are in a discussion about caring for the process” (referring to the change process).

Karlos intervenes again, this time rejecting Nicolas and his argument and reaffirming his proposal:

“Who we assigned with the job responsibility for the strategy pace was Felix.”

Again this causes a rejection from at least two of the executives:

Nicolas: “Now the mess is greater”

Ana: “No one will hold Felix accountable ...”

So, instead of reaching an easy decision, the level of disagreement in the group grows, following every interaction.

A team with this dynamic, by any performance standard, can be qualified as a very inefficient executive team and its leadership detached from the consequences. No decision is achieved over a long period of time. However, their record of achievements suggests something different. This is the same executive team that has been made accountable for one of the most productive copper mines in the world, with levels of innovation and mining standards considered as “world class”. So what is happening?

As said before, a relational communication analysis of the event shows that almost two thirds of the interactions can be classified as negative “symmetrical” (Bateson, 1972, 2000), and only a fifth (22%) of them are “complementary”, most of them positive (+). This configures a pattern of interaction that shows this group in a practice with little common ground in values and norms, leading to an organised pattern of interaction characterised by disagreement, contestation and conflict. This becomes an impossible scenario for the emergence of trusting relationships. Even when there are a number of notable “offers” from Karlos to lead in this process, these are confirmed in the subsequent interaction, so that the sustainability strategy remains an artefact with little reference to the narrative of actions of the people involved.

As has been shown in the detailed analysis of their interaction, we can see that unlocking the habituated practices has not been easy for the group. What is important here is that they have tried, even when this has led to frustrations and negative symmetrical escalations.

In the habituated practice of negative symmetrical interaction that characterises the executive team’s discussion of the topic, “offers” to subjectify a different type of relationship, characterised by egalitarianism, shared decision making and care for what is most valued, are ignored. In this way, this passage confirms the habituated practices of contestation, difference and disagreement within the executive team.

This event shows how the primacy of the unintended, non-deliberate practices of a group takes over the deliberate, intentional practice declared

as necessary for the company sustainability. Even when there are actions that constitute “offers” of a different type of relationship, these are not confirmed in the domain of the negative symmetrical interaction that characterises the context of actions in this group. As long as they keep negative symmetrical interaction, nothing changes.

At the same time it is important to notice that Karlos’ “offers” to subjectify a different interaction within the group leaves his personal project of the self with no leverage in the group practice. His charismatic qualities, even when openly shown during the event, are ignored and the result of interaction is the ratification of a subjectivity that seems to pervade this group interaction. A personal project of the self, which has only just been revealed and becomes intelligible through his own narrative (Event 2), objectified in sophisticated rhetorical resources (Event 3), is simply ignored within his closest group. Paradoxically, it is this open rejection that opens the possibility of getting it real to the group interaction, as shown during this event.

This situation resembles the “dark times” that Arendt elaborates through her work about totalitarianism, in which she explains the product of isolation of the selves to others. Tamboukou (2012, p. 859) explains that, for Arendt, “stories are the only traces of how humans appear to each other and become enmeshed in the web of human relationships”. Arendt refers to the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position but with an “*interesse*”, always in-the world-with-others. For her, dark times arise when this world that lies between people disappears, when there is no common

ground, (which does not refer to having a common vision, but a shared sense of what becomes valuable). I suggest that the experience of Karlos in this account, and the presence of negative symmetrical interaction, shows that they are confronting worldviews about MMC that make the construction of trust persistently difficult. This seems to be happening because of the confluence of the company's habituated practices and Karlos' practice of the self, something that neither Karlos nor the executives could have planned.

The executive team members refer to the strategy implementation as something from which they can distance their own present living practice of interaction which, as we have seen in this event, they regulate not by becoming accountable to each other but by the hierarchical ideal. Karlos offers a different story that, if confirmed, would have meant accepting that hierarchy has no primacy over accountability and personal relationships of trust. These two narratives simply do not intersect and primacy is given to the company habituated and non-reflective practices of hierarchical relationships. Negative symmetrical interaction, as an amplification of differences that make differences a difference, was not enough to construct a contract of positive reciprocal interactions able to open the possibility of a relation of solicitous care.

EVENT 5: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING 7TH / 8TH MARCH 2011

This event presents the executive team assessing the strategy implementation formulated and approved a year earlier.

What I will show in the next section is how elusive leadership becomes when, in the flow interaction, the subject is removed from the narrative, constructing itself as external to its narrative. I will show that everything discussed is about “others” as subjects and very little attention is given to the local, present, living aspects of interaction and the reflexive position in it. I will show empirically how the habituated practices and unintended dispositions deeply engrained in organising are easily reproduced when the subject is removed from his or her narrative.

SCHEDULED TIMING AND TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS IN THE EXECUTIVE TEAM

Karlos looks uneasy. I met him in his office about half an hour before the meeting. He asks me to wait sitting in his office while he answers emails (one of the actions that cannot be observed through shadowing). He then tells me he just arrived from a meeting with the Executive President (Pablo) of AAC plc. He makes a face gesture I could not interpret precisely, but which for sure showed in him signs of preoccupation and uneasiness. I refrain from asking what it means because I wanted to become as invisible as possible and interviewing him about this could define the shadowing setting as a process of inquiry –

something I wanted to avoid. I know that the relationship between them (Karlos and Pablo) is not the best, something that should concern them, since Pablo is a member of the board and a key stakeholder of MMC.

We enter the meeting room next to his office just after midday. Already seated in the room is one of the G7 members (Pedro) and the Strategy Manager (I will name him James). Two of the G7 arrived a minute later, while Juan, the Operations Executive, is on a screen on the video conferencing system, watching the half empty meeting room, from a meeting room on the operating site, 250 miles away.

Karlos sits at one end of the table, with a view of the VC screen. Pedro sits on his right hand side. The rest of the assembly are seated around both sides of the table. I sit in a corner of the room, where I have access to a table for taking my notes, behind Karlos, with just a little angle to watch the side of his face and the faces of the people sitting on both sides of the table. I prefer to become as invisible as possible, so even when invited by one of them to sit at the table I refuse. They are beginning to get used to me as “the shadow”.

The meeting’s agenda includes conversation about what they call the “new agenda” - a specific set of actions of what the roadmap of the strategy implementation might be during 2011, including discussions about:

- The “relational model” - a set of prescriptions around how to build trusting relationship with the different stakeholder groups

- The “Integral Risk Management Plan”, which prescribes the activities for managing the risks in the diverse areas of the company (people, facilities, communities, etc.).
- The “Communication Plan”, which sets actions for internal and external communications around strategy issues.

Pedro and Santiago (the Strategy manager, reporting to the Strategy and Finance Executive, Pedro) will present the results of conversations with executives and advisors around these subjects during the previous weeks.

It is the first meeting of the Executive Committee (G7) after the summer vacations. The meeting was agreed some time ago. Karlos asks, in a tone that seems more joking than serious, if the time scheduled is too early:

Karlos: “Hey, is 12:30 is too early for this meeting?”

The meeting is late by at least 12 minutes, and still two of the G7 members are missing. There is a sense of disorder and I can observe the uneasiness of Karlos. Juan is in videoconference from the mine operations site, and has begun talking for a few minutes, reporting on how things are going after the major programmed maintenance work.

Even when it can be considered a disciplinary “call of attention”, Karlos’ question seems to represent something else: there is some irony in his voice that makes interpretation ambiguous and difficult. There seems to be two kinds of offers here. The first is to bring attention into the actual practice and “inviting” the attendees of the meeting to reflect on their practice. The ironic tone of his

comment suggests at least two types of meaning to his comment. One, and problematic on how to answer, says that he is reprimanding them but attenuating it by showing it as a joke. On other hand he is pointing to people's actions of being late and inviting a reflection about it. The reaction comes from everyone in the room expressed in one or other way, but it is Pedro (the Strategy and Finance manager), who articulates a first answer,

Pedro: "It is not about the timing of the meeting, it's an issue of discipline. I think it's a discipline issue"

Juan adds that they should be fewer in this group, and that the key guys are present. This comment is ignored, as is Pedro's. Karlos also asks about the presence of David, one of the missing executives.

Juan: "He is abroad, assessing a new metallurgical technology for processing molybdenum".

Ana, the Development executive, enters the room almost 25 minute later, apologising because she could not interrupt a performance appraisal meeting with one of her employees. She is excused, but a number of jokes are aimed at her expense.

After half an hour there are seven people in the meeting, excluding me. The subject of the late initiation of meetings is not ignored on this occasion, even when it seems to be endemic to this group. No meeting has begun at the schedule time for a while, according to Karlos.

Karlos: "Till now we have not begun a single meeting on time".

The group, in regard to the issue of punctuality, is showing an anomaly. I do not hear that anyone excused himself prior to the meeting. Karlos' call into the issue can have pragmatic implications but it is, at the same time, a call to reflect on their trusting relationships.

They go into a detailed analysis of the reasons why they are late to most meetings. It is matter of "discipline", says one of them, denouncing the lack of a self-disciplined practice of honouring this type of commitment. What he is pointing to is the practice of self-discipline, to the relation they establish with themselves and how actions in this regard constitute themselves. At the same time this calls attention to the lack of disciplinary technologies related to this issue (Foucault, 1977), the absence of subjective conditions by which this group of people feels compelled to give priority to and self-manage their schedules in order to be able to assist to the meeting in time.

The members of the executive committee are, at the same time, functional managers with responsibility for specific areas of the company (Operations; Finance; Human Resources, etc.). They invoke their seniority as functional managers to arrive late or be absent (as the result of a performance appraisal of a subordinate or assessing a new technology).

After an analysis on how to prevent this situation from happening in the future, they conclude by giving agency to the appointment system (based on MS Outlook) as provoking the problems. Anyone in the company can appoint a meeting to someone else, if there is an open slot in the schedule of the appointees. Then he/she is confirmed, by default, in the meeting. They can reject the appointment and suggest different dates, but this is something rarely

done. So, the issue gets settled after a while as a “systems” fault. They agree that no meeting will be appointed adjacent to another one, giving a fifteen-minute buffer between appointments. They have spent no less than twenty minutes of the meeting trying to settle the point.

The agreement does not include their own mastery of time schedules and they will probably need a new sophisticated appointment system to replace their agency (with different alarms advising the end of the 15 minutes buffer) in the subject. In the text, their actions are removed from the scheduling system. Karlos’ call for reflection is accepted, but what he offers is including them with agency in the subject matter is evaded. They miss the opportunity for reflecting about their owned practices. Nothing can confirm them as agents responsible for managing their schedules. Sincerity, when committed to an appointed time and responsibility for what they have committed, cannot be trusted.

This type of relation of themselves with themselves constructs them as a type of “phantom” instead of human subjects accountable for their own actions.

It seems that a distinction between “episodes” and “contracts” becomes relevant here for judging how important this episode is in building trusting relationships within this group. Episodic events seem not to have great impact in the importance given to habituated practices unless they constitute a “contract”, a practice that becomes stable and routinely enacted.

How much impact this episode has in the building of trusting relationships between the executive team is something I cannot tell, but it shows a way of dealing with difficult issues that have pragmatic consequences. There are

probably specific “episodes” that, by their own merit, have the effect of building subjectivities, which constitute an implicit contract. Actions qualified as betrayal and treason constitute episodes that can establish by themselves a “contract” of mistrust. That is probably why actions of heroism, generosity, benevolence and standing for what is said can constitute “contracts” of trust.

It seems that distinguishing an “episode” from a “contract” depends on the pragmatic effects of the event. In this case, the conversation removes the subject as an accountable agent. Since there cannot be a contract without their presence, so it seems that the whole conversation about timetables will have no impact on trusting each other in relation to appointed meetings.

Second criterions for distinguishing episodes from contracts are judgments of how deliberative, rather than involuntary, the actions have been. Reluctance to involve themselves in the narratives around the issue of late initiation of meetings seems to belong to the type of episodes where there is little attribution of self-responsibility, sincerity or competence as domains in which they have agency and can show care. It is the scheduling system that must be reformed; so being late will have little effect in their relations.

Actions of leadership could have been relevant here to interpret the situation not just as episodic, resulting themselves as helpless, but instead accountability of the effects of their actions. Nothing they said made any difference, and probably explains why the late initiation of meetings had become endemic. Karlos’ questions, have made no difference.

Writing contracts is a privilege of whoever has power, so that if we give credit to these criteria, there is power to constitute subjects and subjectivities in the presence of a reflexive relation between the self and actions. In this case, we will see, through the editing process of this same group, that they try to constitute some kind of power to write a contract to others, but without inscribing themselves within it.

STRATEGY STATUS - A YEAR AFTER ITS APPROVAL

Pedro is managing the PowerPoint presentation using his laptop and sitting on Karlos' right hand side. He states that there it is no need to defend the "new paradigm" formulated by the Sustainability Strategy. It "should" be installed by now in the company "discourse".

"Although this installation effort should have finished by now, it does not mean that we do not need to motivate people about it - we shouldn't need to go on defending the new paradigm. We should now proceed with logic of consolidation of the new strategy. What we want now is that the G7 discusses the year 2011 with great attention".

Then he states that the strategic performance during the last year has produced doubts, nervousness and "bumps" in the road, saying that there was a fatality, the operating performance has been below expectations, there are effort duplications, with the consequent tension and damage of relationships, radicalisation of the relation with some of the valley's communities and tensions with the chairman of the board. So the concern is why they have not been able to achieve a smooth installation of the new strategy.

"Pedro: In this environment we are questioning...; even in our informal conversations, why we haven't achieved the strategy moves at a steadier pace".

He then shows his concern that the strategy seems to be a declaration without pragmatic implications in the practice of excellence, safety and trusting relations. He acknowledges this situation as a matter of “execution”.

Pedro: “it is our execution culture (to which) we have to pay close attention”.

He presents a diagram that shows actions as “correct” and “incorrect” on one hand, and actions that are *performed* “correctly” or “incorrectly”, on the other. He then poses the hypothesis that there are a lot of “correct” actions from the strategic standpoints that have been poorly performed, thereby implying that the main issue to deal with is performance, not the “correctness” of the strategy. At the same time, he shows that there are still a lot of actions which are incorrect from the strategy standpoint, but which are correctly performed, showing strengths in areas, which are there just by “inertia”.

Pedro appeals to the room that they must carry out the “correct” tasks better, from a strategic standpoint at the operational level. He recognises that a considerable level of disorder is present in basic processes such as planning, control and safety. To overcome these weaknesses on the strategy implementation, he proposes three main focuses of action: measurement, assurance that the strategy governs the company’s processes and building on the “historic strengths” of the company.

This passage is not to be analysed in discursive terms. However, I cannot ignore the conceptualisation underpinning their views of strategy “implementation” and of the “strategists”. Strategy is to be implemented, and its

practice generated, from an agentic deliberative action perspective - measuring, normalising strategy as the main governing process and reinforcing what have previously been historic strengths

Pedro portrays himself as someone facing a world of intelligibility, where the ordering of resources in sequences of actions can be performed as the G7 wishes and will produce the desired outcomes. Failures, “doubts, nervousness and bumps in the road” are to be faced with more “ordering”, resources to “do best” in “what is right”. He implies that “doing their best” might be the result of a prescription, a disciplined practice responding to the desires of a “master” manager who, by his knowledge, can dictate preferences and desires to do right and better. He gives little attention to things done by “inertia” - the habituated practices that, as someone in the room (Juan) asserts later, explains that after a year, the company is almost the same.

As a strategist, Pedro seems deeply immersed in the world of strategy as representation, making distinctions between “map and territory”. As Bateson (1991) highlights, there is never a territory we can get in touch with, - no matter how detailed the description of the territory, it remains a description. Framed on the codified comprehension of strategy “implementation”, Pedro loses sight of the experience of what is emerging from the hybrid materials in the living present of organising.

His is a perspective of organising which causes him to become detached from his own experience of the nuances and messiness of coping with the everyday life that constitutes him, and the multiplicity of worlds that are being constructed simultaneously as he speaks.

Moreover, what he becomes detached from is from things themselves - a fatality “affects us” but is made important just as a number, without any value attached to it. It is not an experience - it belongs to the same domain of other numbers on the strategy control system. In his description, the strategy becomes represented at a level of abstraction where he cannot be located as a reflexive agent. Strategy becomes a “map-making process” (Chia and Holt, 2009) with little reference to the territory. Moreover, even the strategist as a practitioner becomes removed from the subjectifying process of strategy development.

Pedro connects the strategy with its weaknesses, but he offers a “solution” that offers more of the same of what they have already tried in the past. He dichotomises what is right and wrong, then offers the solution: improve execution but with little reference to the executive team members as part of it.

His identity as a strategist practitioner, detached even from his own narrative, can be confirmed, rejected or ignored by the response of his fellow executives. As said, actions have little relevance and significance in themselves, unless inscribed in narratives. Pedro receives two kinds of reactions from his presentation. The first is about form and the second about the content. Both comments show the group attending deep and critically into the subject. The first is from Karlos, who comments about the presentation and qualifies it as constructed from an external standpoint and prescriptive.

“People are waiting for someone to tell them which is the shovel they need to pick up and where they should dig. People are acting as non-

accountable because there always will be *someone else* who will make things happen”.

Karlos states that everyone should be included in building ownership of the process. His action is rejecting not the content of what Pedro has said, but the prescriptive tone and lack of agency in it. His reaction invites the subject to constitute himself in the text, and this subject is everyone, including himself. He is asking for attention to the sense of accountability, paying attention to the subjectifying process.

However, the response of people in the group is not on the same wavelength as Karlos. What is confirmed by the subsequent actions of the executive committee members is Pedro’s representational approach to strategy. Pedro’s “identity offer” becomes assimilated into the unreflective practice of strategizing, which seems to have characterised their actions since it was codified.

The second reaction (from Nicolas, the Talent and Culture Manager) is bitter and says that there is no possibility to disagree with what has been said. He says that there is a lack of *specificity*, calling for more a detailed prescription about what has been proposed. Moreover, he complains that the meeting was convened to discuss what the topics would be that would bring success to the company, in which they have to focus their action, and it seems that the meeting is circling around themes that have been discussed and agreed before by this same group.

“This is revisiting old arguments, like in point 3 (in the presentation), conversations that we have already held - in theory, they should be

finished. Obviously all the company's processes are a function of the strategy - we have talked so many times that we have to build on our strengths and of those we have many. I feel we are going backwards with this execution subject in a conversation I thought was over, and this shows it is not".

The third reaction is in agreement with the previous opinions and asks Pedro to outline the specifics of the plan, and detail what would make it succeed.

Ana: "It is in practices that we must focus. I understand that implementation is the focus, a specific plan, in the 'how'. This is the way I see it. I don't see it any more complicated".

Ana's interpretation is that the G7 should be more specific in terms of the prescription and that this will improve execution. This is a suggestion that ignores Karlos' comment and adds to the same prescriptive approach that strategy should be a detailed navigational chart.

This is reaffirmed by a fourth intervention from the Operations Manager,

Juan: "Normally we start three steps above, thinking that the strategy makes that big change. I think that we have to boot from the base, as Ana says - to search for best practices."

After all these interventions, Karlos comments that perhaps the strategy discourse is settled in the G7, but less so throughout the rest of the company management. This suggests to me that he has withdrawn from his initial reflective mode, which, as I have shown in the previous event, seems to constitute him as a pariah. His offers rarely get confirmed, so that he makes

himself redundant in the situation. In this way, Karlos rejects Pedro's initial "offer" and then confirms it, instead of insisting and escalating the negative symmetrical interaction and making the reflexive capacity to relate to their actual practice in the living present disappear. Karlos frames what they are talking about to be for "the rest of the management" – in other words, it confirms that the "execution" problems are external, not reflexive to their own practices, and constituting, a way of subjecting the G7 as strategists in a way that we will see reinforced throughout the whole research period²⁸.

The conversation finished when Karlos minimises its importance saying,

Karlos: "Aren't we giving too much emphasis to these slides? These slides had the purpose of orienting our view to the next subject."

Nothing in this conversation is translated or connected. This shows up in the relational communication analysis of their exchange (Bateson, 2000; Rogers & Escudero, 2004) that shows that in this period there are just a few confirmations.

I analysed 420 turns, 65% of them of negative symmetrical nature, and 30% complementary, most of them positive (+), confirming the same pattern observed in the G7 during the previous event, in which the PMO committee governance was debated.

²⁸ In further events I will analyse events where G7 members interact with groups of middle managers and show how this assertion is actually performed.

Strategy has become an artefact without reflexivity with the practice of the G7, and now they recognise that this artefact has not done its work *on its own*. Denial and deception seems to be replacing the possibility of reflexivity around the subject of the possible failure of the strategy they have formulated.

This passage, like the previous passage, shows the G7 in a mood of denial and deception. They have given agency to the meeting scheduling system and been unable to move into a reflexive relation with the strategy implementation. What becomes important is that they, as subjects, are distancing from it, constructing an unintentional type of subject. They are expecting something to happen, but they are trying to give up their participatory relationship with it, and instead building one that is alien to the process.

Yet, this distancing from the subject becomes a way of engagement. On one hand they make declarations about the topic and, one the other, remove themselves from being involved in the situation. This can be understood as a cynical way of engagement that allows them to relate with the sustainability strategy as if they were doing it, but in practice they are not. This engagement with the world makes action difficult to interpret and easily constructs a sense of uncertainty around which type of subjects they have become to themselves and each other.

Why do they do it this way? A possible approach to understand this is the concept of emotion as an ontic state elaborated by Heidegger (1972). Solomon's (2008) concept of emotion takes an ethical perspective, understanding emotions as "engagements with the world", constituted by "evaluative judgements", not in the cognitive propositional perspective but as

general dispositions akin to moral and aesthetic evaluations that should be appreciated in the type of wisdom they produce.

One reason for adopting a cynical engagement with the world is that the G7 are not able to cope openly and reflectively with the situation. They distance themselves and keep themselves fixed and untouched by experience, apart from the anxiety of the world as it presents to them in their experience. Through the wisdom of this cynical emotion, they have unconsciously replaced the possibilities of an existence of dwelling in solicitous care for the other, to an overriding care for their anxieties.

Cynicism results in an “intelligent” and “surviving” strategy to cope with a world that has become incomprehensible and unpredictable. With no articulation of their judgement, which is kept tacit, they avoid the possibility of the type of emotion intended in the codified strategy. We will see later that this type of relation with themselves means not just a way of relating to the subject of the codified strategy intention, but with themselves and other stakeholders.

Strategy implementation then becomes a paradox. Constructed as a codified artefact, its implementation then results in a conscious and deliberate design that finds itself without a subject, attentive to the predominant ways of engagements, and the praxis that derives from its formulation. Strategising in this case becomes a space empty of agency. Agency seems to be taken over completely by the habituated practices of the copper mining operation and corporate asset management.

We have seen only the first hour of the meeting, which lasted for roughly two. What follows the meeting allows a glimpse of the interaction between the G7 members, with an insight into the way they subjectify a number of issues related to the strategy “implementation”. The definition of their centres of calculation, - how the budgeting process is defined, showing contrasting concepts of what is strategy and the reflexive relation of the top executive team on it - are some of the key aspects that become relevant in this section of the event. In this section I will show how “offers” to subjectify a different type of relationship in the group, and with the strategy, become ignored and habituated practices prevent them from introducing a different subjectivity in the process of strategy implementation. Along with this failure comes the failure of leadership to emerge in the complex domain of strategy practice.

Continuing with the meeting intended to review progress of the sustainability strategy approved a year earlier, Santiago (the Strategy Manager, a middle manager reporting to Pedro, who controls the computer from where the Powerpoint presentation is done) begins presenting what will be the specific strategic “agenda”, explaining that it should result from an iterative process, consulting executives and managers over the next few weeks, searching for an agreement on the major strategic priorities.

Santiago: “In two or three weeks, we should achieve an agenda that interprets strategic priorities”;

He then states that a process that is not mapped or identified in this “agenda” is probably not “strategic” and, as such, they should not be concerned about it. The agenda is then proposed as a ritual - a translation process by which

something becomes real and construed as a “strategic priority” if it is included within it.

What is interesting here is the aim of a specific agent to constitute itself in a centre of calculation for *the strategy* (Latour, 2005). This constitutes a “strategising subject offer” - a clear location of the work of strategising in the department where the “agenda” is kept and completed to be prescribed throughout the company. This is not the space to analyse what is included or excluded in this agenda, but it is interesting how this group constitutes the “editors” of the strategy – that, through a process of “incision” (Chia and Nayak, 2012), topics are included as true and relevant, while others are excluded.

Santiago’s statement is questioned and rejected by Karlos, who shows his concern about how this process is conducted and offers a different understanding of how centres of calculation should be constituted. It is a first explicit reference to a governmentality process (Foucault, 2005; Dean, 2010, Miller and Rose, 2008) that is associated to a company process.

One of the topics included in the strategic agenda is the budgeting process. Karlos strongly suggests that this should be constructed with participation from all the departments and not by someone who builds it and then looks for approval.

Karlos: “You say (paraphrasing Santiago) that we saw the Mining Plan in such committee; it was seen by that and this area; and this other group etc. It seems to me that someone builds a budget and then looks for approval from everywhere. I think that the formula should be different.

The budget has to be built with the genuine participation of every department.”

This concern is amplified by someone’s comment that there is no plan for how key management processes should be run, one of which is the budget construction. They agree that it can be part of the definition of the process itself, another codifying process. Through this intervention, Karlos’ “offer” of a different way of processing the budget and distributing the editing process to multiple centres of calculation is ignored. Moreover, a new topic in the “strategic agenda” is introduced, showing the presence of the habituated practice of “project management” as the predominant rationality (Miller & Rose, 2008), which takes over the reflexive practice proposed by Karlos.

Budgeting has been recognised as a powerful organising ritual and as a potent power game in the midst of the organising process (Welch, 2005). This contrasts with the usual managerial understanding of it as a deliberate, rational and evidence-based decision making with far-reaching consequences (Drury, 2008).

Karlos questions the hierarchical mode of construction and the invocation of “genuine participation”. This becomes relevant, firstly because he proposes an alternative way of understanding the subjective conditions of organising, distributing the centres of calculation across the company. This is a practice that, if authentic, could become quite a different subjective condition for the company governmentality. The second reason that becomes relevant is that he is proposing a different way of understanding strategizing - resembling the intimacy of dwelling proposed by Chia and Holt (2011) as a metaphor much

acquainted with the relation of practice and strategy. He is proposing a genuine participation, where participation signifies not just being part of the budgeting process (“it seems to me that someone builds a budget and then looks for approval from everywhere”), but a genuine subject, dwelling and building within it.

Even when they show agreement that there is a need to think differently about the process of what becomes “strategic”, Santiago’s body language seems to convey the message that adding further complexity into his life is accepted by him with little enthusiasm. He does not connect the aim of distributing centres of calculation with strategy implementation - he translates it into the concept that strategising is a job of arranging resources into a new order, including topics in the agenda, and then “ticking the boxes” (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008, p. 179), once the activities are executed, with no reference to the reflexive and complex nuances of developing practices.

Moreover Karlos brings to bear one of the essential elements of a phronetic relation with the “things” of the world and what strategy development might become as a practice. It is not to make a budget - it is about the relation with the thing itself that constitutes its value. He is proposing a specific way of “seeing into the other”, which is not about checking how the other’s need is or is not included, but “seeing deep” into the other’s aspirations, fears and dreams. He is referring to what he has talked of at the managers’ dinner and repeated at other times: “I see you in your interior”.

As Chia & Holt (2011:157) state: “phronesis is a capacity to attend to what is appropriate for things-in-themselves as much as things-in-use, and the

willingness to accept that things-in-themselves are always much more than what they appear to be; a concealment that draws upon us.” Karlos is inviting colleagues not just to “build” a strategy but also to be in the world, in the intimacy of dwelling and building. He shows concern about the territory in contrast with the map, which, even when inaccessible, is the matter of the strategy subjectivity they are trying to formulate.

Santiago continues presenting the themes in the agenda: communications, risk management and relations with AAC Plc. (the corporate holding company). In regard to the latter, Karlos introduces the need to have a deeper reflection about the “whys” of the partial loss of their capacity to execute with excellence, that have generated issues of mistrust with AAC plc.

“This is related with how we do things and why we lost part of our capacity to perform with excellence that has generated these mistrust issues with AAC Plc., which we have to reconstruct”.

Instead of stopping the conversations about the representation of issues in the meeting agenda and getting into a reflective mind set, Karlos’ request is translated by Santiago as another topic that should be included in the agenda, giving it a name and using quite elaborate language as “reflection” and “learning process”.

Santiago: “I don’t think this is on this agenda...we need to institutionalise reflection and learning processes...these processes must happen in all instances. We should formalise its visibility and milestones.”

Karlos tries to bring the group to a reflective mood, in the living present. He fails in his “offer” - his proposal gets translated as the rearrangement of resources in the “strategic agenda”. I can observe his uneasiness, and can imagine how he contains himself to shift to a language of hierarchy and prescriptions. However, he chooses a reflexive mode, where he invites the rest of the group to review their past behaviour.

In the end, the group fails to address Karlos’ request. Everyone agrees that they need “reflection” and “learning process”, but these practices are for others or for another point in time. They champion the description of what “must” be done, but fail to enact what they propose.

Santiago continues, saying that even when these “transversal issues” are not included in the strategic agenda, they should be extended to new areas, so that an institutionalisation of the reflection and learning process is constructed. Karlos goes on to reject what Santiago is proposing, arguing that

“...we should not add a process on top of another which is already wrong”.

Karlos calls on the group to initiate this reflection on what has happened that resulted in them losing their capabilities.

“What are we doing that we produce such dissatisfaction in our stakeholders. Why is it that we are always giving explanations?”

The answer he receives from the group displaces action, suggesting that the “reflection” process will be done within each “functional” group. Karlos paraphrases Santiago by saying that he understands that:

“...each plan will have an initial reflection, exposing the problems and the required solutions”.

It appears to me that he is making a compromise here as he did before. Every time that his proposal is rejected for a second time he puts himself in a one down position, avoiding escalations. At the same time, by doing so, he withdraws his relational offers, not allowing the group members to confirm them.

The G7 agree that this reflection will be part of the agenda and will be part of the planning process. The outcome of this debate is that the most powerful centre of calculation, the executive committee, is not able to begin its own reflection process, displacing it to the “functional areas” and removing them from the process as we have seen before. This is a decision that seems motivated by the lack of trust in their own capacity to do it, more than a genuine aim to create subjective conditions of governmentality.

The G7 shows here a fundamental disagreement on what they should incorporate into the agenda. On one side Santiago (and most of the G7 members) talks about adding one more “transversal issue” to the agenda - the introduction of another line of code in the strategy formulation - while Karlos talks of incorporating it into their everyday practice. These are distinct ways of understanding what strategy construction means. For Santiago, it is not about their actual practice of reflection and learning, it is a new line in the agenda: “a transversal issue” to include in a list of activities. For Karlos, it is about themselves and the actions that constitute them, on who they become and how they live in the present.

From the well-acquainted practice of defining *poietic* ends and *techne* knowledge from which they can detach themselves, and which has defined the habituated practice of copper mining in negative symmetrical relationships, the contrasting rationality of the phronetic praxis means a deep transformation that this group seem unable to articulate. This idea is well illustrated by Dunne (1993) and introduced into the strategy literature by Chia and Holt (2011:107), which holds the *relation* with the thing as valuable.

These different rationalities bring about the subjective conditions of governmentality (Dunne, 2010; Miller and Rose, 2008). Karlos' "offers" do not get confirmed: reflection, paying attention to the present living moment of their interaction and taking accountability for their own actions, as an intimacy of "dwelling with building", are discarded. This is not intentional, but as a result of the fact that these two discursive rationalities have led them to a relational position where there is no intelligibility between them.

The G7 group has lost the possibility that in their open domain of interaction they may find an illumination of their positions. They cannot see deep into each other. What takes primacy are the detached list of resources and items of an agenda, which classifies actions in "right" or "wrong" to be performed "better" by the disciplinary subjective conditions of management in which most of them trust, even when facing an evident failure.

In this interaction, what happens with Karlos' propositions is not that they are rejected, a response mode that means the recognition of the subject, opening the possibility of a different response. They get ignored or "disconfirmed" (Bateson, 2001). If they were asked, the group would probably be unable to

articulate the fact that they are ignoring a quite radical and different worldview of what is possible in the organising process. Even Karlos' possibility of making an articulated reference to what he is proposing is reduced. Even for him, observing his sometime errant actions, there seems to be some opacity on what is going on with his own self and others.

Observing Karlos' leadership behaviour, it can be argued at this point that by a traditional definition of leadership that dichotomises leader and followers (Parker - Follet, 2004; Kouzes and Posner, 2010; Bass and Avolio, 1994; Greenleaf, 2004; Badaracco, 2001), he is showing a lack of leadership within this group, since there is no followers' action that confirms new subjectivities emerging from this interaction.

He has the authority to stop the conversation and pose direct questions to force the group into a reflection process. In this context, facing failure - which means risks, there might be merits in intervening and forcing the group to focus on a reflective process. However, he refrains from doing this, and with this course of action he is demonstrating what he cares for. He is showing respect for the decision process of the group, constructing his leadership as caring for the relation. His actions are not dichotomised from declarations. He does not separate what they are building from dwelling. His acts of leadership are not about the making of strategy as codified artefact, but about new possible practices in this group. A more "directive" leadership style might have been praised, but I suggest with disastrous consequences in his capacity to constitute himself as able to make a difference that makes a difference in the

midst of the complex interaction of this group. He enacts, through his actions, his project of the self, offering it to his fellow executives.

Because of the presence of risks, for his integrity and authority in leading the group, being true to his project of the self means a parrhesistic practice of truth telling, that should be especially noted in this situation. The effect of it, instead of convening a governmentality practice, positions him as a pariah and a potential form of leadership as a result of its incomprehensibility.

Santiago is allowed to continue with his presentation. As we have noted, a task-driven process of presenting the so-called “strategic agenda” overcomes the capacity of the group to deal with the issues themselves (the concern about how strategy is performing). The meeting’s agenda is made more important than tackling the issues that the agenda is dealing with. The map overcomes the territory - the meeting becomes an emergent space of interaction which reproduces, non-deliberately, the key dispositions which have been deeply engrained in the patterns of interaction – the same interaction which the group are declaring needs to be changed urgently.

PRODUCTION FORECAST DISCUSSION: PARRHĒSIA IN THE
EXECUTIVE TEAM.

In this section the group discusses the reviewed budget they will present to the board during the forthcoming meeting. It is a relevant discussion since it is one of the key building blocks of how this group builds trust with the board members and shows the type of subject that prevails in their interaction.

The group has built around 12 different scenarios from which to choose the best to present to the board. Some scenarios match what was budgeted, presented and approved by the Board in September 2010 (this meeting is taking place in March 2011). Other scenarios forecast results below the target by around 12 KTY (Kilo Tons per Year) of fine copper, three per cent below budget.

The decision on what plan they should present is discussed. A conversation about the risks included in the forecast is the main basis for making a decision. The Operations Manager (Juan) states that the plan is “accurate” and “well-constructed” from an “operations planning” perspective. They know that what they are discussing is not about the forecast itself, but about repairing trust with the board. They have not achieved their targets of last year. At this time of year (March 2011, three months advanced in the present year) they have a clear idea of what the year-end results will be. They have carried out the main maintenance, which meant stopping the plant for almost a week and they know how the new plant²⁹ will work - whose capacity has been expanded greatly during the last three years and which has been the explanation they have given for not fulfilling the targets in previous years. No one questions that the output forecast to the board has to be accomplished this year – as Karlos, Ana and Nicolas all paraphrase: “at whatever cost”.

Although there is clear agreement that whatever the production forecast presented to the board must be achieved, the plan presented by Juan is seriously criticised:

²⁹ The plant capacity expansion meant building the largest copper concentrate processing plant in the world.

Nicolas: “When we reviewed the plan we found it too precarious...there was no risk analysis...in the stand of accomplishing and acting proactively in the face of the different distinctions, we (in the Excellence Committee) had the feeling it needed a redraft.”

This criticism is contested by the Operations Manager (Juan), who states that they have

“A good plan, from a mining standpoint”.

This suggests that there are different criteria to define what a “good” plan is. For Juan, a good plan is one that includes actions to face every “operational” risk, i.e. the possibility of not meeting the production target. Then Nicolas adds that there are risks that are not considered which are “not operational”, such as the lack of specialist workforce or the possibility of an energy blackout. For Juan, this is part of the “periphery” of the plan, because, for him, services are not part of the operational planning system, showing how deeply they live their operational roles.

In the middle of the conversation Pedro makes a call to do an “evolutionary” risk analysis of the plan.

“We have to learn to ‘spoon’³⁰ the risk issue, in an evolutionary way; which means going beyond the ‘solid planning processes with very ‘high

³⁰ A metaphor of everyone putting his spoon into the plate, referring to how to participate in discussions and decision making about subjects that require ‘transversal’ technical knowledge.

standards' and incorporate a new type of risk analysis, such as the electric power provision, specialist workforce, etc.”.

After a while, another voice is heard. It is Pedro, in relation to the issues that should be included in the “risk analysis”. Pedro, states that “how” the strategy is performed is as important as the result itself. They can present a plan with very low risk that gives attention to the needs of the board, which builds reassurances that what has been promised will be accomplished. However, this can mean that they are not giving the best of themselves. There are cost issues that are not included in the analysis, such as:

“...the transformation process that we are going through, to name just one.”.

This, including the “transformation costs”, is made important not only for them but also as a signal to the company’s personnel. After exposing this challenge, Karlos challenges Juan on how much more minerals the mine and plant can produce. He obtains a response that reassures him that they can get at least a three per cent additional fine copper from the production process, but that the restrictions are not due to production capacity but to the ceiling of 175KTD (Kilo Tons per Day) agreed with the government authorities for environmental reasons. Karlos agrees then that they should proceed with a challenging plan for themselves:

“If it is that way, I am ready to go with the demanding plan (achieving the budget numbers and completing the strategy implementation)”.

However, he finds opposition from Pedro because his proposed decision means sticking with the budgeted number. There is no consideration, Pedro says, for the change process and the introduction of it into the plan:

“We have to introduce the change and ordering process in which we are engaged. It has a cost that we are not facing”.

It seems that this statement resounds amongst the G7, and they state that it is necessary to establish how much the change process constitutes a risk for accomplishing the production targets and rebuilding trust with the board. Instead of just accepting the statement, some members of the G7 critically judge the planning process that at this stage has not incorporated the strategy implementation risks to the production plan:

Nicolas: “My problem is that when it (the plan presented by Juan) makes such a definition it seems that it has not incorporated the cost of implementing the strategy.”

The answer from Pedro, the Strategy and Finance Manager, acknowledges that there is no such analysis:

“It has not been done”.

Pedro adds that it is not possible to do it because of time constraints (they have 48 hours to submit the plan to the board), but urges them to incorporate the risk and reduce the production in the forecast, because the level of efficiency of the company will not be enough to match the budget target.

“This is a different effort than the one of a company in a regime acting in “automatic”. This will be an organisation that will be using its head, thinking everything through and this will be an effort”.

This is supported and paraphrased by Karlos, saying that what Pedro is stating is that all the operation areas will be rushing to meet the production target and whatever other actions that could involve operation’s people will be ignored or will mean that they will be stressed. Pedro adds that sticking with the budgeted production target could mean a double defeat: not meeting the production target, because of the risks involved in the strategy implementation costs, and at the same time not being successful in implementing the organisational capabilities they want to install.

Pedro: “Something will not square. The refined copper will not square the organisational capacities we want to install. One or both will not fit, and in the end this is a matter of trust with the shareholder”.

They do not make things easy for one another. Nicolas challenges this last view, saying that since the strategy is already installed amongst the management team, the 12 scenarios should have incorporated the strategy implementation costs in the risk analysis. Pedro argues back that not all the company’s processes have been governed by the strategy. This is an open recognition of the role strategy is playing in the organising practices.

Pedro: “To say today that we are governed by this strategy seems unrealistic”.

This is ratified by Karlos who states:

“That was what we said, even though we discussed that it was well understood. But it is not internalised, is not implemented. We have an enormous disorder. We said that the discourse was done, that we need to implement it”.

It seems that there is agreement on the subject, but there is still an objection from Nicolas, who maintains that from an “excellence” standpoint, it is not possible to present a reduced forecast:

“It is unthinkable that we can go with such a number”.

Nicolas argues that still there is no argument to support the reduction of the budget target, only “gut feelings”, and that this would send the wrong signal to the organisation if the target is reduced under such argument. The counterargument comes immediately from Pedro, who says that if the target is reduced, because the company management find the notion that they have to meet the targets *and* the strategy implementation consistent, it will be well understood.

Now they are facing a new dilemma: that they reduce the production target and show that they have a poor planning process:

Karlos: “And we accept that the thing is not well done”.

Time runs over and they have to finish the conversation by deciding that they will carry out an overnight analysis of the plan to see if it is possible to incorporate the “costs” involved in the strategy implementation and keep the budget numbers.

At the end of the meeting Karlos convenes the G7 to a meeting the following day to have a conversation around the subject of the change process that he states as being “on hold”, and where the initiatives are advancing but in an organisation that is in disorder and is disoriented.

This shows the executive committee dealing with the reconstruction of trust with the board. They have acknowledged (probably rightly) that trusting relations with the board are mediated by the accomplishments of their commitments and they are facing the possibility of correcting downward their production budget by nearly three per cent (equivalent to about US\$ 90 million).

The main argument is not about mine and plant capacity or “operational” issues. The possibility of underachieving is due to the presence of the “risk” imposed by the “transformation process” of strategy implementation, which has not been considered, because the represented strategy is not governing all the company’s processes, emphasised by Pedro’s assertion that it “is unrealistic that strategy governs all the company processes”.

The underlying subject matter of the discussion is about how they define themselves in front of the board. Here we can see the deeply habituated functional approach of each of the G7 members and how difficult the construction of a group fully accountable for the company governance has been. Pedro argues that they have to accept the scenario where the forecast is three per cent below budget in refined copper, so that organisational capabilities square with what is produced. On the other hand, Juan, the operations manager, points out that from an “operational planning” perspective the forecast that meets the budget is “accurate” and “well-constructed”.

Meanwhile Nicolas, the talent and culture manager, asserts that the budget is “precarious”, since it lacks risk analysis, and he names specialised manpower as an example.

Even when acknowledging that they cannot introduce this analysis into the forecast and postpone the decision for next day, the discussion is illustrative of how they subjectify themselves in front of the board.

Karlos is eager to go with the budget numbers, just like as Juan and Nicolas but for different reasons. Pedro argues against it because he is the Strategy and Finance Manager who can see his efforts of strategy implementation jeopardised “because everyone will be running behind production (instead of strategy)” and because he is responsible for the accurate budgeting process of the company.

The language that builds trust with the board is based in accountability, honouring commitments, and they know that excuses will not be acceptable in this matter. So they are in the dilemma that they have failed in presenting an accurate budget, because of the lack of the appropriate risk analysis.

The alternative is that they introduce it now in a precarious way because there is not time to carry out a thorough process. With which truth they present themselves to the board is the dilemma. The easy and face-saving one is to keep the budget numbers and risk the possibility of not achieving it - which would mean at the same time building deeper mistrust between the board and MMC executive committee.

The alternative is to tell the truth about the budgeting process and present a forecast (three per cent below budget) and introduce the risk to the strategy implementation, acknowledging the flaws of the budgeting process. They postpone the decision until the next day, asking a group led by Juan to work overnight to assess the possibility of keeping the budget numbers and introducing the “risk” imposed by the strategy implementation process.

What I conclude from this episode is that the subjectifying process implicit in the forecasting action shows them taking refuge in their functional roles, with little regard for speaking the truth to the board about the conditions in which they are operating and acknowledging their lack of competence in introducing the risks imposed by non-operational factors into their budgeting process.

This was an opportunity to speak the truth in front of power and subjectify themselves as truthful, “at whatever cost”, in front of the board and between themselves - a key type of action in the construction of trusting relations. Foucault (2001, 2005) gives great value to *parrhēsia* as a practice of subjectification in front of power, which seems relevant here.

Foucault highlights that *parrhēsia* is not just important as a game of being courageous enough to tell the truth to *other people*, especially in front of power, but because it “consists in being courageous enough to disclose the truth about one self” (Foucault, 2001:143).

Foucault (2001) refers to *parrhēsia* as a game which implies a contract and which is continually negotiated – pushing the boundaries of what can be said, via a skilful practice by which specific ways of constructing truth are mutually

created. In the same way, the executive team shares knowledge with the board about the truth of mining forecasting. The board does not need the G7 to tell them what the production forecast will be - they have enough information to know that already. What they do not know is what is not operational about the production budget. What they do not know is what is going on with the strategy implementation and how much cost it will mean in the use of people's time and attention with the consequent production reduction.

The G7 can hide the facts they are facing, that the strategy appears to have "stalled" and that they have actually not succeeded in its implementation. Acknowledging this truth with themselves, as well as in front of the board, is what seems to have not been addressed. They have established a relation to truth that, as a relation to themselves, has taken from it the possibility of subjecting themselves as truthful. It seems that their darkest hour leads them to act for what seems necessary, but not according to what seems truthful for them.

Finally they agree to reduce the budget numbers to be presented in the forecast by three per cent. My guess is that they are presenting this reduction, which is not substantiated by technical figures, as a way of covering up underachievement in the health and safety areas, as well as on community relations. They have to do much more and "better" in the subjects that they define as "right", and they know this, but they are not telling this truth to the board.

This, as a collective process of self-deception, has deep consequences in the subject constitution of the team, leadership and especially on the building of

trusting relationships with the board and with themselves. As I have said before, the board uses a language of accountability. Now they are presenting a forecast that is deceptive, not in the numbers, but in its foundations. The relevant number is not that they will produce 400 KTY of refined copper equivalence minus three per cent. This three per cent is not just incorporating the cost of a “transformation process”, but the past failure to achieve what they have committed.

Coding the interaction of this section shows that most of the interactions are negative symmetrical, a pattern that has not allowed them to get something stabilised during their interaction.

Instead of constructing a trusting relation about their sincerity, responsibility and competence to deal with the “strategic” issues that they have identified it can be stated that this cascade of themes, is undermining it. The themes, which are introduced but not settled in their conversation, are also reinforcing the habituated company practices of hierarchical relationships and the primacy of meeting production targets over constructing a trusting relationship based in a more complex environment than the one defined by production.

The G7 group seems to be building mistrust instead of connected actions to create future possibilities. They “jump” from action to action on these topics. Their identities as people who are able to deal with the topics introduced are not confirmed, and no decisions are made that can change the course of events. What does get confirmed is the immanence of practices in which their actions are inscribed.

What does leadership mean here? Instead of the aloof presence I observed, leadership could have emerged as a practice of parrhesia “as an assemblage of practices of truth telling and the situated position of a vigilant self to its self that is asking the crucial question of “what are we doing?”” (Arendt, 1998:123). Acknowledging that they have not introduced, in their own core practices, the basic themes of their formulated strategy could have been a powerful sign for doing so. Possibly a second step would have been addressing a reflexive relation of their own practices - to do “right” and “better” and to do less what is “incorrect” but doing it “well”, as suggested by Pedro.

I was expecting to observe leadership as a process of forming subjectivities, in the complex domain of a strategy implementation. What I found was a group struggling to cope with failure and deception. A group dwelling in the strategy implementation project they had constructed with a cynical mood that kept them away from the possibilities of constructing a reflexive practice in which they were inscribed, and from constructing the subjectivities they were intending.

They had declared the importance of trusting relationships as a key “strategic priority” but were building exactly the opposite type of engagement with their world, a cynical “as if” relationship which resulted in them becoming indecisive in the face of the change process. Instead of building a careful attention to what they said they valued, they were removing their actions from the narrative of the strategy implementation.

THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT CYCLE

Nicolas, the Talent and Culture manager, presses the group to finish talking about strategy issues, and urges them to listen to a presentation about the PDC, the Personal Development Cycle. They have been postponing the issue for a week or so and time is running out because they have to make decisions on how to run modifications to the Cycle by no later than mid-March. As a result, they interrupt the strategic agenda revision to address the issue.

The description of this process allows us to see and understand practices that, in the background and with no reflection on the part of the executive committee, reproduce the hierarchical relationships that have become pervasive in the company practice.

One of the processes that has been performed almost unchallenged, with a great influence on the relationship between managers and employees, is this Personal Development Cycle - a personnel planning and appraisal process. In the PDC, the organisation's staff is assessed from the near future perspective (a year) and an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of each functional area is carried out, with the participation of the executive committee (G7) and each of the functional area managers. This process lasts for around a month every year, where every employee is assessed and decisions about promotion, demotion and outplacements are made. The process is very time-consuming for the G7 and carried out without any participation of the employees themselves. Even when the employees are aware of the process, they remain ignorant of the criteria by which they are assessed and receive very little feedback to justify the decisions made by their managers. In this process,

an exercise of “editing” takes place (Czarniwaska 2008), where everyone is inscribed in a narrative about their performance, constituting something like a modern panoptic that creates subjective conditions in which employees constitute themselves as “worthy” in their relations with the company.

Nicolas is asking the G7 to approve the scheme by which they will assign levels of “promotionability” to employees after the assessment of their performance. They discuss the issue, without any critical perspective and finally approve the system proposed by Nicolas.

What is interesting here is that even though this offer the opportunity of talking about the subjective conditions by which people in the company can constitute themselves, so being very careful in how they think about the PDC, the G7 approach the subject uncritically. My sense at this time, based in the quite submissive way in which they relate with Nicolas in regard to this subject, is that this is due to the fact that it is considered a “talent management issue”, therefore a functional issue, and that it is the job of the functional role to implement it. At the same time, the presentation lacks any opportunity to resist or take a reflective mode in relation to it. Again I miss the lack of leadership as a shared practice of forming the desired subjectivities.

EVENT 6: “DRY RUN” BOARD MEETING

This event shows the contrasting pattern of interaction, characterised by negative complementarity between the G7 and the board and its group of

advisors, one of the key stakeholders of the company. It shows how these anomalous patterns of interaction have primacy over a reciprocal interaction pattern which might allow the inclusion of content relevant for the board's awareness and permit decisions about issues involved in the strategic performance of MMC.

This meeting is a preparation for the board meeting, where the Executive President (Pablo) of AAC Plc., G7 and a number of corporate advisors to the board, meet to review the presentation due to the board meeting a week from then. I am sitting in a corner of a large room on the 22nd floor of the corporate building, behind Pablo, who sits at the extreme end of the table, with Karlos to his right. I remember that Karlos sat at the end of the table in the MMC meetings, with Pedro, the Strategy and Finance Manager to his right. Interestingly, the advisors are sitting on the right side of the table (looking from the Pablo's position) while the G7 members are sitting to his left, facing the advisors. This suggests a form of panoptical setting for the G7 and the advisors, since they are observed but with little visibility between them. Karlos enjoys this observational position too. It seems that the setting is arranged according to the ease in which they can observe the screen where the presentation will be shown. The most comfortable position is Pablo's.

Pablo is the first to talk and, in a very ironic tone, looking at David (Operational Projects Manager and member of the executive team), says,

“This is an important meeting where the use of time is key. Everyone that is sitting here earned the right to do so. I expect that no one here will use the time of others to show how valuable he is himself. So, Mr David

(looking towards the operations manager), now that you know this we can begin”.

A quite intimidating comment, where any intervention can be criticised as a form of showing egos instead of contributing to the quality of information shared during the meeting. It shows too that what becomes important is how much content they are able to cover during the time assigned.

They begin by talking about the destination of a large piece of land, named Fundo Piulo (anonymised name), which is closing its agricultural activity under the supervision of the MMC Foundation - a non-profit-making organisation created by MMC to promote projects for the development of the valley's communities. Karlos informs the meeting that it will be closed to agricultural operations, and they will keep it without exploitation. There is a question from one advisor (Mark), related to the cost of implementing this measure, which is duly answered by Pedro.

Reviewing the list of items to present to the board, they then go to review a system to follow up the investment project. David begins to explain that they are still studying the way of presenting this investment project, but that they have not reached a conclusion yet. They discuss in which way these projects should be presented, depending on the size, level of advance, acquisition phases, etc. Karlos asks David when the follow up system will be ready. “Next week” is David's answer, to which one of the board advisors asks, with some uneasiness, if it is going to be presented in the next board meeting, to which the answer is “no”, to the relief of everyone.

It seems that this type of answer - which shows that there is little accomplished in relation to what has previously been committed and where there seem to be too many background details - could disturb the relations with the board, so it is deleted from the agenda to be presented to the board.

I begin to realise the type of identity that constitute the board for them. This meeting, even when it imitates the board meeting, allows at least one level of reflection, where people can qualify, tacitly and in a non-articulated fashion, what seems appropriate or not to be presented to the board. It does not replace the board but is a ritual of selecting what content is suitable for the board meeting.

The fact that there are topics that are “filtered” and not shared with the board, give clues about the type of relationship the board and MMC executives maintain. It seems that only what is ready for a decision or already accomplished (or not accomplished at all) for the board consideration should be presented. The board seems to not deal with the nuances, subtleties and messiness of executing decisions of the company. The board’s concerns are only with what is accomplished or not. It seems that the only things that matter for the board are the making of things, not what the processes involve. Through this process the board becomes identified as a stakeholder with whom, if a trusting relation is to be constructed, it will be by honouring commitments and accomplishments and producing ready-made types of decisions.

The next theme approached is safety.

David: "During July, we had seven accidents, and during August; we had another one".

They comment on the safety chart, which shows the accidents happened during the last three months, is presented. There is no comment on the detail of the accidents. Nobody asks, nobody explains, so that there are no signs of concern for the future of safety issues in this group. It looks very much like a group of surgeons examining a broken leg, talking about it but with no concern for the patient to whom it belongs.

They then proceed to present a chart showing production. They begin explaining that there is less production than expected because they anticipated a major maintenance, foreseeing that in July they were not going to meet the forecasted figures because of the low level of the ore deposit. They anticipate that during August they will recover the forecasted production level. Pedro concludes that they will reach slightly over the forecasted production. One of the board advisors asks if there is any possibility to reach the budgeted level (12KT of fine copper equivalent more than the forecast). Karlos answers that they are exploring the possibility of producing more than the ceiling of 175KTD, in an informal way. This brings a long conversation between the corporate people and Karlos, in which he explains that the limitation is there as a result of the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) for the plant expansion in 2006, so it is already established and to change it would take a long process. There is no commitment from Karlos and the question stays unanswered in what looks an unsatisfactory way for the advisors.

The next topic to analyse is the cost lines in the budget. Pedro mentions fuel, electricity, maintenance and steel balls for crushing material. Another advisor, to understand the cost rises and reductions, poses some questions. The managers have some answers, but some questions remain unanswered because Pedro cannot give more details (most are operational issues and the operations executive is not present in the meeting). The advisors guide the G7 on the way they should present the production forecast, especially the cost in relation to production - which is the major concern, since costs rises when production diminishes.

They then analyse the advance of investment projects. David explains that there are projects that are generating net savings. Then he explains various projects that have incurred a lesser cost than expected, mainly because they are lagging behind schedule and not because of cost reductions.

From there, they review issues around environmental and social value. They begin with air quality in the valley and in the facilities, where they analyse the impact of the deterioration of the air quality because of the dust in the air. They state that this has an impact on operations because they have to shut down some of the machines to improve the air quality back to acceptable limits. Pedro talks about possible measures to reduce dust in the air. Then they explain an incident where a truck leaked sulphuric acid onto the valley road for almost 20 kilometres. David explains the incident and how they are intending to prevent this incident from happening again. There are no questions on the issues.

Next they analyse the new EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) project to raise the ceiling of 175KTD. Since it was a theme they have dealt with previously, they do not comment.

Nicolas (MMC's Talent and Culture Manager) explains staff-related aspects. He reports on talent management, labour relationships and service to employees. He goes on to explain that they are working in the "theme" of culture. There are no comments on his presentation. He explains that they have had some trouble in keeping up the intended numbers of operators, since they are having a high level of "rotation" of contractor's personnel. He explains that they have to train nearly 500 staff every month on basic safety and operational skills.

Ana (the Development executive and member of the executive team) explains a project that integrates and allows them to follow up the almost 9000 legal commitments acquired by the company in the last ten years. They are putting this in place because new law enforcement will begin to operate at the beginning of next year. She answers a number of questions. They expect her to identify which of these commitments have an impact on the company's operation. The conversation revolves around whether the new government office will be able to monitor such a large number of issues in the whole mining industry. Karlos emphasises that there are around 500 governmental permissions, which should be solved before March 2012.

Mark asks about the status of the lawsuit against the company brought by one of the communities. From here they go to show that there is no news on property issues. Pedro explains about a trial with the family of a contractor's

employee that died on the site in December 2010. The discussion is around the way to reduce the liability for the company.

Then they introduce a number of projects, like the “fog canyon” that will reduce the level of dust in the air, and the introduction of a web-based environmental monitoring of the site for the external government office that supervises the enforcement of mining regulations, which they are implementing voluntarily.

Then they talk about the new governance of the company. Previously they had to go through an executive committee once a decision by the CEO was made. Now they will go directly to the MMC board. Pedro explains that this has consequences for relations with the Japanese partners, since the new governance establishes that they have to make decisions only in relation to MMC. The foreign partners only participate in the holding company board (AAC), so they are able to take decisions without first checking with the Japanese partners.

After this, they analyse the investment in acquiring a large farm in order to give it up to the government as an environmentally protected area. Karlos emphasises that this decision has two types of benefits: one is reputational; since it will be bought in order to protect a large native woodland area. The other is

“a bargaining chip that can be used in the development project of the company.”

They discuss if it is a decision that the general manager can make with his own approval power. The advice is that he has no power to make that decision

because of a legal formality, even when he can approve investments higher than this.

Then they review a number of issues around the legal power of the MMC managers, the “chart of approval” and issues of governance with the board.

At the end of the meeting, they check the time to calculate how much time they have spent in the meeting and finish, with no further comment.

The interaction of this meeting is deeply complementary with a negative sign, since shows a very hierarchical relationship between the executive team members and the advisors to the board and Pablo (AAC CEO). Every time that there is a question, there is an answer and there is a clear difference in the type of actions of the MMC executives and those of Pablo and the board advisors. They seem to be playing clearly defined roles in a game of well-known codes on what can be said and what cannot. There are a probably a number of codes that need to be learned in order to participate, but my sense is that the relation with this stakeholder (the AAC’s CEO and the board advisors) is highly codified and that the formalities on the relations replace the concerns that are going on within the G7. Trusting relationships within this group seem conditioned to keeping to formalities and making sure that they show what has been accomplished. The mock meeting shows a clear disciplinary relation between the board and the executives, where what become legitimate contents are restricted to the accounts of accomplishments.

The issue of the production forecast being behind budget is a key issue. It gets asked about, but this is not the place where a conversation about the issue can

take place. I have the sense that I am playing the role of Hermes, the ancient Greek messenger, who will go to the board members, in particular the chairman, and translate what has been said in terms that are easy for them to follow, giving some sense of interpretation of what will be presented in the meeting. Like Hermes, things are probably going to become translated in a way that is going to be most pleasant to the board members and to the messenger. It is doubtful that such a lack of achievement will be explained with a background that describes it as we have observed during the executive committee discussion (Event 5).

The board is not present in this meeting, but becomes identified in the way the relation is established with their representatives in this mock meeting. The board has a defined hierarchical relation to MMC top management. It is there to review the decisions of top management, but moreover it is there to check the performance in their commitments. It seems that there is clear role assigned to the MMC management to raise and propose solutions and for the board to approve and check performance. It is not the role of the board to get involved in the details of the management of the company.

The sustainability strategy is not present in the conversation. There are no clear measurements of the key priorities of the strategy: no reference to trust is made and references to excellence can be deducted, but not named as such, from analysing safety and production which show little accomplished. The long discussions about strategy seem to be confined only to the executive team.

The board seems to have no access to establishing a reciprocal relationship with the MMC executive team, where a mutual recognition that, even when

performing different roles, they might be able to gain access to each other's world and be touched and moved because of their mutual observation.

If we have seen negative symmetrical interaction as blocking the possibilities of subjectifying different subjectivities within the interaction of the executive team, now we see interaction between the MMC executives, characterised as negative complementarity, where the one-upness position is always kept by the board members or its advisors while the one-downness position is always maintained by MMC executives. Negative complementarity leads to an increased categorical differentiated interaction where dominant – submissive that leads to tensions, potential hostilities and obviously prevents the presence of solicitous care.

EVENT 7: THE PEC MEETING

In the previous events we have been able to review interaction within the G7, the G7 with advisors of the board and the holding company executives and board advisors. This event is about the interaction between G7 members and middle managers. Middle managers were mentioned during the previous event, especially in relation to “why things gets paralysed”, where a prescription of what their role should be is posed by Karlos. This event is an opportunity to observe the type of practice the G7 members perform with middle managers in this regard.

The recently created PEC (Process Excellence Committee) is part of the company’s new governance strategy and this is their second session. Three incidents are to be presented to the committee. Invited to this meeting is the Mining Services Manager, a middle manager reporting to the Operations Executive, to present the analysis of an incident that stopped the concentrator plant for nearly three days and the rollover of a truck containing sulphuric acid. The mine superintendent is also invited to explain the accident that produced the sinking of a 300 ton vehicle into an abandoned underground gallery while working over it on a mine road. The three incidents constitute serious safety flaws, with lots of economic and material loss as well as potential human casualties - which fortunately in this case did not occur.

There is very little difference in the relational communication analysis of the interactions around the three safety issues. In the incident related to the plant stop, 14 (74%) of 19 interactions responses are negative symmetrical; on the

truck rollover 16 (76%) of 21 become negative symmetrical and in the most serious of all the incidents 25 (93%) of 27 of the responsive interactions can be coded as negative symmetrical interaction. It is clear from the start that the narrative about these actions does not construct trusting relations, since there is no settlement whatsoever, just a kind of clash of visions and positions.

The initial narrative of the Mining Service Manager (identified as DO), shows him acknowledging that people involved in the incident (a power failure that stopped the plant for almost three days) undertake a review that has led them to develop “specific protocols” to deal with the equivocal decisions that led to the incident. There are no questions about this review and its output. He mentions that the usual practice when an incident of this nature happens has been to blame the “viejo” (the worker involved) - the weakest link in the chain. He considers what they have done is an improvement, because they recognise the existence of many participants in the production of the event. The “viejo”, the technician that made the mistakes, is included in the situation, but as one of many. He states that what they have deduced is that the responsibility is shared with many actants in the production of the event. This looks like an improvement to the way the event was presented before. He shows that their reflection practice derived protocols that will

“not make room for mistakes of this type again”,

It is interesting here to note the middle manager is “offering” a new identity, where reflection and accountability resides in the group involved in an incident like this, and that they have made a change in how they will deal with this type of situation in the future. But, for an identity to emerge it needs to be confirmed

relationally, something that as we will see is distant from what actually happened.

Instead of agreeing with the report, Nicolas (the Talent and Culture manager from the G7) questions the content and type of reflection, and especially the notion that because of the level of risks involved, there should be people involved from the executive team.

Nicolas: "...I do not know if we are in some, or in any (referring to be included in the deliberations about safety incidents), but when we have this discussion there should be a correlation with the level of impact of what we are talking about..."

This is spoken in quite strong language, rejecting the "identity offer" of the middle manager, which says that they are able to handle it. Instead of trusting the competency and responsibility in his group's review, he claims that someone of a higher "rank" should be involved. Nicolas sets what the discussion should be about. He uses the term "prioritisation", relates to the company's processes and establishes a correlation where "higher-level risks" should involve "higher level" people in reviews. The middle manager's initiative produces a reaction from Nicolas that reflects how deeply mistrust is present between him and middle managers in the operations area. This is not based on their past record but because of the value given to their hierarchical position.

There is the use of specific language, which in this case becomes exclusive to an executive committee member, such as "prioritisation" and "company's processes". Then the use of "us", as a distinct entity in relation to the rest of the

company members, in this case the middle managers involved in the conversation, differentiates the G7 from the group, dividing the group between members of different status and power, conflating the use of language that exacerbates technical terms with an organisational position. This is a manoeuvre with great governmentality consequences (Dean, 2010), specifically in segregating the type of managers to organisational layers and status in relation to what type of issues and situations can be handled by them. So, as shown in Event 5, it is not surprising to see that middle managers wait for executive's decisions to act upon projects, even when they seem urgent and critical.

This becomes a rare process of translation between words as things (Czarniawska, 2009) with some rhetorical effect but at the same time constructing the subject of a G7 member as legitimate source of use of such language, which in this specific event proves to have an important pragmatic effect in differentiating them as belonging to different hierarchical status.

This passage sets the tone for the type of interaction that we will observe during the analysis of the three incidents that the PEC deals with at this meeting. This forms a practice that, instead of constructing trust, is constantly forming mistrust and taking away accountability from middle managers.

From an interactional point of view, what I observe here is the "offer" of an identity, which says, "we, the executive team, should be involved in every high priority/high-risk event". It can be translated as the G7 saying to middle managers "...you are not capable of dealing with these types of situations on your own." However, it is not enough to have an identity offer, it must be

accepted, rejected (which means some type of acceptance) or ignored, to become subjected.

What happens next is that the G7 members' intervention is subtly rejected by the middle manager, who argues and at the same time offers a different type of identity definition for themselves.

DO: "...90% of our job is to deal with risk...and we are involved".

This answer rejects Nicolas' "offer" and poses an alternative one at a relational level: "we are capable, and involved; I do not see how it is that you need to be involved in all our high-risk situations." So, what we have in this situation is a process of constructing identities that find themselves with little common ground in interaction.

It should also be noted that there is multiplicity of action nets in the construction of this situation, which constitutes different layers of reality for the actors involved. The issue is that a "high risk" situation not known by the G7 reflects another issue around strategy formulation: the lack of transparency.

Karlos has stated a number of times that if there is a problem, it should be known immediately at all levels, avoiding the culture of "here we do not have problems, only solutions", which has previously been so pervasive in the company culture, keeping some difficult situations covered by middle managers. In Karlos' words it is contrasting with a desire culture for "transparency and honesty at all costs. Problems have to be reported". The multiplicity (Law, 2009) constructed in this situation reflects how contradictory and even paradoxical the subject of trust can become. What are trusting

relationships in this situation? One option shows middle managers feeling autonomous and competent to review and make decisions on how to fix situations or where transparency and reporting to higher ranked managers is the rule. This is an example of multiplicity (Serres, 1995; Law, 2009), where there is no need to make any action in only one action net. The construction of actions nets can be multiple and construct many simultaneous realities. There is no contradiction in these realities; they are just different and simultaneous.

This constitutes a paradox that needs to be approached theoretically in its pragmatics. The paradox is where we have more than one reality interacting simultaneously, which shows contradiction, but if solved in one of its versions constructs a problem in others. In this case, it seems that mistrust is constructed to the benefit of transparency. Trusting relationships seem to emerge from the capacity to care for something much more fundamental than specific concepts, and this fundamental element seems to be the relation itself. Karlos has made this explicit in relation to their initial insights about the way by which value is discovered, when he says that it is done in a relationship. Keeping a rigid position in relation to an abstract topic, as with “transparency” in this event, prevents the G7 members constructing a trusting relationship from what the relations are showing.

I expected that this was the intention of the meeting: that they could reflect on the situation so that they could find out how to prevent these types of situations in the future. Instead of this, what happens is that another G7 member, Juan, intervenes with a much stronger statement:

“Risk management is not employed by the supervisors, the superintendents or by the operating managers. Because if it was, this would not have happened.”

This is a statement that rejects DO's offer, reflecting a judgement about the poor involvement of operations leadership in risk management. He asks for a specific type of reflection with leadership involvement.

It becomes contradictory that he, as a member of the G7, is actually the formal leader of most of the people that are involved in the incidents. He deals with the situation as an outsider, using the pronouns “we” and “you” making the distinction between him, as a G7 member, and the G32 members involved in the situation, resembling the practice of the previous G7 member's intervention. It is difficult to know if the statement is accepted, rejected or disconfirmed by the middle manager. He remains silent, which I interpret again as a passive and covert rejection of the argument.

The chair of the committee, sticking to the protocol of risk analysis and in some way trying to appease the situation, suggests that involving leadership in the analysis should be included as an action item. This is a very neutral statement, giving primacy to the reporting procedure, which reveals a kind of self-protection of the established organisational routines to deal with safety and risk incidents.

This brings to the scene an actant: the procedures and policies established to which the members of the committee refer as “the report”. The report becomes for most of the people involved in the meeting a key actor, which organises

what is or is not included in the conversation. The report becomes something that has living qualities, such as “opportune”, “complete”, “absent”, etc. The report can or cannot be rejected. It is not the content or the people referred to that becomes key in many passages of the conversation. Rather, what becomes important is the integrity of the report itself. The “territory” becomes of secondary importance: the map and the map of the conversation becomes what they care for.

Through the first passages of this interaction there are almost no answers conducive to a reflection about what actually happened during the incident. There was a reflection about the people involved and the members of the committee learned about how to prevent this type of situation happening again. Action items became reduced to:

Nicolas: “ (in an imperative tone of voice) establish responsibility in point 3, where the control measures are written”.

What they show a care for is not the lives or integrity of the people involved. What is valued is that the reporting process works - at least in this committee. Instead of serving the strategic intent of constructing trusting relationship between stakeholders, the committee construct mistrust, at least between G7 and middle managers. Moreover, trust is still a precarious commodity when dealing with safety issues.

What becomes concerning is that trust is not construed in what is the most important mandate of the formulated strategy: “to value people”. Safety and health are minimum standards of this solicitous care - physical integrity should

not be dealt with as a bureaucratic process, but as an effective action to prevent health and safety issues. Instead we see this group perpetuating a way of protecting themselves from the anxieties of ineffective action.

The PEC goes then into analysing the rollover of a truck. Most of the conversation is about the procedures of reporting incidents, the lack of compliance of the due dates, the incompleteness of documentation. The main topic is eluded, and the content of the conversation becomes what is needed in the report. Again in this incident Juan complains about what he recognises as a lack of management involvement and a sense of urgency in taking action. The middle manager presenting rejects this statement, saying that action has been taken promptly. He acknowledges the incompleteness of the report, arguing that the reporting rules require that he present the report when it is completed, with all the technical details in it. He is not presenting full details of what happened and which were the actions taken to prevent this incident to happen again because he prioritised the opportunity of presenting the report to the PEC committee, instead of following the rules.

Again, Juan makes a statement about taking responsibility and showing commitment:

“We are not attending to risks”.

This statement that again is rejected by the G32 member presenting facts and figures about the level of responsibility and level of reflection and action they are implementing in this respect. The conversation shifts then to the visibility of action and the importance of the timely submission of the report.

Juan: “So it should not be seen (by others) as if nothing has been done, that there is no commitment and there are no visible actions”.

The absence of any conversation about what actions were adopted is remarkable. Although they agree on showing commitment and taking action, it is not clear to whom they are “sharing” this (It seems that to the some level of management control outside the company, probably some corporate office controlling these type of processes).

DO: “The point is that the timely presentation on due date makes that all the uncertainty about what we are doing gets to an end. We can show that there is commitment.”

The agreement then is about the quality of the report, showing that actions are being taken and there is commitment from the management team. The event is notable for the lack of analysis of the incident itself and inquiries on what happened and which action can prevent this type of incident happening again. The truck operator, the risks involved, the potential casualties, become translated into figures to show that management is involved and “doing something”. Actions that show care for what is valued reflect here that what is valued is what “others” (it is difficult to identify to whom they are showing the reporting) can think about safety management in the mine operations, not on actions which reflect care for “the value of oneself as stated by Karlos.

They then analyse the third incident: the partial sinking of a 300-ton vehicle into one of the underground pits of an abandoned mine that intersects with the open pit of the mine.

Juan blames everyone in the line of command as “involved” and accountable for the incident, since everyone knew and there was given instructions to mark the place of the underground gallery:

“Nobody checked the demarcation. As you all said, this was discussed beforehand in an open meeting and analysed the day before, so no one can say that he was unaware of it...”

The Mine Superintendent’s (SI) explanation of the incident is that there is a

“...failure to apply the risk-management procedures by all the areas involved. That is mine management and planning”.

The reaction of SI is then to explain that the maps of the underground pit are not likened to the integrated electronic chart system used to plan the open-pit jobs for the new mine. There are maps of the underground works, but these are not visible in the charting system used to plan the jobs on the open pit. Again here we have the presence of a device that by its presence or absence is explaining the behaviour of certain people in relation to this incident. It is the absence of the underground mapping that is behind the accident. Because it was not translated, its presence is omnipresent as a permanent danger. Risk management is about what gets inscribed. What is not inscribed is not recognised as a risk for which it is necessary to mobilise action. A safety procedure becomes such if it is visible in the mine planning chart and if it is included in the electronic charting system. Now the underground mapping system is translated as guilty for the situation because of its lack of enrolment into the decision-making process. The early discussion of the managers

involved, to what Juan refers earlier, has no effect in the construction of an action net of safety.

SI agrees to include the background information requested during the conversation in the report, but no reflection of what happened actually takes place during the meeting, still less on how this type of incident will be prevented.

We cannot view these events and say that nothing happened. Actually some kind of action net has been knitted. Probably the one with most relevance is the action net creating the macro actor of the G7 - an institution with serious faults in legitimising itself in front of middle managers. A subject constitution constructs them as dysfunctional to the strategy formulated more than a year ago. This provides me with a better interpretation of the comments of the supervisors during the Supervisor's Dinner of August 2010; "if top managers are not showing the way, this will not happen". It is not that they need an example, but is the acknowledgement that this will only happen in a reflexive mode of interaction. It is August 2011, and it is difficult to find the presence of actions that construct trusting relationships.

EVENT 8: MY RELATION WITH MMC

I would like to highlight a few points that have implications for my research questions and to the comprehension of the reflexive nature of the research process itself. I will refer especially to how these few events can be conceived as action nets, a sequence of actions, the origin of which I have arbitrarily bounded, so to as give some meaning to them.

The first point concerns how I gained access to research in this company and the type of access I gained. The second point concerns the access to Karlos and the possibility to shadow and interview him on a number of occasions.

By their absence, other events became important as well. It is especially notable that I was not given access to any event designed by the Strategy Department of MMC, such as seminars and the PMO committee. This group, as previously pointed out, was the first group of people I met as a researcher in MMC, and who showed interest in researching their strategic process. A second event that is important to mention, is that I was not able to interview the Operation's Manager, a member of the G7 before he left the company in June 2011.

GAINING ACCESS TO MMC AS RESEARCHER

I have a long history of relationship with the AAC holding. Since 2002, two years after MMC began its operations, I began working with them as a consultant, where I had been invited to help the management team of AAC plc. . AAC grew from a single operating company (MMA), producing around 50 KTY (Thousand Tons per Year) of fine copper in 2000, to around 400 KTY in 2002 after strong investment and the development of two other operating companies (MMB and MMC). I worked with the top management group of the four companies for several years in diverse activities related with the development of the team and the organisation. Later, we (the consulting firm with whom I was working at the time) were called to develop another type of consulting processes related to the development of the holding companies. This work, which extended to the year before I initiated this research, gave me access to establish relationships with some of the members of the MMC's executive committee, particularly with Karlos - whom I had known since he was the finance manager in the early stages of MMC. Another member of the G7 that I knew before my research period was Nicolas, the Talent and Culture executive. He was hired in May 2010 by MMC, but he worked previously with MMB.

For obtaining access to research I did not contact MMC managers directly. Access was obtained via a conversation with a manager of AAC who was in charge of the change management process and who had originally suggested MMC as being a potentially interesting case to research. He was aware of the recent approval of a new strategy for MMC and I called him a few weeks earlier, looking for "any place where a deep innovation was taking place" to carry out my research. In this way I defined my interest, because I assumed that where a place was notable for its innovation, emergence would be present too.

I was introduced to the Strategy and Finance executive (Pedro), the Strategy Manager (Santiago) and Talent and Culture executive (Nicolas), and they showed interest in the way change could be understood in the narratives of stakeholders - something they labelled as building a “narrative barometer” of the strategy development. Once I finished explaining my research design, Pedro commented that they were very interested in my research and that they had decided that my liaison would be Nicolas, the Talent and Culture executive. I accepted this as a matter of fact, but what subsequently happened was surprising.

Between August and September 2010, I worked intensely on constructing the Sense Maker Collector; which meant working in the valley and interviewing employees, and the blog for collecting reflective stories from the company management. All this work was coordinated with Nicolas and his group of staff.

Around two weeks after meeting with the G7 to explain the use of the blog and how a reflective practice could be of use for their learning, I noticed that they were not using the blog. I began to inquire what was happening. Nicolas told me that he thought it was because they had no concept of the benefits of logging and writing their reflective stories. I was invited again to one of the executive meetings to show with more detail what the potential outcomes of the use of this device might be. The answer I got from the seven managers in the room was positive in terms that they were going to log on and write on a regular basis, tell stories of their everyday interaction and reflect on them. In that meeting I asked one of the attendees to show in practice what they were being asked to do, which he did. I waited another couple of weeks and noticed that

still nothing was happening. I decided to talk to Karlos and asked him to promote the use of the device amongst the G7, and he subsequently wrote an email to them. After a week or so, again I saw that nothing had happened, so I thought that it was worth talking to Pedro (Strategy and Finance executive) and Santiago (Strategy manager) about the subject. They answered that a possible reason was because it was not seen as “strategic” - meaning by this that because writing stories and reflecting about interaction was “not in any line in the strategic agenda”, there was little chance that people would spend time to do this. I decided to ask them to include recording and analysing stories as part of their “strategic agenda”. Their answer was that they were going to study it as a complement of the many measurements they were implementing to monitor the strategy development. I waited a couple of weeks for something to happen, but nothing did happen I wrote a number of emails, from which I received no answer. Every time I had to visit the corporate building I sat for a while in the open space in front of the G7 office, so that every time I saw one of them available I approached and talked to them about how the research process was going and inviting them to participate using the blog. Still nothing happened - the blog was visited by three of the G7, which included Karlos (once), Nicolas (once) and Pedro (twice). None of the other members of the G7 visited the blog.

I understand better now what actually happened. I noticed from analysing the rest of the data that executives actually removed themselves from the narratives related to what was going on in the company. In the editing process that involved every narrative account of events, they seemed to have the power to do this: distancing themselves from the events as a way of dealing with the sense of failure in which the strategy implementation seemed to be and at the

same time building a cynical mood of appearing to be intended. What actually seemed to be taking place was that they did not actually have material for carrying out this reflection, because they were not there in the narrative of the events. Their dwelling with the strategy was in a way of engagement “as if” they were doing it. They performed their tasks, what they were doing was visible, especially in the rhetorical side, but they did not seem to be accountable for what was going on since they simply were not there in the practice of building trust with the company stakeholders.

The second event that I want to describe is in relation to the possibility of being present in the PMO committee - whose mission was considered key in conducting the change processes involved in the strategy implementation. I asked Nicolas, who was a member of the PMO, for permission to him, especially when he was interacting with other people beyond the G7 and especially when participating in the PMO. This was in September 2010, when the PMO began to work. His answer was positive, so I prepared myself to be invited during October. However, Nicolas disappeared from October to late November, as he headed the collective negotiation with the five unions of the company, which were due to be held during this period. He and the negotiation team were isolated from other company activities during this period, so he was not available in any way. I wrote emails and left messages asking him to coordinate the possibility of witnessing the October and November meetings of the PMO, but received no answers during this period. So I decided to call Pedro (Strategy and Finance executive) and ask him to introduce me to the meeting. He himself was not part of the committee, but Santiago (the strategy manager) was the head of it. His answer was positive, but I did not receive access to the

meetings in October and for the November dates I was not able to attend. I asked to attend during the early months of 2011 and there I learned that actually the PMO were only due to meet once again in late March, when I was not present in the country. The PMO never met again after that date.

The third event I consider of importance, is that I did not get the chance to interview Juan, the operations manager, during all of the period of the fieldwork. He resigned from the company in May 2011 and had left it by July of the same year. The research design did not consider interviews with the G7 members, only shadowing and self-reflecting logs. I knew about his resignation and I sent him an email asking him for an interview, as I considered it important for my research to trace the actions that led to one of the strategy owners not just to defect from the strategy, but leave the company he had worked for over more than ten years. I received no answers to my emails, so I attempted to meet him personally. I managed to make contact, but was unable to organise a meeting with him.

These events can be read in many perspectives. The most naïve is probably that the executives were very busy coping with their daily working lives, that there was little time to work with a researcher as “shadow” of their activities. I had no opportunity to check what the narratives were that were being constructed in the background of these events - as I have previously stated, there was always something going on. Every action has a message value and, as such, can be inscribed in a narrative. Despite this, what comes across is that I was inscribed in a very subtle, but very powerful, narrative in the relationship between members of the G7. Every member of the G7 was very kind to me and

showed me a lot of consideration, but it seems that the “turf war that was going on, in quite subtle ways between the G7 members, in some way included me.

As we have seen, the primacy of negative symmetrical relationships and the sense of mistrust grew within the G7 group during the research period. This was not something causing something else. My actions, the blog, shadowing, etc. were inscribed in the narratives which acted as analogies of the action nets that emerged during this process. My presence was inscribed in the interaction happening at that time, so that my inclusion or exclusion can be interpreted as part of the more general processes of inclusion happening at that time in their interaction. In one of the meetings I witnessed, they referred to this in a very explicit way, stating that there are issues of agenda and trust that, even when improving, are still weak between them. It seems that seeing me as associated with the Talent and Culture manager dropped me into one of the turf wars, so that my actions became inscribed either as related to this company area or to Karlos, who represented a higher hierarchical level. Mistrust was not a personal issue, but became an emergent practice in which no one could be considered above or beyond its creation, including the researcher's.

RETROSPECTIVE OF THE EVENTS

Even when the company practice had not been alien to the social environment to which it belonged or had not neglected the environmental regulations that ruled mining operations in the country, the dramatic reactions from stakeholders to the September 2009 environmental accidents demonstrated that its main focus on producing economic value had inhibited the type of relationship that some of them were expecting from the company management.

The valley's environmental, social and economic landscape has been transformed by the presence of the company. From a peaceful agricultural valley it has become a bustling site of new commerce and town expansion, where newcomers have settled, bringing in great changes in the lives of the original valley residents.

The transport and communication infrastructure has changed in ways that are unrecognisable from ten years previous. There are now paved roads everywhere, cable TV, mobile phone and free Wi-Fi covering whole towns. Educational and health facilities have been improved to equal what is available in larger cities. Youth that before had been forced to emigrate from the valley to find work or to improve their lives, are now remaining in the valley or returning to work for the mining company or to the many other businesses that have flourished around it.

However, the fallout from the environmental incident shows what has been missing during these years of expansion: a relationship that acknowledges each

other (between the company and the valley residents) as inhabiting in the same world. Dwelling in the mining world is very different than in the slow and peaceful agricultural world previously enjoyed in the valley. The relationship has been deeply asymmetric, building a difference between these two worlds.

Mining, as many other capitalist endeavors, means obtaining economic returns on what is invested. Investing in mining represents taking away from the soil in order to obtain its product. It deploys resources and technology for destroying at a very large scale in order to obtain its product: minerals.

What makes mining different from just about any other human activity is that it uses huge amounts of supplies, mainly energy, in order to obtain the desired product. The raw material - rocks - that has to be broken up and transported uses enormous amounts of energy. The ore comes immersed in solid rock, which is first separated from the mountain using explosives and is then loaded onto trucks able to carry loads of more than 300 tons each, all travelling at a speed of around 30kph in a continuous process of feeding the mill that breaks down the rock into a thin sand from where the mineral is extracted by a chemical process known as mineral flotation. Production targets are aggressive and grow every year - fed by the growing demand for copper, molybdenum and gold which, combined with the historically high prices of the last ten years, makes every day's target a continuous fight for everyone.

In order to obtain the mineral, a group of executives has to be carefully planning how the mine topography will be developed, ensuring that cranes and trucks will be able to access places where the elusive vein of mineral is found. Every day the information system reports the amounts of rock broken up, the transported

and processed ore and the amount of energy used - either from explosives, diesel or electric power sources. Every day people go to sleep in the camp, after their twelve hour shift, either with the sense that they have accomplished what they were expected, or with a sense of failure that they are behind target.

They live in a continuous game of trying to surpass targets, to subjugate the challenges that the mountain sets in front of them. Not meeting the day's targets means that they have to make an extra effort to obtain more from the earth the next day, increasing efforts and resources. When the rock does not provide enough mineral, the amount of rock they have to crush increases, so they can accomplish the targeted amount of mineral output. The speed of the conveyer belt and of the crushing mills are set according to the combination of the ore grade and the targets - they run at a steady pace, and everyone has to adapt to the production rhythm established by the machine pace. Everyone seems happy when weekly production targets are met. This means that they do not have to fight harder in order to achieve the promised targets. The feeling is very different when they are experiencing the opposite. Pressure increases and they know they risk not just their bonuses, but that their efforts will have to be redoubled.



Figure 6 The Mine Pit

The environmental conditions of the mine are harsh. The mine is an open pit with hundreds of miles of roads that run along the slopes at an incline that allows the heavy trucks to travel at an average speed of 30 kph. It is freezing cold in winter, when temperatures drop to -10 Celsius and over 35 degrees during the summer, at an altitude of 3,500m above sea level, where a lack of oxygen can be noted when making a physical effort.

People become used to these conditions, but this is at a cost - they become harsh miners and, as such, learn to survive in this environment and do well. It is in these conditions that the company mission of creating economic value has been accomplished during the last ten years. It was not only that they met or exceeded every target - they have also met ambitious targets in areas of labour relations, environmental standards and community relations. It is in this context that the environmental incident and the consequent events of September 2009

are formed as showing that a “new environment” has emerged for the company and that change is needed.

As a milestone, September 2009 represents how a “new environment” is objectified by the company management. This is contradictory to the symmetrical relation of deploying resources to tackle the challenges that the mountain sets in front of them, relations that are also replicated in labour and community relations. The company management team begins to dwell in a completely different context, which confronts them with experiences they have not experienced before.

The team are called to do more than just relate with what is in front of them - the harsh mountain environment, metallurgical recovering processes, mineral concentrate transport or shipping - escalating their efforts to mirror every challenge, deploying innovation and resources needed for obtaining what is required. From this point they see the importance of a different praxis, one that includes a relation of looking, listening, feeling and relating in different ways with the world that surrounds them. For a short period of time, part of the executive group becomes immersed in their experience of the crises, where the exploitative relation that has made them “successful” converges with the formation of a “new environment”, which makes evident the need to change company practices if they are to be successful in building a future.

At this time, leadership was immersed in hierarchical practices, bringing to the company a planning process of production that was transferred to all other activities related to the company - including social and environmental issues. However, following September 2009, leadership was faced with the

uncertainties, messiness and subtleties of this “new environment”. Now, they, the company management, needed to dwell in a world that was not “out there” to be sorted out, but need to be attended to as embodied with a sense of belonging. The “new environment” meant that sharing and acknowledging that reality was not fixed and they, as managers, had no privileged position to control the outcomes that would emerge from interacting within a heterogenic net of stakeholders. This meant that in order to transform their relation with “the environment”, they had to be able to address the type of relationship they were having with themselves and others. This proved to be a change that changed the “them” into “us”.

The “environment” was not a ready-made reality but a relation, where their selves became able to make a difference, forming and being formed by the conditions of interaction. This new environment meant being able to subjectify a different observing perspective than the one they were used to. It involved the activity of transforming their observation altogether, becoming not just observers but embodying the change emerging from interacting with different stakeholders. The company CEO stated what this transformation meant in plain language : *“I see you”*, meaning seeing and being seen whilst allowing the self and its actions to be transformed by what they are seeing in each other, in an evolving process. The management were asked to become observers of their observation process and allow others as observers to be transformed as well.

The management were called to construct trusting relationships with all stakeholders. The distinctions between economic, social and environmental values were not needed, since they were not separate categories in an ethical

relation of seeing each other and acting according to their concerns. This represented a change in relation with everything they were used to. Negative symmetrical relations were no longer the type of relation that could build the company's future - only positive reciprocal interaction with their stakeholders could manage that.

What they were facing was not just a different approach to value creation. Before, they were able to keep themselves the same, distancing themselves from their actions, even upgrading their technological capacities, but not changing their practices. The management was facing the need to conceive their practices as phronetic (Chia & Holt, 2011; Dunne, 1983), where actions could not be separated from their making, in an ethical stand where they could not be conceived as outside the domain of the observer (Maturana & Verden-Zöller, 2008). What needs special attention here is not what was made, but the observer's standpoint and how it is transformed through this process.

Negative symmetrical relations are a form of differentiation between observer and phenomenon, where the observer experience of standing aside (or in front) of the phenomenon is easily comprehended as belonging to a different domain of experience - hence leading to act upon it as an outside experience. Positive reciprocal relationships mean the opposite: the observer is part of the phenomenon, which cannot be acknowledged as a different domain than that of an observing experience.

Positive reciprocity is a practice of de-differentiation, which presupposes the other in the flow of interaction and interdependency, where the response takes place through acknowledging the previous action as belonging to the same

domain of experience. This acknowledgement allows the observer, who is experiencing the transforming effect, of relating reflectively to his own self as the origin and finale of the phenomenon. The other is simultaneously “out there” and “in here”. There is no dualism between observer and observation, between action and representation.

Trusting relationships were objectified as a strategic intent, but became codified from an experience of touching and being touched in the confluence of the multiplicity of realities to which they related when facing the crisis of September 2009. The management had constructed a negative symmetrical relation to the communities, seeing themselves as different and able to stand aside of what they needed (“facing downhill” as Karlos put it), so that every time they detected a need, they came with some sort of solution (acting “to them” according to Karlos). By this approach the company provided all sorts of programmes for the valley residents, who came to expect that every small or large requirement could be met, building an escalation of needs and solutions, which increased the community dependency and at the same time resentment of the company’s powerful presence. After September 2009, a new form of “other” came into sight of the company management. They “discovered” they need to build relations of mutual trust, which could only be constructed by “seeing deep” into the other, building with the other, and not just tackling every situation with a solution.

Instead of the dominating and dependence-creating relation that the management team had maintained, they needed to develop the “solicitous care” relationship that “jumps ahead” of the other in order to give him or her back the freedom to care by themselves (Bishop and Scudder, 1991; Heidegger, 1973).

Trusting relationships became the basis for a sustainable future if the company was to continue to operate in the valley. But was this transformation possible? Could the differentiation relationships, so pervasive in the mining industry, be replaced by one of positive reciprocity, which allowed all actants, even the physical environment, to engage in a deep solicitude care for each other?

The adopted answer from the company management to these questions was that it could be done. Why not? They were accustomed to accomplishing every challenge posed to them. They codified and formulated a Sustainability Strategy which declared the company mission to create simultaneous economic, social and environmental value. They acknowledged, at least from their declarations, that value emerged from a positive reciprocal relationship with all its stakeholders, hitherto absent from the company relational landscape.

A number of institutional arrangements made this declaration seem authentic, such as the distribution of power to new managers in the organisational chart, the dramatic reduction of weighting given to production numbers in supervisors' bonuses calculation (from 85% to 15%), the "new podium" which elevated community relations and safety over production in order to get visibility and the amount communications emphasising the declared intention.

However, as we see across the analysis of the different case events, strategy quickly became a represented artifact to be managed as any other project in a negative symmetrical relation according to the challenges that it set. The management saw themselves as external observers who could have a distant position, adding or subtracting activities to the agenda and "ticking boxes" in a project management control system as the key form of strategising.

Moreover, in order to own the project, executives built a distanced way of relating to the formulated strategy, at the same time that they reproduced the habituated form of management they had been used to, constituting symmetrical relationship with their challenges in ways that had characterised their habituated management practice. These practices overcame the insights and intentionality that brought the formulation of the strategy together after the September 2009 environmental accident.

After twenty months of the strategy codification and formulation, mistrust had been persistent within the executive group, which had become unable to overcome their hierarchical and functional positioning and to develop a flexible pattern of interaction amongst themselves and with other groups of stakeholders. What was understood as a transformation of the relation of the self, in order to dwell in a “new environment”, had become a mandate to others with no reference to their own practices other than a rhetorical one.

Executives were removed from their positions when it was demonstrated that they could not steer the company to achieve the targeted production levels, safety standards or community related targets that they had promised to the board. Trusting relationships had proved necessary with stakeholders, but they were hindered by the habituated practices of negative symmetrical relationships that characterised the company practices. Negative symmetrical relations took over - when the team deployed to run the company is not successful, a new team was deployed, resources were rearranged to ensure that the company “won” in this harsh and always challenging environment.

Making a close analysis of interaction patterns and having had the opportunity to access the narrative trajectory of practices of the self of some of the actants in the process observed, it seems convenient to reflect about what could have been different if the championed ethical stand of the strategy had been able to “temper” what seems to be a determined company practice.

CHAPTER 5: CASE ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter presents the analysis of events described in the previous chapter, from the theoretical perspectives reviewed in the first chapter. There, I argued that the crux of the definition of a non-dualist epistemology is that action, subjects and context emerge simultaneously, having no pre-existence relative to each other; hence conceiving the forming process of subjects and subjectivities as an eco-logical process of mutual composition of actions in interaction. “Interaction” refers to how actions have an effect upon themselves – forming other actions, whose associations are able to construct subjectivities and which, in turn, belong to the reflexive action of subjects constructed by these same interactions. Leadership as a relational product, in this perspective, becomes embedded in context and can emerge when the context contains specific forming processes.

This epistemology, as I argued before, brings a perspective on leadership referred to as a “relational approach to leadership” (Hosking, 2011), which instead of focusing on the “entity” of leadership as situated in individuals or collectives, attends to the relational process of its formation as identity and phenomena. In figure/background relation, the background is actors, and the foreground the context in which it is formed.

As systematic understanding of this formation logic, I exposed what can be regarded as a formation epistemology based on “transformative causality” (Stacey, 2010), by which organisational features and unpredictable futures

emerge in the present, in interaction between actants, which themselves emerge relationally through a reflexive process of formation.

Having defined this epistemological frame, I went into exploring a more specific understanding of interaction as a subject/subjectivity forming process. For this, I explored the assumptions of “Relational Communication” (Bateson, 2001, 2000; Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson, 1967). Specifically I asserted that interaction is immanent, due to the fact every act can acquire a message value – make a difference – because of its relationality to other actions in a pattern. Power resides in interaction and neither in individual or collectives formed by them. This resonates with a process philosophy which sustains “...things are relationally produced which cannot be construed by their own making but because of difference as their main organising process” (Chia and Nayak 2011:287).

One of the corollaries of this perspective, is that power to subjectify practices resides in the endless and multiple sequence of “offer-response-offer” of actions. Without an “offer”, there is no value in a “response”, as both actions in interaction have the same status and emerge from endless possibilities. Thus, action can act as confirming, disconfirming (Leone Cissna & Sieburg, 1982) or rejection of previous utterances recursively composing each other’s meaning. It is in this process of association of actions that patterns of interaction are constructed, which, in turn, form contexts, which give meaning to these same actions, in an endless and at the same time creative process.

Following Bateson’s (2000) work in relational communication, I said that we can talk about “differentiating” and “reciprocal” patterns of interaction, each of them

affording very different possibilities, pragmatically and epistemologically, for the subjectivities involved. Patterns of negative symmetry and complementarity form different subjects than reciprocal symmetry and complementarity, I hypothesised.

Once explaining what a non-dualist epistemology brings into the study of leadership, I suggested that a relational orientation to study leadership can be based on Foucault's work on subjectification, especially on "care of the self" (2005; 1988; 1988), a relational concept situated in the ethical and aesthetic domain of the subject's constitution, a relation of the self with the self in the midst of a web of constraints, which accentuates the ontological notion of freedom as the possibility of being human, as a form by which the self elaborates one's life as personal work of art (Foucault, 2005:43), into the phronetic practice of discovering the self as a knowledge that enables us to live properly.

Care of the self is a concept that has importance not just because it explains the constitution of subjects, but also because of its relevance in the formation of regimes of truth, by which the self and others subjectify the truth of their present situation. This is referred to as governmentality, the "conduct of conducts" (Foucault M. , 2010), whereby the self, forming some form of truth about itself, contributes to the "government technologies" by which the "other" constructs its own definition of truth in its practices of coping in the world.

I suggested that by exploring the process of forming a specific subjectivity, trusting relationships, we could explore leadership as an emerging phenomenon, when we understand that the forming of this new subjectivity and

leadership form simultaneously as an emergent phenomenon. Following these concepts, we can understand how it is that choices, desires, aspirations wants and lifestyles of individuals and groups are formed in the creation of a particular regime of practices (Dean, 2010).

The formulated strategic aim in the case described in this thesis suggests that the formation of a particular regime of practice has been proposed. In order to build a sustainable future the company needs to form trusting relationships, understood as mutual solicitous care for what is valuable to each other, between the company management and a wide net of stakeholders. In this chapter, I analyse the findings described in the previous chapter about the case company. First I will focus on describing what I regard as the context of the leadership practice in this theoretical perspective, and then analyse leadership as a phronetic form of practice.

I will begin by making a short overview of history that gives way to the formulation of the strategic intent of building trusting relationships between the company management and all its stakeholders. Then I will explore how it is that trusting relationships are portrayed in the company's relationships with its stakeholders, especially with its employees and the valley's residents where it operates. The aim is to analyse them from the non-dualist perspective that understands them as secondary formations of patterns and contexts of interaction.

THE COMPANY CONTEXT OF LEADERSHIP EMERGENCE

Mining is a destructive activity and copper mining shown in this case is on a scale that probably has little parallel in other industries. For obtaining a pound of fine copper, it is necessary to process nearly a ton of arid, barren rock. MMC produces roughly 440 KTY (Kilo Tons per Year) of fine copper, which means that they process more than 63 billion tons of rock every year. This means transporting material, enormous amounts of supplies, technology, people and financial resources.

This is an industry that in Chile operates in the harsh environment of the high mountains of the Andes or the arid desert of Atacama, usually far from populated locations. MMC is an exception – its huge operation is situated on the frontier between Chile and Argentina, in a valley where the population was previously dedicated to small-scale agriculture. Its industrial activity competes for the use of water, roads and principally with the local customs of a once peaceful agricultural valley's villages and towns.

The environmental impact of this industrial activity is highly regulated by Chilean law. Before beginning its operations, the mine needed to complete the process of environmental and social impact assessment and clearance by authorities and communities. MMC obtained clearance to operate in 1997, before constructing the plant, pit, port, concentrate transportation pipeline and its first tail dam.

Most of the commitments were effectively fulfilled, according to the company's sustainability annual reports. However, new conditions and unforeseen events occurred. New reserves were discovered; the plant processing capacity was expanded and a new tail dam constructed. A new proposal was submitted to the communities, which was also approved, but this time with many more concerns and better knowledge from the local authorities and communities, which asked for higher cost mitigations and the commitment to preserve higher environmental standards.

The company ethos was to produce economic value, and this was done for almost a decade in a distinctive way, preserving most of the social and environmental commitments. The focus given to this "objective function" – as company management refers to it – means "mitigating" the environmental and social costs, which neglected the presence of environmental and social issues for almost a decade. This came to an end in September 2009, when a series of environmental accidents provoked a different reaction from almost all agents involved.

Listening to the voices of the company, the impact of this situation on employees and management was significant. The pride of belonging to a success story of economic, innovation and environmental and social commitment lost its ground and the company ethos began to be challenged not just by those seen as "outsiders", but by management, employees and board members.

The September 2009 series of environmental accident was a milestone with a number of implications. The accident was acknowledged as representing a

change in the “environment” in which the company operated. The incremental interaction between stakeholders, especially communities' representatives and company management, created possibilities of a different pattern of relationships, which emerged as these groups faced each other in the midst of the crisis. A new language, metaphors and mythologies emerged, and a whole different concept of the company's identity began to circulate amongst the management – in particular in relation to what was the company's business.

THE ACTUAL REGIME OF PRACTICE

As we have seen in the account of the relationship between the company management and its different stakeholders, the actual status of this type of relationships differs greatly from the intended rationality of trusting relationships. It is striking in the relationship with almost every stakeholder, contractor and company employee, as well as between the valley residents and the company.

I found that ‘asymmetric partnerships’ define habituated practices of employees and managers but do not imply trust between them. Employees have a strong sense of hierarchy with their managers and, at the same time, managers show openness and egalitarian treatment with employees. More contrasting is the relationship with contractor's employees, which show praise of egalitarian treatment based on an almost free access they have to the company management, access to information and facilities comparable with the company employees. However, the contract that they hold is far from equal, with

imperative termination dates; salaries are unequal; shifts are much longer, and demonstrable the signs showing a vast inequality between the company and contractor's employees. It seems that the direct relationships between managers and employees overcome these differences in the formation of the experience of partnership of employees. However, almost all human resources practices implemented by the company stress asymmetrical relationship between management and employees.

I termed this relationship as “asymmetric partnership”, which highlights an ambivalent relationship plagued of contradictions between differentiation and egalitarianism. On one side are human resources policies, which seem to stress normalising practices of hierarchy and control, while the day-to-day interaction between managers and employees seems to be experienced as a partnership. Alvesson & Kärreman (2007) suggest that instead of shaping functional organisational practices, human resource practices act through “aspirational control”, linking identities to management control, which in this case seems to work more in the direction of preserving the disciplined and hierarchical relationships pervasive in MMC. This finding seems to confirm this function of HR policies, which should be seen as the use of institutional power, and which in this case contradicts the strategic intention of creating trusting relationships as the predominant rationality governing the interaction with all of its stakeholders.

These findings show traces of the contexts formed in interaction between managers and employees. It is notable that there is a multiplicity of them. First, and it seems that this has primacy over the second forming one, is a rationality

of differentiation between managers and employees reflected in the Human Resources practices, which have a component of institutional relational definition, with a clear message of hierarchy and control over each other. The message seems to be: “We are partners in this business as long as you keep your submissive relation to managers who will show you benevolence and egalitarian treatment so long as you keep to this submissive hierarchical relation to them”. From the interviews with employees, this arrangement seems not to be problematised and converges with their own practice of the self. I have shown how deeply the company practice of differentiation is introduced in the truth employees form of themselves, confirming the presence of a specific regime of truth in the company practices. “Asymmetric partnership” becomes a location where employees' aspirations and management control meet.

From a “relational communication” perspective, a rigid complementary interaction is present with this group of stakeholders, a context that differs greatly to the declared strategic intention. A positive and reciprocal interaction, which instead of forming differentiated subjects in interaction between managers and employees, have a series of implications that I will portray later in the next chapter.

The interaction is similar to the pattern of the relation between company and employees, showing a progressive differentiating process between them, either in dependency or opposition between them and the company. Some of the valley residents define themselves as praising the economic possibilities that the company has provided. They cite the source of employment for young people or infrastructure and services for the villages as examples of this. Others

express their dissatisfaction, arguing that what the company has provided has not been enough, so that their expectations have become frustrated. What this group share is a dependent identity with the company, either as “victims” or as “beneficiaries” of the company community relationship policies. A second group defined themselves as being concerned with the loss of their lifestyles and the landscape, either positioning themselves in resistant or conforming stands. No one was indifferent to the presence of the company's operations either in dependent, conforming or resistant positions, all forms of mistrust.

This is a synopsis of the status of the relations between the company and these two groups of stakeholders. It shows the forming process of an interactional pattern of differentiation, which instead of composing a relationship of mutual acknowledgement and care for each other, highlights them locked in an interaction where the only possibilities seem to be subjectifying more of the same. Employee actions of submission evoke actions of egalitarian treatment, perceived as fair by them, producing more actions of submission, which reinforce the pattern, creating a pattern of rigid complementarity. Each of the actors' identities (submissive/egalitarian) in relation to each other becomes formed by this pattern of interaction. The same happens in the interaction between the company and valley residents, in which I found either a rigid complementary interaction pattern, forming dependent or conforming actors; or a rigid symmetry, an escalation of demands and their fulfilment by which actors become formed in these different patterns.

Furthermore, I have observed these differentiating patterns are not alien to those within the executive team, as well as those between most of its members and the middle managers' group, and with the board members and its advisors.

Trusting relationships fail to emerge between almost all the stakeholder groups. We observed the effects of this when there is a breakdown in the relation. This breakdown happened in September 2009, mobilising communities and the company's management to reframe their relationship and formulate the "Sustainability Strategy". However, the strategy seems to have failed, as a further breakdown in relations happened again with different stakeholders. Eighteen months after the formulation of the strategy most of the executive team, including the CEO, were dismissed from the company. According to the chairman of the board, they were no longer trusted to run the company.

Trusting relationships with the board were not repaired, apparently because the end of year forecast (November 2011) showed that the company was not going to achieve the production levels predicted in March 2011. The chairman of the board did not tolerate this for a second year. The dismissal of most of the executive team buried the codified "Sustainability Strategy" and along with it the "relational model" that prescribed how to construct "trusting relationships". The paradox is that even when "trusting relationships" as a strategic aim are not openly pursued any more, the reasons for the breakdown are exactly what the strategy intended to repair. In the next section, I will analyse how it is that the strategy implementation and its leadership fails, and what does this say to us in relation to leadership from a non-dualistic relational orientation.

I divided the analysis into three sections. The first refers to shifting from the practice of strategising, which can be characterised as praxis, to one that becomes acting “about” a represented object, which in this case is the “Sustainability Strategy”. The second section analyses the interactional context within the executive team and with some of their stakeholders, showing the primacy of a differentiating pattern that forms a context in which it is *almost* impossible that a phronetic form of leadership can emerge. Finally I analyse, the practices of the self of the CEO in the midst of the interaction of the executive team, and consider the possibilities for the emergence of a phronetic form of leadership from the pariah figure into which he has become. In also consider whether a practice of parrhēsia could have formed him as the parrhesiastes figure of “conscious pariah” proposed by (Arendt, 1978).

FROM PRAXIS TO REPRESENTATION

It is interesting that what was initially, after the events of September 2009, a praxis³¹, of “seeing each other”, of positive reciprocity and self forming, quickly became transformed into an “artefact”, to be presented to the board and “communicated” to the company's employees. After its objectification and representation, nobody owned the practice that was visible only for a short

³¹ Dunne (1993:10) reading in the distinction between poiesis and praxis made by Aristotle, as an activity, “which is conducted in a public space with others in which a person, without ulterior purpose and with a view to no object detachable from himself, acts in such a way as to realize excellences that he has come to appreciate in his community as constitutive of a worthwhile way of life”.

period, following the events of September 2009. Just to remind the reader what I am referring to, a short narrative of the event follows:

The malfunction of the pipeline was followed by the late reaction of the people responsible for maintaining and monitoring it; the valley inhabitants responded angrily to the river pollution; the company management were faced with a reaction from the communities that they had not experienced before; employees lost their pride in being part of a “successful” mining company; the board was concerned with losing reputation and the risk for the continuity of the operation; Karlos, the CEO, describes the situation as a “new environment” for the company management; the release of the film “Avatar” brought to mind the mythologies of transformation and the practice of “I see you” in contrast to the violent exploitative behaviour of a (fictional) mining company; and the advice of a renowned environmentalist to consider all of their stakeholders. These events configure a different type of interaction between parts of the company management and the valley's residents for this relatively short period of time.

For this brief period, people faced each other and paid attention to how they were listening to each other and their own understanding of what was needed if this “new environment” was to be addressed. It was an interaction that brought with it a different ethics, where *the relation* came to the foreground. It was not a “nice” interaction environment: tensions and conflict surfaced. But it was emergent and created, for a short while, a different pattern of interaction.

However, it was the predominant regime of practices (Dean, 2010) that took over these “un-owned” (Chia & MacKay, 2013) management processes of strategy implementation. The codification of the situation and its formulation into

a “Sustainability Strategy” reveals that the intention to reduce uncertainty (Morin, 2008), manage the unknown and to have a clear sense of managerial control, replacing an ethics of interaction, were the main aims after September 2009. By April 2010 (six months after the environmental accident), an articulated strategy formulation passed through various different protocols, such as the Strategic Planning Meetings with representatives of all the company’s stakeholders and the presentation and approval of the “Sustainability Strategy” by the board. From here it became a unilateral, intentional and locatable project, responding to autonomous and deliberate actions of company management.

From privileging “withinness” (Shotter, 2010), acting without differentiating their actions from an ulterior intentionality, just coping with their present living conditions and undeliberatively adopting a “wayfinding” approach to strategy (2011), company management adopted an “aboutness” orientation which privileged the building of a representational management project, from which they could detach and over which they sought to exert control. The interaction of executives shifted from face-to-face interaction with employees and valley residents to interaction with this management project. A “new environment” with which they related as coping in the present living conditions of their daily lives is transformed into an abstract artefact, *representing* the aims, expectations, resources and practices that should be introduced in the company's practices. Not only the object of their attention shifts, but also the interaction, since now instead of a practice of reciprocal “I see you”, acting according to their experience of the “other”, they establish a symmetrical interaction with an

abstract artefact where every challenge is followed with a management action to fulfil abstracted objectives of the “plan”.

The representation of practice is not the practice itself, as the map is not the territory, whose relation is through “news of difference” (Bateson, 1991). Only “news”?, Bateson asks himself (1991), suggesting that we can only relate to experience influenced by the map we make of the territory. When representing, executives are able to distance themselves from their experience, ordering, making everything predictable and distancing from the living present in which it is possible to build a different future. The intended practice of establishing relationships of care with all the company stakeholders means the presence of reciprocal interaction in the living present, where each is abandoning its own interests in preference for a relation of solicitous care of each other. This means acknowledging others’ expectations but not acting on behalf of what needs to be done for the other, in a service or dependent relationship, but with the other, anticipating his or her potential, not in order to take his or her care away but to give it back. It is an interaction pervaded by reciprocity, which helps the self to discover itself as a carer and in care become a free subject to care. (Bishop and Scudder, 1991; Heidegger, 1973), and this only can happen in a “witness” experience.

Once represented, the strategy is detached from their daily living conditions of interaction with all its messiness, uncertainty, and contradictions and becomes stripped of uncertainty, since they are “experts” in managing “complex” projects, in reducing complexity. What is different from almost all their previous project, is that this one is not only about the “other”, building dams, mines or complex

financial schemes, but also about themselves. It is they themselves who need to be transformed and subjected as different subjects in order to become a caring company.

Building trusting relationships, as I have argued previously, is (even when seemingly in contradictory terms) a phronetic practice (Dunne, 1993; Chia & Holt, 2011), actions that have not another aim than construing the subject as such. The executive team cannot construct trusting relationships without transforming their relationship, through their actions, with all their stakeholders, forming themselves into different subjects. What they do instead, is construct a reification of what is required and relate to this object in a dualist relationship of management and control, where there is little reference to themselves as subjects of the transformation required on it.

In this scenario, there is no care of the self-practice to accomplish, their ethical and aesthetic relation with themselves and others becomes alienated from the situation. They establish a distanced relationship with their practice of the self. Moreover, what we see is that soon, and emotion of care is replaced by cynicism, acting “as if” they were doing so in relation to the strategic intention of creating trusting relationships, a metaphoric form of action with no effect in their living present. It is most striking to observe that in such scenarios, what has primacy are habituated practices, in this case, practices of control and reducing uncertainty through the practice of “project management”. Which, in turn, brings along practices of hierarchical and differentiation relationships.

In the next section, I will interpret with a non-dualist relational epistemology what I found about how leadership and the intended subjectivity of trusting

relationships fail to emerge in this context. First, I will show how rhetoric practices, relationally constructed the company leadership, and especially the figure of the CEO in a subject of very different qualities than the required to form trusting relationships. Then I will analyse how it is that the emergence of the subject of the parrhesiastes (Foucault M. , 2001), provides the possibility of forming a leadership subject able to form the intended subjectivity. I will then argue that even when the figure of the parrhesiastes fails to constitute leadership in this situation, the formed figure of the pariah and especially the “conscious pariah” (Arendt, 1978) as a figure with great possibilities of constituting the phronetic leadership practice required by the company strategy.

RHETORIC AND THE FAILURE OF LEADERSHIP

The description of the third event in the previous chapter shows how the well codified and represented strategy priorities were “communicated” to more than three hundred managers within the company in a notorious “supervisors’ dinner”. Using a masterly crafted set of rhetorical resources, including metaphorical and mythological language, Karlos tried to persuade them to “see deep into the other” and “actively commit to doing great things”. It is a call for positive reciprocity.

However, the event shows that the well-intentioned and nicely arranged CEOs message to the audience was taken over by the unconscious, unreflective presence of hierarchical relationships – the prescription and obedience that

characterised the company practices. The benefits of openly-prescribed trusting relationships in everyday practices became weak signals compared with the strong and non-declared hierarchical relationships, prescription, obedience and project management practices that were shown as simultaneous and contradictory in this “communication event”.

De Certeau (1988) notes that strategic intentions, as isolated representations, bring into place the diverse modes of institutional power to mobilise people’s action. In this event, a mix of rhetorical resources and the exposure of diverse management control devices, such as the “new podium”, were deployed in Karlos’ speech. A leadership practice, as the capacity to form subjectivities and institutional arrangements, was absent in this “communication event”.

Even when “communication” practices look inspirational and ground-breaking, “offers” need to be confirmed in an author/reader relationship (de La Ville & Mounoud, 2002), which contrary to the passive reception, converts “strategy” as ready to be ignored, resisted or innovated in “tactical” ways. The “supervisors’ dinner” represented the contradictory process that tried to subjectify managers as active and committed to doing “great things” and at the same time, subjected them to hierarchical prescriptions and obedience that construed them as passive subjects of their emotions. Certainly in the continuous process of care of the self, this event probably contributed more to constituting “asymmetric partnerships” than trusting relationships.

The rhetoric, inviting the audience to confirm a different “way of doing things”, which indeed was openly praised by some, is multiple and contradictory. Instead of receiving confirmation of his speech, the responses to Karlos’

presentation were cautious and revolved around how the subjectification process might work. A voice in the audience at the end of the show asked for the presence of a master who would show, with his presence and actions that he cared for what they should care for themselves. If a change was to happen in their practice of the self, he showed them the need to choose the master of this relationship, an essential feature of the governmentality practice an open rejection of the hierarchical and prescriptive relationship offered by top executives to middle managers (Foucault M., 2005; 1988).

Regardless of the sophisticated rhetoric deployed to persuade people about the rationale of the strategic agenda, what is subjectified in the present living conditions of interaction, are a passive resistance and the quest for a change in the prescriptive relationship, where the self of the top executives remains unchanged, between the top and middle managers. This episode remains as a first action signing to the need of the “parrhesiastes” (Foucault M. , 2001), a subject constructing practice that makes coherent truth, logos and bios. We observe a rhetorical practice, which whatever the good been offered, is sitting people to be persuaded about what is good. We see here the absence of actions that construe the subject about which the strategy was formulated. If we follow Foucault's argument that governmentality power becomes with the truth-telling practice of parrhēsia, we can see here how the project of the self, embodied in the strategy project, distances from the strategy management practices at this point. Moreover, Foucault (2001) emphasises that the true parrhesiastes, whom he distinguishes from the “flatterer” is not eventual but permanent, continuous and steady. The becoming of the company practice is

taken over the immanently habituated practices of hierarchical and differentiating relationships.

What is taking place here is the multiplicity of selves that are simultaneously being construed in this situation, in a relational understanding of leadership, we must understand what the context in which actions can make a difference is. What is the context to which one and the other self is responding to, and at the same time, which are the practices from which they are responding. Assuming a relational perspective of leadership, this means asking about the context itself from which these actions represent traces. It seems that the answer to this question, from what I have seen, is that the most predominant context has become the managerial context of hierarchy and control, which needs the ordering power of representation, which takes over the reflexive self of the parrhesiastes which can be present more eventually, unveiling the truth of the situation.

The emergence of a phronetic form of leadership will emerge from the practice of parrhēsia. This is to say that it will emerge in such a situation from the practice of care of the self, a specific relationship between truth³² and the form of life. The contradictions highlighted in the descriptions of the events show that the practice of the self of executives is distanced, disconnected from their practices, what always rhetoric does to the self. The interest is to persuade the other by other means than showing the truth in its own actions.

The relation of the self-revealed in these actions reflect little correspondence between logos and practice, but most important is that reflects parrhēsia, not as a permanent, continuous, and steady practice of parrhēsia by the executive group. If there is to be formed a different regime of practice, there must be a difference that makes a difference. Leadership becomes constituted in a relational process of forming truth about a purposive action by the practice of parrhēsia. There is nothing that shows what the way for forming the “see you” practice they are talking about. I will examine then, how it is that this process goes in the following events of the case.

Explaining the failure of this subjectivity to emerge by understanding its emergence as counterpoint between representation and non-dualism perspectives results insufficient if there is little reference to the context. As I have argued, a non-dualist perspective of or relationality needs to make reference to the forming process of interaction, which simultaneously forms context and subjects. We have seen, in the midst of the executive team interaction, how a number of non-propositional “offers” to form a different practice in their roles and relationships, more accordance to the strategy intention, were ignored. Instead, hierarchical relations and “turf battles” (defense of functional positions) appeared as the most predominant practice within this group.

Moreover, as shown in the description of events 4 and 5, managers who were initially subjected as “strategists” became an obstacle to the strategy implementation. Strategising for them became an arrangement of resources and activities in the agenda. What results contrasting was how Karlos’ offers,

coherent to his ethical positioning, became incomprehensible and unintelligible – and thus was never translated – into the group interaction.

In the executive team interaction, when they faced data that showed the risk of failure of the strategy implementation, the group constructed an even more complicated form of distancing than the mere isolation and representation of strategy – they removed themselves as subjects from the narratives of their own practices. Not only did they distance themselves, but at the same time they acted “as if” they were in it, constructing a way of engaging with the topics declared in the strategy formulation that became cynical and as such, ambivalent.

From a dwelling (Chia & Holt, 2011:133) form of existence, this group moved into a representational world that separated them and made them assume positions of “foreign” designers and controllers of the building process. They became seduced by their positions, which placed no limit on their power to edit, exclude and include in representations what organisational reality should have become. Interestingly, it is this detached and unreflective engagement that made them ignorant to what was being subjectified by their own practice.

Trusting relationships were codified as a set of behaviours to be executed, formulated in a “relational model” which specifies “six steps” to trust and which represents something that one can perform to others with little meaning for oneself. It is not a form of engagement with the world that is intended, but a prescription to be performed. This prescription becomes, then, “a thing” to be learned and applied as a mechanics of relations and not to be subjectified as a basic, ontic position, where the relation of the self is involved. It becomes not an

ethic of the interaction but a utilitarian action with little implication for the subjectification of practices.

Relationally, this confusing form of action brings confusing effects in the interaction, by one side content in interaction says something contradictory to what a relational level is showing. Action's meaning, as constructed in interaction shows little confirmatory actions to each other, converting conversations in infertile exchanges of little value in forming any new subjectivity.

Strategy became an artefact that had little relevance to the executive team practices and became a habituated practice of detailed "ticking boxes" (Alvesson, 2008) in a "project management" practice, where the role of the strategy manager was to control and set the agenda.

INTERACTIONAL CONTEXT AND LEADERSHIP EMERGENCE

In a non-dualist perspective of the relational forming of leadership, it is emergent and not pre-existent to individuals or another identity, but from practice. Before attending to specific actions, if we attend to patterns of relational communication (Bateson, 2000; Rogers & Escudero, 2004; Rogers & Escudero, 2004) Attending to the context construed through interaction we can have a characterisation of the possibilities of given actions to get subjectified. As shown in these events, differentiation patterns were predominant in the

interaction within the executive team, between the executive team members and the executive team and the board members and advisors.

The analysis of these two events (No 5 and No 6) contributes to demonstrate that the presence of a pattern of differentiation driven by negative symmetrical and complementary interaction prevents the emergence of subjectivities such as trusting relationships and a phronetic form of leadership. This finding points to the fact that leadership emergence has to be conceived as related to a wider ecology in the present and local interaction.

In event No 7, interaction between the executive team and other stakeholders, such as the board and corporate advisors of the holding company, was shown to be of a negative complementary type, revealing an extremely codified way of relating that further differentiated them and highlights their extreme positions of unequal power. The corollary is shown in the negative symmetrical interaction of the executive team with middle managers, which revealed that they shared little common ground, and there were many disputes between these two very differentiated groups. Middle managers subtly rejected the executive's "one-upness" actions that expressed mistrust and little concern for the company's practices related to key issues such as safety (set as a second strategic priority in the "new podium").

This negative symmetrical interaction seems to reveal the existence of not just a dispute, lack of common ground and struggle to define the relationship, but the existence of parallel-differentiated realities between these two groups. One of them, the executives, trying to reassure themselves in a controlling position,

while the other group trying to cope with the nuances, messiness and unpredictable conditions of their everyday lives.

Throughout these events, negative symmetrical interactions mean the presence of an interactional pattern in which there is little possibility of an action sequence in which actions compose each other as meaningful in themselves, construing subjects and subjectivities. Instead of producing patterns of mutual recognition and acceptance, actions seem to build only pre-existent identities that struggle for their own presence. Contrary to a reciprocal interaction pattern that emphasises the primacy of the relation and the presence of subjects and subjectivities as transitional, these differentiating patterns of interaction seem to freeze the evolutionary capacity of interaction. Trusting relationships, defined as relations of solicitous care, can only emerge in the midst of patterns where the mutual composition of this practice is present.

The same can be said about negative complementary relationships, which seem to belong to a different type, but if framed in the struggle for defining relationships, seem to show that relationships are frozen in a pattern in which key subjectivities are marginalised and left in the background of interaction. "I see you" as actions of reciprocal acknowledgement and recognition will not emerge within this pattern of interaction. Trusting relationships, as more general understanding of this attitude, cannot be construed in this context.

By contrast, this suggests that the emergence of trusting relations might be facilitated by the presence of positive reciprocal interactions, which mean that the relational control is not stable and routinised, but switches according to what is presented in the local and present interaction to the actants, which identities

are construed by this same process. By this same reasoning, positive reciprocal interaction relates to the intelligibility of a much wider range of possibilities. Instead of ignoring offers, actants are able to “interesse” (Latour, 2005) and find common ground, translate and enrol actions that construct a wider range of future possibilities. Positive reciprocity opens up the possibility that more marginalised practices of the self become subjectified.

Differentiating or reciprocal patterns of interaction should be regarded not as entities with an ontological status different than actions themselves by which are constituted. This means that I am dealing with the characterisation of these patterns in double mode, by one side as description of the forming process of actions/pattern/context, at the same time than referring to an epistemology into which this characterisation establishes the primacy of interaction as a forming process by which actions constitute context, which in turn form subjects and subjectivities. Differentiating patterns of interaction seem not to afford the emergence of the organising capacity of leadership in forming trusting relationships, since the interaction that afford the emergence of trusting relationships belong to a different form of interaction more in accord with a reciprocal interaction. Within an epistemological stance of differentiating interaction, it seems that there only can emerge actions that compose more of the differentiating patterns as we have seen through these events.

However, what we have seen in the described events of this case, is that, within the context of the differentiating interaction of the executive team, we find that the practice of the self of the CEO opens up the possibility of a transformation of this pattern of interaction, which despite being successful, offers the

possibility of portraying how it is that leadership ought to emerge in such context.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE CONSCIOUS PARIAH

During the case construction I was able to discern the ethical positioning of MMC's CEO, one of the many actants, whose actions helped to form the process "triggered" by the environmental accident.

Karlos' self, according to his own narrative, had gone through a long process of adjusting his self and the company relationships into a more "people centred" practice. This process, enacted through actions confirmed and made meaningful in different posts within companies of AAC Plc. during the previous years, proved him capable of constructing a governmentality regime (Dean, 2010; Miller & Rose, 2008) according to this orientation.

According to him, these governmentality regimes constructed different mentalities in these companies, changing their scope of actions and ethos. He narrated a process that culminated in the formulation of the sustainability strategy of MMC, bringing in the value of people as a different proposition, and trusting relationships with all its stakeholders as central to its capacity to produce a sustainable future for the company.

The analysis of his narratives in the social encounters of interviews (Alvesson, 2011) was not about the "reality" of the facts that he was presenting, but about the type of ethical relation he established with the facts as he narrated them –

how his self was enacted in the construction of these events and the type of practice of the self he tried to get subjectified in these encounters with me. The event constituted a space to reflect on the concept of care of the self (Foucault M. , 1988; 2005) as a concept that fits a non-dualistic perspective in the emergence of leadership. At the same time, it was an opportunity to configure a background and better interpretation of Karlos's actions in the interaction sites within the executive team, shown in further episodes.

The description of this event (N°2) shows that there are a number of conditions that begin to configure a governmentality project. The first of these conditions was the emergence of a different language and forms of examining what the “environment” in which the company was operating had become. The second condition is that the executive team began to show a different pattern of interaction, slightly reciprocal with the valley residents that, as we now know, lasted for only a short period.

Nevertheless, we can understand leadership as an organising process (Fairhurst & Cooren, 2009; Hosking, 2011) of an ethical and aesthetic stand that acts as a locus where a given “project” of conducts is formed. Leadership in this perspective is not a random process of convergence between the organising practices from which emerges an epiphenomenon, but the process of reducing the latency and increasing the potentiality of the emergence of a given regime of practice.

Even when the CEO was in a recognisable position of prescribed power, I observed how the predominance of a rationality of control, distanced the self-constructing practice of care of the self from the company practices. In this

scenario, his ethical stand had no influence on the company's predominant discourse and became unintelligible within the predominant practice of management control. A glimpse of an ethics of positive reciprocity, shown during the period after the environmental accident of September 2009, was replaced by the habituated mentality of control and predictability, which had been central to the copper mining production process. The intention to address a "changed environment", converging different mentalities was resisted and through a number of subtle processes, neglected.

As I have argued, every action may have a relational value, makes a difference, and the ethical position of the CEO, even when in this case showed it had little consequences, other than diverting a large amount of resources to the "Sustainability Strategy" implementation and derailing careers, could have had governmentality implications, if a few conditions had been met.

Karlos' (MMC CEO) practice of the self played a key role in "punctuating" (Munro, 2009, p. 135) and objectifying a new truth about the "environment" to the company management and board. This process became governed by the emergence, through the interaction with stakeholders, of two new practices, which acted to reform the "environment" in which the company operated. One was the practice of reflective listening, observing the way by which the company management and employees were listening and relating with their stakeholders. The second was giving primacy to people and relations as the source from where value might emerge.

Leadership, as a fragile subjectivity and as a capacity to form new subjectivities, emerged in the chaotic circumstances post-September 2009, by the "interesse"

³³ (Callon, 1986; Latour, 2005) of external stakeholders (communities, authorities, NGOs, universities and other) as part of the company boundaries and relocates the company's business including new actants into the company's "objective function". A redefinition of the "environment" meant defining the copper mining operation as being concerned with a diversity of related interests, not just the monochromatic one of creating economic value, giving primacy to relationships with stakeholders.

The situation configured a governmentality project (Foucault M. , 2010; Dean, 2010; Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, 1991; Miller & Rose, 2008), where a different "mentality" was "proposed" in their praxis, which at its centre required the forming of trusting relationships.

However, as I have said previously, what I find is that this project became more of a "management project", with the same regime of practice we know previous to the formulation of the "Sustainability Strategy". Actions of the same interactional pattern were introduced, leaving the context unchanged. The habituated practices of what I have called "project management", by which every situation is tackled as a well-defined set of objectives, activities, deadlines and responsible individuals, took over the attention of the executive team, obscuring the uncertain, emergent and usually messy experience of interaction that was unfolding following the events of September 2009 and coping with it in an evolutionary way instead of by using the useless "map making" (Chia & Holt, 2011) practice.

³³ Usually translated from the French as "enrolment"

A practice of the self, evolving along with an emergent situation, able to punctuate the situation as a “new environment”, succumbed to the dominance of the company regimes of practice and differentiating pattern of interaction. A paradoxical result of this is that, in the practice of owning the management project, by distancing themselves from the strategy so as to exert their executive role of control, the executive group lost control of what the strategy intended to form. Mistrust within the executive group, with the board and middle management grew and a year after the strategy had shown little effect in the company practices.

It is in this field of interaction that, nearly a year after the strategy launch, the team identified that they seemed to be failing and, as a consequence, that their relation to their practices had become not just unreflective but cynical. They began to engage with their own practices “as if” they were doing what was expected, but with no care whatsoever for themselves or others.

When observing detailed interaction within the executive team, in the conditions described, I am able to identify a number of episodes in which there are “offers” to confirm and construct the situation as reflexive to the strategy intent of forming trusting relationships. However, in the presence of an interaction pattern of negative symmetry (Bateson, 1972; 2000; Rogers & Escudero, 2004) leading to increased differentiation, these “offers” were ignored, showing them unintelligible in the midst of an interaction pattern that reveals the presence of little common ground and struggle to define their identity and relations.

With his “offers” ignored, Karlos becomes an isolated figure, disconnected from the group's predominant discursive practice and interaction. He is ignored

because of the scarce possibilities the group demonstrates to “interesse”: to confirm and translate these “offers” into their practices in the context in which they operate. He becomes a pariah within the group, whose actions, even when respected by his rhetorical power, were never translated into team practice.

Differentiating pattern of interaction produces, instead of converging multiplicity of realities, that they remain parallel and reaffirmed in their own rationality. What we found here is the lack of “interesse”, the “common ground” within which action becomes intelligible to each other and able to form new subjectivities. It is in the midst of this intelligibility that the figure of the pariah emerges. This process is built up not by an external process, able to “cause” it from “outside” interaction. It is produced by the same interaction process, which is subjectified in the midst of its own narrative context (Fairhurst & Cooren, 2009).

The interaction of the executive team demonstrates the presence of multiple rationalities reflecting as well multiple realities, where each executive represented at least one of them. Karlos’ “offers” found no ground to be confirmed, and they were ignored or even disconfirmed, as they would have never occurred. It made no difference. The group was trying to coordinate a different practice than Karlos was suggesting.

How can the figure of the pariah be constituted in leadership, able to form subjects, subjectivities and organisational arrangements? In order for leadership to emerge, actions ought to make a difference, and what can make this difference is the relation of freedom of the self to relate to itself and others. The other’s self is subjectified by actions that open up the possibilities of a

permanent bifurcation in how narratives about each other are constructed in possible futures.

Karlos becomes a pariah when his actions become incomprehensible, thus unintelligible in the specific domain of interaction of the executive team. His actions cannot become subjectified as “offering” an alternative trajectory because they belong to a different context by which they could be interpreted. In every event analysed, actions constituted him into a more distinctive but at the same time more ignored figure. The pariah – a figure created by being ignored but visible because of its isolation – attains its power from its capacity to make a difference to the predominant discourse, so that it becomes unveiled. Paradoxically, it was in this situation where there seem to be more possibilities that leadership could emerge in the executive team of MMC.

Foucault (2006) gives great value to parrhēsia as a practice that can constitute a difference in front of “regimes of truth” (Foucault M. , 2001) - a practice that makes use of freedom in order to maintain a way of living with the other and with the self that includes a “willingness to question ourselves and the way in which we relate to others and to the world more generally” (Loacker & Muhr, 2009). This practice of the self is not a rhetorical one - it is the outcome of performativity by repetition and difference of actions that constitute it.

Parrhēsia practice (Foucault M. , 2010) constitutes a central one at the time of form the truth about which the self constitute itself and others, as well. It is by a standing for the truth that it can become a transforming capacity in interaction. This can be considered as heroism, but at the same time the practice of an ontological humility (Holland N. J., 2012), where there is always the possibility

of discovering a different truth about ourselves and others in the midst of the subjective conditions of interaction.

Gandhi, Mandela, Suu Kyi and many other people, which have constituted leadership, were effective in changing regimes of practices, experiencing the pariah experience that Hanna Arendt describes as "conscious pariah" (Arendt, 1978), and embracing the practice of asking, "what it is that we are doing?" This is especially true for the practice of parrhēsia (Foucault M., 2010; 2001). Parrhēsia, as a practice, makes use of freedom in order to maintain a way of living with the other and with the self according to the truth that becomes subjectified as possible. Truth here as "to stand in the light of its being... setting-itself-to-work of the truth of beings " (Heidegger, 1961: 16), an action of unconcealment. What is happening? What are we doing? Acquire the meaning of contrasting, making differences and especially unveiling the context giving meaning to the situation and changing its orientation, which means introducing actions that belong to a different pattern. In this case the forming of trusting relationships, a phronetic practice, Trusting relationships do not emerge from the observer's perspective but from "engaged awareness" (Chia & Holt, 2011: 157) and a relational sensibility able to attend to the open-ended possibilities of "things-in-themselves as much as things-in-use" (2011:157). Karlos' "offers" with this orientation were ignored in the context of the prevailing differentiating pattern of interaction within the executive team, however, could have emerged in the same interaction if Karlos' actions could have been regarded as permanently, steadily and coherent with his ethical declarations.

From the pariah into which he became, to constituting the figure of the “conscious pariah” a form of pariah, which distinguishes by its parrhesiastes qualities, this is to say its permanence and steadiness in keeping coherent his relation to truth through his life is what makes the difference.

I have analysed the reasons why I think this could have happened, especially the presence of differentiating pattern of interaction, but would like to finish highlighting the contrasting examples of Ghandi, Mandela and Suu Kyi. There is something common to them: it is that they show the permanent reflective practice of examining their selves asking “what are we doing right now?” which, as a consequence, constitutes them as “conscious pariah” (Arendt, 1978) - the distinctive practice that constitutes the parrhesistic practice of this figure. It is this “permanent problematising” (Wray-Bliss, 2002), as a systematic practice of relating with the self and others, in which the definitive subject and subjectivity answers to this established situation by inquiring and unveiling its forming process, what constitutes the remarkable quality of this practice.

RESEARCHING FROM A NON DUALIST EPISTEMOLOGY

In this research project, it seems that my approach to research practices has become not that different than the one researched. Symmetrical interaction, expressed in shadowing to “extract” data, became the most predominant form of interaction during my field research. A reflection about my research practice, where I could not find myself with any reciprocal relationship with my research subjects, seems to bring important consequences for the type of knowledge constructed, and especially for what the aim of research seems to be itself and for an ethics that seems to preserve the differentiating processes observed during this work.

Researching from a relational perspective means experiencing the subject study as "poetic composition" (Shotter, 2010, p. 90; Wittgenstein, 1973), whose function is to make “*remarks* that function to draw attention to what we all too easily fail to notice and thus overlook – to “move” us to seeing ourselves and our own activities in a new light...not to arouse representations within us, but to “*call out*” *appropriate responses from us*” (italics in original) (2010: 90). Alternatively, as Chia and Holt suggest (2011), it is a phronetic form of knowledge, which “extends towards an awareness of things-in-themselves and our appropriate place amid them” (2011: 135).

A relational perspective research what Shotter (2010) refers to as “witness thinking” (2013; 2010), departs sharply from a representational perspective, which leaves untouched the researcher’s participatory presence and the agency of the situation’s context in the orientation given to its observation, and the

presence of its observation over the context. It requires not just the detached form of writing I have been using in the construction and analysis of this case, but the form of “poetic composition” from the name of “witness-talk” (2010, p. 91) and characterizes it as occurring “when we come to into a living, spontaneously responsive contact with another’s living being. It is a *diffractive* form of chiasmic *intra*-action that occurs when events are occurring out in the world come to “be in touch” with each other – in which both do the touching whilst at the same time are also being touched (emphasis in the original). ” I would like to add that it is in this “mutual touching” that the process of mutual translation happens into which “practice within practice” (Chia & Holt, 2011, p. 141) research approach unfolds in producing “orientational knowledge” (2010: 74) where the research practice cannot be separated in a subject/object dualism.

I became aware that the research process with a non dualist perspective needs to not just to deal with non dualist theoretical stand for analyzing constructed data and being aware of the reflexive relation with the knowledge process, but the need to clarify research aims, researcher's self construction and to inquire into the purpose of research in this perspective. I will discuss its implications in the next chapter.

In the next section (Chapter 6) I will discuss the implications of these findings for a conceptualisation of leadership from a non-dualistic perspective within the case analysed.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In this case, the top executive team of a copper mining company, which has championed the creation of economic value, discovers - after an environmental accident with a number of consequences - that building a sustainable future demands the need to simultaneously create economic, social and environmental value.

In order for social and environmental value to emerge, the top management team realises that this will only occur by forming an egalitarian, dialogical and trusting relationship with all of the company's stakeholders. However, the empirical examination of this case shows that this type of relationship did not emerge and, contrarily, that the habituated practices of negative symmetrical and complementary engagement have persistent primacy in the top executive team interaction – taking precedence over their declared strategic intent and with most of their stakeholders.

In this chapter I will discuss how this failure to accomplish the strategic intent contributes to the knowledge of the formation of leadership in a relational perspective, as a capacity of forming subjectivities and institutional arrangements, with an emphasis on a subjectivity of a phronetic quality, as is trusting relationships. I will focus specifically on the interaction between interactional patterns of differentiation and de-differentiation and the potential of these phronetic subjectivities and leadership to emerge. From this analysis I will discuss different possibilities for the collaboration between interactional patterns and the formation of subjectivities to be explored through research.

I argue that the habituated practices of negative symmetrical and complementary interaction that characterises the case company context, unintentionally sets the response to every challenge into the same frame as the exploitative mining practices. This explains the primacy and persistence of this negative differentiating interaction, preventing the emergence of *positive reciprocity* within which the intended type of relations established by the Sustainability Strategy could emerge.

As the analysis of events shows in the previous chapter, the use of metaphors and metaphorical language became central in the communication of the strategic intent. I discuss how these metaphors implicitly adopted frames that contradicted the intended type of relationships and, moreover, stressed the negative symmetry of relations. I argue that the use of one or other type of metaphor have ethical and epistemological implications and suggest that a “positive reciprocal relationality” metaphor can be regarded as having far-reaching possibilities for constructing the intended relationships.

In the context of building highly differentiated identities shown in this case, I explore and discuss the figure of the pariah as a potential figure of leadership. I have proposed that leadership can be subjectified when the pariah becomes a “conscious pariah” (Arendt, 1978), as it develops the practice of *parrhēsia* (Foucault, 2010), as a practice able to unveil truth, making a difference that makes a difference and clearing spaces to form new subjectivities and subjects. Leadership can be characterised in this context as a difference able to make differences in a relation of mutual acknowledgement of the other as other,

acting in progressing matters within the co-evolving transformation of the self and others in interaction.

I discuss in this chapter the implications of this finding to the development of a phronetic type of leadership in a context of differentiating patterns of interaction. I suggest that adopting a non-dualist relational perspective, by which primacy is given to the relational forming of subjects and subjectivities, imply an understanding of leadership development not focused on individuals but in actions of “contextual reframing”, setting specific challenges to a “non-prescriptive” approach to leadership development.

Finally, I acknowledge how deeply my own research approach dealt with dualism in an “about-ness” relationship to my research subject, which reflects the same negative symmetrical relationality I discuss the implications of this research approach in terms of the type of knowledge and ontology of leadership in complex domains. I relate this to a more situated, orientational knowledge of the “grammar” (Wittgenstein, 1973) and possibilities of acting in a “dialogical” (Boje, 2008; Bakhtin, 1993) relationship of “within-ness” (Shotter, 2010) to the research situation, that a positive reciprocal research approach can provide. Contrary to the intention of building representational knowledge in a differentiated relationship with the subjects of research, which leads us into a dualistic relation with them, a relational perspective to research intends to explore what the future possibilities are, according to our unrests, within the situated context open to us through our and others’ actions.

This perspective has implications too for understanding leadership research practice as “leadership development” practice. I suggest that using “shadowing”

as research method with this “within-ness” orientation it can be considered in itself such a practice.

I will conclude by posing some of the many questions that such a perspective can bring for future research. Some relate to the research practice itself but others relate to the implications of governmentality leadership using a positive reciprocity ontology.

COPPER MINING, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL VALUE CREATION

The empirical examination of this case shows that a dominant interactional pattern that sets the context for interaction in a copper mining company finds its obstacle to change not in the forming causality of external conditions, but in the restricting conditions that emerge from interaction itself. These are the same interaction conditions simultaneously could allow a transformative causality to operate, where a “permanent problemise” (Wray-Bliss, 2002), meaning by this dealing with the present practice of organisational life as problematic and unveiling the truth of the situation in order to allow a different subject and subjectivities to emerge.

Schematically it is a change of sign, from a negative symmetry of rigid complementarity to a positive symmetry to a flexible complementarity what could allow this transformation. The introduction of actions with different sign could have been the transforming factor. However, we have seen how resilient is the context formed through interaction to the introduction of actions able to

change the sign of it, if this later actions become confirmed becoming a bifurcation in the differentiating pattern. An exploration into the context of this large copper mining operation should give us some light in this respect.

POSITIVE RECIPROCITY: INTERACTION AND CO-EVOLUTIONARY RELATIONALITY

Rigid symmetrical and complementary interaction seems the epitome of the creative destructive interactional pattern and was the most predominant in MMC, where differentiation seems the predominant definition of the relation. Positive reciprocity is the opposite: it supposes the mutual recognition of differences, giving primacy to the presence of the other as a legitimate other, to whom it is legitimate to respond accordingly.

The co-evolution metaphor denotes that identities and intentions are transformed along with the selves of the actants in interactions.

The co-evolution metaphor assumes that creation and destruction of interactional patterns can happen only in the presence of a relationship and in the care for it (Solomon, 2004). Trusting relationships are basic conditions in this metaphor, understanding them as an ontic state in which solicitous care takes primacy, especially for the relation. Was this possible in the form that MMC's executive team formulated? There seems to be a paradox not solved in this formulation, which misled them, within their own references to believe that it was a feasible purpose.

DIFFERENT DOMAINS OF KNOWLEDGE - DIFFERENT DOMAINS OF PRACTICES

What the MMC's executive team formulated as their Sustainability Strategy, if compared with their practices, seems to be just a rhetorical device with no pragmatic consequence in their relations. However, what seems a more feasible hypothesis is that what happens is that the formulation was authentic, but the intention to make a difference in the domain of relationship is contradictory to the domain in which they are habituated to operate: mining.

Moving across these domains without noticing it is problematic. Language and meaning can change dramatically from one to the other, as we were able to see in this case. Moving from the extractive relations of copper mining to a domain of trusting relationships as the centre of the strategic intent involves a significant change of language and emotions. Mining has a "member" to "class" relation to relationships (Bateson, 2000; Whitehead & Russell, 2011). Relationships are "classes of classes", whose qualities cannot be distinguished across the domains in which they occur. Trusting relationships are the same in any domain, (family, government, academia or friendship). Mining activity cannot change its approach without changing the relationship to earth and people.

As we have seen, the strategic intention was set not to transform mining, but to transform the relationship with stakeholders. However, changing the relationship means the inevitable change in mining: in order to change a "class"

of phenomenon their “members” had to change as well. I believe that most of the executives and the board members were not aware of the type of change they intended and ended up trying to change relationships at the same logical type than changing mining practices. They thought they could change relationships without changing their identities as miners.

However genuine the intentions of the people that codified the adopted strategy, it is doubtful whether they were able to problematise (Foucault M. , 1984) their identities as managers, miners and mining altogether. They created parallel realities in their interaction, where multiple sets of actions became tangential to each other, but never became part of a common practice. This resounds with the parallel construction of time between their daily practices and those intended for the strategy implementation.

It was the presence of these parallel realities that subjectified the unintended figure of the pariah. It means in all of its forms an experience of isolation and suffering, regardless that at the same time it can become a powerful figure in forming a different regime of truth, when the rationality in which it is operating becomes visible and worth reflecting on.

The intended aims of the company leadership set in motion not the change process they wanted to produce, but an indirect and rich one. They mobilised the question about the possibilities of building sustainable copper mining and building trusting relationships with all stakeholders.

The answer is not as straightforward as they intended. Now, and for a long time, Karlos will be remembered in the history of this company as someone who failed to form this type of strategy. However, what seems to remain is the

question of how feasible it is for copper mining to be a simultaneous creator of economic, social and environmental value, as advocated by corporate social responsibility theory (Maak, 2007; Porter & Kramer, 2007; Jenkins & Yakovleva, 2006).

Karlos became a pariah, and as such I see that he had the potential of producing leadership in a co-evolving process. Interestingly, this process is built up not by an external process, able to “cause” it from “outside” the group’s interaction. It is produced by the same interaction process, which is subjectified in the midst of its own narrative context (Fairhurst & Cooren, 2009).

The interaction of the executive team reflected the presence of many rationalities reflecting multiple symmetrical realities, where each executive represented at least one of them. Karlos’ “offers” found no ground, either in the language or in the discursive practices of the group. The group was trying to coordinate a different practice than Karlos was suggesting - a practice characterised by the exploitative relations of mining.

IS ANY OTHER REALITY POSSIBLE FOR A LARGE COPPER MINING OPERATION?

Even rejecting the presence of the autonomous decision-making that pervades methodological individualism (Chia & Holt, 2011) and conceive practices of the self (Foucault M. , 2005; Foucault M. , 1986) not of its own making, but as a

relational practice, there seems to be at least two contrasting positions to take after examining this case.

The first suggests that practices become habituated to company context, in an “ecological embeddedness” defined by knowledge/power relations that constitute the practices of copper mining. An alternative position acknowledges the embeddedness of company practices in the power/knowledge relations, but at the same time the presence of interaction as able to set not just restrictions but to create new patterns and contexts, which in turn can form different realities.

In order to examine these two perspectives, I am going to use two metaphors that emerged during the description and analysis of the case. The first metaphor, represented by the film *Avatar*, highlights some of the elements of the strategic intent whose narrative has become analogous in some form to what I highlighted from the case. The second metaphor is that of self-organising systems as a continuum-creating process, which contains many of the elements that were adopted by the strategy formulation, but which became “neglected” through in the interaction process.

AVATAR FILM AND SYMMETRICAL RELATIONSHIPS

In one of his speeches to the company management, MMC’s CEO uses metaphorical language to explain the type of transformation required by the new

strategy. There he makes reference to the film *Avatar*, using excerpts that show how a relationship of trust is constructed. The film shows that the exploitative relation that mining has with the earth does not provide room for the emergence of relations where the idea of dwelling in this world with a sense of belonging and harmony can emerge from anywhere other than escaping the activity of mining. The film shows that only by becoming an *avatar*, by reincarnating into a villager and becoming one of them, is it possible for a manager to “see them” deep enough so that trust can emerge. However, becoming one of them does not stop the company’s main exploitative ethos and the only way of stopping it is resisting, escalating in a symmetrical relationship, as shown in the film. At the end of the film, the symmetrical relationship persists and the *avatar* protagonist comes into full-scale conflict with the company’s aggressive intentions.

The “I see you” practice - when it relates to what seem to be the conflicting interests of stakeholders, where conflicting and contradictory discourses have to interact - becomes a practice that makes its protagonist a pariah to his own people. In the case of the film, some of the people who defected are killed, but all of them become pariahs. The hero of the film is resourceful and shows many abilities to deter the company’s intention...at least in the short term.

MMC’s executive team experienced a sort of *avatar* experience, seeing deep into “them” (them villagers) and inhabiting the space opened up by their physical interaction, which allowed them not just to empathise with the valley residents, but to invite them to build together the 2010–2020 strategy. They were able to see, feel and dwell as the villagers that closely mirror the plot of

the *Avatar* film. For a while there was hope that this type of transformation was possible in the face-to-face site of interaction.

However, this event meant only a temporal breakdown of the interaction between MMC executives and the valley residents, but not a change in the unequal power relationships that were pervasive in the company practice, embedded in the major ecological context to which the company belonged and that seemed to have primacy over their local, present, living practices.

Managers quickly assumed that they should have ownership of the process: a codified strategy became the form by which this was done, reducing the uncertainties (Morin, 2008) and having a blueprint of how the future should look like. What was initially a self organised process emerging from their evolving relationships became a well-shaped map with details that showed all members of staff what their next steps should be. Power to edit and represent is reflective of this unequal power relationships and at the same time the form it takes its practice. People and names as well the incident is codified and what were for a short period of time mutually demanding a face to face interaction experience is replaced with a neat and formalised strategy, with which executives relate as owners and executors.

The *Avatar* film metaphor shows that the exploitative ethos of a mining company cannot be transformed by the intention to do well in the social and environmental spheres. The conflicting interests of stakeholders need to be regulated in order to keep a balanced relationship, but there seems to be no possibility of belonging to the same world, in a relationship of mutual solicitous care. The satisfaction of mutual expectations will not emerge from a relation of

trust, but from a symmetrical escalation of demands and resources deployed for satisfying them.

This perspective, as we have seen in this case, because of its symmetrical nature has as a consequence the risk of producing schismogenesis (Bateson, 2000), points in interaction when there is a breakdown of the possibility of a relation. Bateson proposes two forms by which Schismogenesis could be prevented. One and the most obvious is the balance between symmetrical and complementary interaction.

I identified that a predominant interaction pattern between executives and board members was a rigid complementarity, of a domination/submission type of behavior. The introduction of action regarded as symmetrical. For example, instead of accepting the agenda set by the board for the meeting suggest a different one, more accord with what is needed by the strategy implementation. Or otherwise, instead of a the escalating demand/fulfillment relationship between sectors of the valley communities and the attitude of the company officials, the demand is met with a requirement of more “joint” endeavors between company officials and valley residents. This seems to be the actual practice and this is usually understood as change in the actions of one or the other.

A truly relational perspective to change, means addressing the process itself as the wider ecology of interaction. Balancing between patterns is, in this perspective not a change at all. A change in the ecology of interaction means learning a new type of pattern, which is not defined as an opposing, but belonging to a different class. In the next section I suggest that relationship

defined by positive symmetry and complementarity means a shift in the interactional pattern from a differentiating forming process to a reciprocal de-differentiating one.

AN ALTERNATIVE METAPHOR: CO-EVOLUTION RELATIONALITY

An alternative metaphor to *Avatar* is the self-organised dynamics of adaptive systems, which describes that population-wide order comes about in spontaneous, emergent ways through the local interaction of diverse agents. There is no grand plan for this. Furthermore, this spontaneous self-organising activity, with its emergent order, is vital for the continuing evolution of the system and its ability to produce novelty.

A key concept of this metaphor are attractors, which means that the trajectory of actions will evolve according to a determined set of variables following an undetermined but representable formula. When interaction lies between homogeneous agents, attractors can be easily represented. However, when interaction evolves between heterogenic agents, as in the case analysed, the population-wide patterns of interaction develop in unpredictable forms (Stacey, 2011).

What is interesting about this metaphor is that it shows that when there are no external restrictions to interaction, as there could be when there is no strategic plan or an imposed code of ethics, population-wide patterns of interaction can evolve from not just one but through multiple types of attractors, governed only

by the enabling and restricting conditions present in the living local and present interaction.

The difference of the self-organised metaphor between heterogenic agents - which I will call co-evolutionary on behalf of Stacey's description (2011:243) - contemplates the presence of multiple attractors, domains and narrative trajectories through which action can acquire meaning. This metaphor is not in opposition to the *Avatar* metaphor, which represents the presence of only one attractor of rigid symmetrical or complementary relation, but it offers a diversified form of future possibilities.

What becomes essential to this metaphor is that flexible patterns are allowed to emerge, combining not just competing or collaborative relations between agents (in our case stakeholders) in a different type of interactional pattern. The main quality of this patterns is that what is preserved is a type of relationship as having primacy over the subjectivities, subjects and institutional arrangements. It is what I have called positive reciprocity.

Action from one actant provokes behaviour from its otherness, configuring different interactional patterns. Differentiating/ De-differentiating patterns of interaction can be conceived as opposites, excluding it each other. Both can be formed through symmetrical and complementary interaction, but have very different pragmatic effect in forming subjects and subjectivities. If differentiating patterns of interaction, as we have seen, seem to keep thing the same, positive reciprocity seems to be related to a process of creating novelty.

A sustainable strategy using the positive reciprocity metaphor conceives management and stakeholders not as fixed entities, but as co-evolving through

their positive reciprocity. This implies the “dissolution” of some non-propositional categories and the emergence of new ones, especially those that reinforce the process of de-differentiation. Bateson asserts “...any adaptive change in the relata, if uncorrected by some change in the other, will always jeopardize the relationship between them” (Bateson, 2000: 339). Like a kaleidoscope, it reflects that for a change to take place in one of the conditions of interaction many others are needed, since it is not an isolated process, where some level of association is always present in interaction.

Seeing the other as a legitimate other, not in its aspirations, intentions or needs, but as an “other”, who becomes to its presence as such, represents a transformative logic of relationships that seems incompatible with the always-tangential relationality of a world constructed under a monologic discourse of differentiation. Negative symmetrical and complementary interaction reveals the struggle to overcome the other’s presence, mutually imposing a way of seeing, even for the other’s “own interest”. As a struggle, it signifies a call to be listened, which at the same time reveals its failure.

It is this far reaching metaphor that, I believe, suits better the rhetoric of the Sustainability strategy. “I see you” is a radical proposition, stated as a type of relationship, where the acknowledgement of the other as a legitimate other has a radical consequence in the transformation of each other in the exchange of its existence.

This does not mean eliminating the paradoxes of these encounters, but to allow a stand to “permanently problemise” (Wray-Bliss, 2002) the frames in which they are operating. Under these conditions a newly emergent reality and the

formation of a different subject becomes possible and interaction acquires its own life.

CARE OF THE SELF AND THE CONSCIOUS PARIAH

One of the key practices to consider in this metaphor is “care of the self”, (Foucault M. , 1988; 2005) - a relation to power that supposes freedom of the subject to constitute its self and others into an ethical and aesthetic project, within the subjective conditions of interaction. This practice of “care of the self” can be recognised as constituting an ethical practice of coping with present living conditions in a way that seeing, touching and feeling the presence of the other - as a legitimate other - becomes a process of constituting itself as a legitimate other as well.

Even when giving primacy to the immanence to interactional patterns and context in the formation of subjects and subjectivities, care of the self a relational concept of a type of relation in the formation, has value in the formation in the emergence of forms of leadership in the midst of interaction. The forming subject process of the CEO that I have shown evidence of, shows possibility of the simultaneously forming process of the subject of leadership in the interaction within the executive team and trusting relationships. As I said, the lack of a common ground reflected in the differentiating pattern of interaction and the weak presence of parrhēsia prevented the presence of a the parrhesiastes figure of the “conscious pariah” (Arendt, 1978).

A non-dualist relational perspective on the emergence of leadership means conceiving this process as one and the same, where there is no boundary set to

the subjectivity of leadership, truth as unconcealment and the relation of the self with the self in a caring relationship by which becomes to being. It is in this practice of conducting its own life as an ethical and aesthetic endeavour, true to its self, that the form of leadership I missed in the midst of the strategy development, could have emerged. Contrarily, it is in the relationship with a represented reality, with ulterior instrumental aims, which did not include this relationship that the process of strategy implementation became an empty and meaningless artefact.

It is in the freedom to relate with an ever-changing form of self, not reduced to the limits of the skin of an individual that holds as this main quality. Moreover, and it is this same process of truth telling through the actions by which the subject is formed that power to form the truth of others emerge. In order to make a difference, truth cannot be thought as eventual and appearing and disappearing but permanent, coherent and steady. It in this permanent practice of asking “what are we up to?” or “what are we doing”?, in a continuum of sense making and sense giving in which leadership can emerge. This practice either practiced by individuals or collectives, means less an intellectual endeavour than one of the will. As Wittgenstein (1980:17) says it “What makes a subject hard to understand – if it’s something significant and important – is not that before you can understand it you need to be specially trained in abstruse matters, but the contrast between understanding the subject and what most people want to see. Because of this the very things that are most obvious may become the hardest of all to understand. What has to be overcome is a difficulty having to do with the will, rather than with the intellect”. Instead of an intellectual approach to truth, we should call it “orientational” (Shotter, 2010), in the sense

that “moves” actions into a different type of sphere, changing context by introducing difference by which context is unveiled and reframed. Instead of addressing issues within its logical understanding, such an approach means acting revealing the traces of context or grammar have in the actual actions and acting so to introduce elements of different type of context. I suggest that for the implementation of a “Sustainability Strategy” requires introduction of actions, which can bring a more coherent truth into the situations. Actions that could have been qualified as heterarchical instead of hierarchical; absorbing instead of controlling; egalitarian instead of asymmetrical; acknowledging instead of rejecting/ignoring and many other of the type, which can invite actions of the same type.

The main implication of this form of understanding the emergence of leadership is the shift required for leadership development practices if such a perspective is adopted. In the section I will analyse the implications of this perspective to the practice of leadership development.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND A RELATIONALITY METAPHOR

The pariah figure seen in this case, an outcome of practices of the self, could have constituted a governmentality regime of practice (Dean, 2010; Miller & Rose, 2008), moving the company practices into an analogy to the co-evolution metaphor of organising with far-reaching consequences. However, it is

parrhesia (Foucault M. , 2010) practice, as I have argued previously, that constitutes the central and most powerful practice for such regimes to emerge.

Foucault (2006) gives great value to parrhesia as a practice that can constitute a difference in front of “regimes of truth” (Foucault M. , 2001) - a practice that makes use of freedom in order to maintain a way of living with the other and with the self that includes a “willingness to question ourselves and the way in which we relate to others and to the world more generally” (Loacker & Muhr, 2009). This practice of the self is not a rhetorical one - it is the outcome of performativity by repetition and difference of actions that constitutes it.

Ghandi, Mandela, Suu Kyi and many other world leaders were effective in literally changing regimes of practices, while experiencing the pariah experience that Hanna Arendt describes as “conscious pariah” (Arendt, 1978), and embracing the practice of asking, “what it is that we are doing?” This is the practice of parrhēsia (Foucault M. , 2010; 2001). Parrhēsia, as practice, makes use of freedom in order to maintain a way of living with the other and with the self according to the truth that becomes unconcealed as possible.

What I found in the MMC case is that this practice had little presence in the the executive group and was usually confined to rhetoric with no pragmatic effect. Karlos, as I showed, had an ethical and aesthetic positioning to offer, which could have moved others in a different direction, but this did not happen since there was no notable evidence of a parrhesia from his actions to convert him into a parrhesiastes (Foucault M. , 2001).

Gandhi, Mandela and Suu Kyi have in common the fact that they show the permanent reflective practice of examining themselves asking “what are we

doing right now?” which, as a consequence, constitutes them as parrhesiastes – the distinctive practice of truth telling that constitutes the parrhesistic practice of this figure.

Leadership is able to form subjectivities and organisational arrangements when it emerges as able to make a difference that makes a difference. It unveils, not the abstraction but in practice, the “context” (Bateson, 1972) or “grammar” (Wittgenstein, 1973) in which identities (such as leadership) shape their narrative trajectories. Parrhēsia seems to be the difference itself.

What remains pervasive to this co-evolutionary metaphor and the practices of the self is that assumes there are no fixed positions. Interests, expectations and identities are conceived as epiphenomenon, with no ontological importance in the process of becoming through interaction. A first process to which the “care of the self” concept can contribute in the development of leadership, is introducing practices of self-examination as suggested by Foucault (2001; 1988) were done in ancient eras and were especially developed by the Stoics, especially Seneca, Epictetus and Marco Aurelius.

This strategy of leadership development points to pay attention not just to be “courageous enough to tell the truth to other people”, as the practice of parrhēsia may represent, but to another truth game which “consist[s] in being courageous enough to disclose the truth about oneself” (Foucault M. , 2001: 143). The confrontation about oneself, adds Foucault, (2001:143) requires “askesis”, a “special relation to oneself – a relation of self possession and self sovereignty”, which can permit the individual to fully confront the world in an ethical and aesthetic manner.

Foucault refers to these self-examination practices as truth games, forms according to which knowledge capable of being declared true or false is articulated in relation to what is to be considered true to the subject. He examines three of them, which I am going to outline only briefly. These “truth games” stress the self-relation with the truth about oneself, with the aim of avoiding self-flattery or self-delusion on one side, and steadiness or persistence of mind on the other, as two practices by which the self “maintains complete self-possession” (2001: 137).

- a) Solitary self-examination, a kind of administrative scrutiny which enables the self to review rules and codes of behaviour to make them more vivid and coherent with future behaviour. In this practice the individual is examining his actions and searching for a more efficient form of practice if following rules of behaviour he accepts as truth.
- b) Self-diagnosis, a kind of inquiry into the form by which choices and preferences are made, searching for faults of harmonisation of actions and thoughts with the structure chosen for one’s life.
- c) Self-testing, by which all representations (thoughts) are put on trial, discerning between those which are under control of the self and those that are not and guarantee self-mastery.

This strategy, which stresses the practices of verification of what results true to the subject constitution, we can call part of the “care of the self” approach to leadership development, where it is in the relations of the self with the self that a truth is subjectified in the subject constitution. An alternative approach, which can be regarded as slightly different because it attends to not just the self-

relation to the self (especially to its actions), but to unveiling and “move” things within the interactional pattern forming the context in which it is embedded.

Shotter (2010) suggests that “our task is to “prepare ourselves to approach each new circumstance with an appropriate readiness, an appropriate openness, ready to allow “something” to “call out” from our appropriate embodied anticipations as to how next to act in relation to “it”. This “anticipation” means developing general dispositions that prepare actions to be in accordance to the type of interactional pattern we want to introduce. It is not a matter of the type of dialogism as suggested by Cunliffe & Eriksen (2011), but changing the categorical type of actions, so that if reciprocal patterns of interaction are intended, actions become of positive and symmetrical or complementary depending on the unveiled context.

In a more plain language, if we find a hate escalation, actions to be introduced should be of loving reciprocity. Nothing guarantees that an action of given sign will be followed by one of the same sign, but leadership in this perspective means attempts more than accomplished facts, possibilities out if the latency of the many possibilities.

In this same vein of reasoning, it seems that researching leadership from relational non-dualistic perspective can be regarded as a “leadership development” activity. I suggest that if research aim and practice is considered with “within-ness” as suggested by Shotter (2010), the research relation with leadership practice becomes a form of unconcealment of leadership practices, either as examining or moving things in the interactional forming process. In the next section I will develop this idea more extensively.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCHING LEADERSHIP IN A COPPER MINING COMPANY

Reflecting about this research project after the event, it seems that even though reflexivity was considered a basic aspect of researching leadership in this context, I overlooked its implications on what a relational approach would mean for reflexivity of the research practice itself.

While trying to research leadership in a non-dualistic perspective I was observing leadership as a phenomenon that could have been observed as independent of my own experience of researching practices. Company practices were out there, in the domain of a very visible and complex copper mining operation and not *in* my experience of it.

As I had separated myself from the company, assuming an “invisible”, “detached” and “interpreter” role of company practices, I lost touch of my own ethical positioning in the observation of the phenomenon, which not only had implications for how I was reflexively interpreting and constructing the facts “out there” but left out the “otherness” of whole sets of experiences I gave little attention to while shadowing executives. I think that I left aside the possibilities of a practice-led experience of research.

I notice now that I gave little attention to what Shotter (2010:91) refers to as the contrasting “within-ness talking and acting” that “occurs when we come to a living, spontaneously responsive contact with another’s living being, with their

utterances, their bodily expressions, their ‘works’“. He adds to this concept saying, “it is a diffractive form of chiasmic intra-action that occurs when events occurring out in the world come to be “in touch” with each other - in which both do the touching whilst at the same time are also being touched. And it is in the relations between the outgoing touching and resulting incoming, responsive touches of the other that “moving” differences can emerge and can be sensed.” (2010:92)

This is more evident in the initial design of my research project, into which I developed a number of what I called “sources” of narrative data³⁴ - artefacts through which I intended to collect narratives of different types. These methods resemble a system of “data mining”, where the intention of research is to accumulate large amounts of data in order to extract, even from an interpretative perspective, new knowledge, looking for trends and correlations, or even more sophisticated statistical analysis. I prepared myself for carrying out such analysis by reviewing my dusted-off knowledge in non-parametric statistical analysis and trained myself in the use of sophisticated software to make analysis of narratives.

If I observe my own observation, I realise that I enacted a representational discourse of what it is to be a researcher. Without questioning my dualist perspective to research, I unconsciously reproduced the habituated approach of considering my self as a sovereign, self contained individual (while declaring a different ontology of the world) who can step aside from the flow of experience

³⁴ The most notable of these, the “Sense Maker Collector” and the “Reflective Logs”, for obtaining narratives from large number of people and making abductive analysis in the first and reflections on the experiences of relating in the latter.

happening in the actual “intra-action” (Shotter, 2010:102) of the shadowing process.

I made the dualist distinction between two domains of my own experience, one happening “out there”, with no relation to me as an observer and other as “my experience” about it. I was careful to observe some of the assumptions that could have been working in some of my interpretations, but never “problemised” (Foucault M. , 1984) my ethical positioning as researcher in the midst of interaction itself. This distinction lies at the bottom of research as a practice, where there is no form of standing aside from the experience of observing. I neglected the assumption that there is no territory other than the distinct domains of experience of the observer so well expressed by Maturana et al (2008).

Moreover, this reflection brings in the question of the purpose of research itself in a non-dualist perspective. What does it mean to let go of representational and abstract knowledge as the intention to research and adopt a more process approach in practice? The discussion is far reaching and opens a number of subjects to be addressed, that I think need a quite different perspective into what we consider the production of knowledge.

WHAT A NON-DUALISTIC AGENDA MEANS IN PRACTICE FOR RESEARCHING LEADERSHIP IN COMPLEX DOMAINS

A non-dualistic perspective for studying leadership should acknowledge not just that the researcher cannot stand aside from interaction, but at the same time should address him not as an external observer of this interaction and the phenomenon, because a domain observer's experience is an ineluctable part of interaction itself.

What I was observing was not an external reality to my observation, since what a truly reflexive perspective should acknowledge is that observation of a phenomenon is the observation of observations in a specific domain of practice. Thus, the only materials with which a researcher is left are the observations of their observations in different domains. Maturana et al (2008: 17) illuminates this point by saying that experience and phenomena become the same and exchangeable. My enthusiasm with my initial observations was a barrier to see them in more critical perspective, as I discovered later.

Instead of "orienting" (Shotter, 2013) me into the context of my enquiry, my enthusiasm separated me as an observer from the contextual conditions created by my own point of view. I was under the spell of the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness" (Whitehead, 1985), that I understood and discussed as part of the relationality of the phenomena and not in the continuity of my experience as part of it. My research was conceived as able to describe practices, as if this can be done standing aside from the researcher's own observations, ignoring the context shaping and giving meaning to them.

This is a key point in relation to this research, since advocating the possibilities of interaction between heterogenic actants as the site for the emergence of trust and leadership (and not as an objectified process, but as a type of observation

in one of many domains of experience) has a number of consequences in how this research could have been conducted in a different way and how its results could differ from what has been shown.

A first consequence of such an approach is that it brings to the foreground the many preconceptions of what is being researched, assuming that what are declared as strategy, leadership and trusting relationships are already shaped phenomena that can be defined in the flow of experience as if isolated in a domain of observation.

I interacted with many people and had a number of experiences during the long period of my field research process, but gave little attention to the “othernesses” of my experience since I was focused on these phenomena as if they were real things. My research objects were not they, but something I was calling “leadership”, or “trust” or “strategy”, I was relating with an abstraction, and not with people coping with their living present.

What I now become aware of is that these preconceptions predisposed me to an ethics of differentiation in interaction between researcher and phenomenon, where detached representational knowledge fits well. I did not consider my research actions and the phenomena being researched as belonging to the same domain, thus I established the same exploitative relationship that later became so persistently visible in the interaction of the executive team and with other stakeholders.

Researching in a copper mine and its complex net of stakeholders is a challenge, not just to learn and produce valid knowledge about the subject matters of my research question, but also as a process in which I could make

this research object open up its being and let me know about it. I was “mining” for knowledge about leadership, strategy as practice and constructing trusting relationships. Every time I faced a difficulty I thought about how to overcome it and not about “it” in itself, as something that was disturbing my observation. I did not allow myself to become disturbed or moved by anything other than my own “ticking boxes” and “research objectives”.

The executives rejected the use of the log for reflecting about the relational practice because it meant an exploitative relation with them. I failed to notice that I was not observing their rejection itself, as I was looking for something else. My answer to the question “what is the benefit I get from using it?” received the answer “increasing reflectivity” on their practices: something of no interest to them whatsoever.

The methods that actually worked in my research were those that meant building a trusting relationship between them and me as a researcher. I became a “shadow” - something almost invisible, part of the background of their present, living experiences. I was able to research as soon as I was subjectified as invisible in a relationship, which none of the other research methods I wanted to use would allow me to do.

What I see now is that by becoming part of the shared domain of relational practice, where I shared the possibility of seeing and been seen, I was able to produce knowledge. They showed me that, by sharing their everyday lives, I could access the domain of experience that allowed me to see, listen and feel what they were experiencing. The only way of doing so was by having access

to observe experience itself, which happens only in the domain of actions that touch each other.

Shadowing can provide the possibility of moving things along, as it allows researchers to be part of the domain of intra-action. It appears to be limited to playing the role of non-participant, external to intra-action but, now that I note that, I became part of the context of their interaction. Whilst attending a meeting, witnessing a conversation in the mine operation site, or observing a presentation to a large audience, I was part of that domain, a stranger in it but acting in it.

Shadowing is a good metaphor for this research method as it regards the researcher not as an external character, but as a relational product of intra-action within the research situation. Shadows can only be understood as a relational phenomenon.

The task then, is not to get a larger set of data (that will be there anyway), but to have the right awareness for observing our experience in the complex domain of a strategy implementation. It is not about equipping ourselves to reproduce a symmetrical relation that mirrors the complexity of an external reality, but being able to construct a positive reciprocal relation with our own experience - thus enriching our capacity to listen, hear and feel what our observations of experience are showing us.

Chia (2011:183) points out that complex thinking is the outcome of a “sustained resistance rather than a cultivated predisposition”, thus inviting us to think about a set of ethics of observation that we should build in a complementary relationship with experience. A “sustained resistance” implies the

acknowledgment that experience is not a product of an external reality, but the outcome of the relation of the observer with himself while coping in the local present living dimensions of life, giving a provisional status to everything which is observed. This seems to be a set of ethics in which “we become painfully aware of our ignorance of our ignorance” (Chia, 2011:184). Observing the observer through which we constitute our experience means the presence of a process that acknowledges simultaneously the partiality of experience and, at the same time, the “otherness” of it. Doubt is set in the centre of the observation process, not as a rational enquiry about objective subjects, but about our ethical relation to what we are experiencing about others and ourselves. This requires us to acknowledge that our actual experience is not just partial, but deceives others and us, leaving static assertions about the self and others untouched.

As has been broadly argued from many perspectives - every action has an ethical and aesthetic meaning in interaction. Consequently, we should be able to establish a relationship with our experience that allows us to “permanently problemise the ways we authorise or normalise our practices and identifications” (Wray-Bliss, 2002: 11). This is the practice of care of the self to which Foucault (Foucault, 1988; 2005) gave much attention in his late work. He calls us to “permanently transform” the self as a form of truth, so that we become aware of the “otherness” and our ethical positioning of our actions.

According to McNay (1994:4 in Wray-Bliss, 2002: 33) “Foucault’s whole *oeuvre* is oriented to breaking down domination of a fully self-reflective, unified and rational subject at the centre of thought in order to clear a space for radically other ways of being” (McNay, 1994). For me, this position means being able to

establish a reflexive relationship of the self with the self and others, where any form of domination in the (research) situation should become problemised. We are invited to find ourselves belonging to a “dialogical relationship” (Boje, 2008; Bakhtin, 1993) with our observation, so that the effects of actions of others on ourselves, whatever the role we assume in intra-action (Shotter, 2010), is not to build representational knowledge and abstractions, but to obtain “orientational knowledge” (Shotter, 2010; Wittgenstein, 1973), on how to move around within the practice grammar embodied in our observation. By doing so, we build differences that makes differences, in how we can progress in the situations as it shows future possibilities to address disquiets and intentions in the evolving possibilities that this grammar opens to us.

This proposition should be explored in this same mining context or in others. However, what becomes striking is the potential that a relational approach of positive reciprocity can bring for the foundations of how we work through our research practice. I can foresee how different my own research approach could have been, and consequently the shaping of events in which I become involved, if I had adopted such an approach. As I see it know, I walked along a road that seems to contradict my research aim of researching leadership in complex domains from a non-dualistic perspective.

In conclusion, I would like to succinctly summarise what seem to be the most relevant contributions to the study of leadership, organising and to research methodology. Then I will suggest questions for further research.

1. It provides an empirical study of a sustainability-related strategy implementation in a large copper mining company.
2. It provides a detailed study of interactional patterns in a management team, using a narrative approach to research.
3. Shows how improbable the emergence of a phronetic form of leadership becomes in a mining company whose practices are habituated to an exploitative relation to the earth as its principal actant. There is very little possibility of subjectifying trusting relationships as a strategic priority here. It is therefore all but implausible that such a company might create economic, social and environmental value as emerging from “within-ness” relations with stakeholders. Exploitation is central to their mode of production and to the relations associated with it and, in this context, “within-ness” relationships could not be sustained. This finding suggests a challenge to those who call for a more “sustainable” form of mining, and counts as a contribution to our understanding of extractive industries in relation to their stakeholders.
4. Leadership is shown in this work to be an ethical and aesthetical locus of interaction, conceived as the convergence of regimes of practices, (not as a random epiphenomenon of them), including practices of the self. If leadership is to become a practice of making a notable difference to governmentality and the formation of subjectivities and institutional arrangements, it requires the freedom of the practice of parrhesia. This

research therefore contributes insight into the relatedness of care of the self, managerial regimes and workplace subjectivities.

5. Has contributed to our understanding of the part that parrhesia plays in the formation of regimes of practices, as characteristic rationalities that define forms of visibility, ways of thinking, questioning and acting.
6. Therefore, this research returns to the primacy of practices over individuated deliberate intentionality and the embeddedness of leadership in them. This contributes a theoretical challenge to the accounts of leadership in complex domains that we see in the dualistic perspectives that are characteristic of much of the mainstream literature (Goldstein, Hazy, & Lichtenstein, 2010; Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009; Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2008).
7. Contributes to the emergent relational perspective of leadership (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011; Hosking, 2011), providing a with new conceptualisations of the process of leadership emergence. Especially with the introduction of care of the self and governmentality practice (Foucault M. , 2010; 2005; 1988; 2001) as key relational process of subjectification of leadership.
8. I have also contributed a new conceptualisation of interactional patterns, which I have named “positive reciprocity” and that, instead of leading to differentiation, leads to de-differentiation and confluence. I suggest that

this increases the chances of subjectification of phonetic forms of relationships. As a pattern of interaction, positive reciprocity is in contrast to the interactional patterns that lead to differentiation and representational relationships, which have taken primacy in the case analysed in this research.

This thesis opens up a range of further questions and possibilities for researching leadership in a non-dualistic perspective that resonate with a non-representational and “withinness” approach to research.

Some of the many questions that seem relevant for further research are:

Methodological questions:

- What form would a practice research approach take “in practice” (Shotter, 2010) if a relational ontology is taken for researching not about leadership but within leadership practice in complex domains with an “oblique” (Chia R. , 2011) metaphorical language?
- What type of subject does the researcher become in practicing research as practice from this perspective?

Substantive questions:

- Can symmetrical relations of copper mining be transformed by researching practices from a complementarity relationship? What form could this research approach take in a copper mining company?
- What is the role of metaphorical language in the perspective of a complementary relationality that looks to progress from intentions and disquiets?
- What are the subjective conditions that allow change in the presence of a “conscious pariah” (Arendt, 1978) and the parrhesistic practice of care of the self? How does its fundamental question of asking “what are we doing?” relate to the constitution of governmentality regimes of truth (Dean, 2010)?

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: CONSTRUCTING THE RESEARCH DEVICES

COMPLEX RESPONSIVE PROCESS RESEARCH

The first research device that I created was a blog website (based on the Google blogger application) which allowed executives and managers to keep confidential logs of their daily experiences of their working day. The intention of these blogs was to collect data based on Stacey's (2005) Complex Responsive Process Research, where people are expected to write accounts of their daily experiences, their identities and the way their responses craft their relations with other staff.

It took me no more than a week to prepare this device. I then sent an invitation email to each of the G7 members (the seven members of the executive committee), explaining how to use the blog and describing the type of events I was expecting them to record. I received a very poor response to this invitation. Only one of the G7 members recorded an assessment of an event, but gave no details of the event itself.

I thought that there might be a problem with the use of this type of technology, so I went to meet each of them and helped them to log in and register an event and to then reflect upon it. I waited for another couple of weeks and only a couple of comments came in – not in the format I was requesting. I talked about

this with the Talent and Culture manager, who was my liaison with the group, and he posed a couple of hypotheses of why it was that people were not using the device. One was that they were not seeing the end value of doing so. The second was that they were not used to stopping, reflecting on and writing about their daily events, so it would require a change of habits.

With these two explanations I again went to meet the group and explained the research aims and methodology, including explaining which type of data they would have access to that could shed light on their strategic process. My feeling of that meeting was that I saw everyone agreeing on the potential value of the research process, but I could not get a straight answer on their disposition to stop, write and reflect about their experiences of interaction. After a couple of weeks I sent a second email, reminding them of the availability of the site and how to access it. The CEO forwarded my email asking them to contribute to the research process using the site available.

The final outcome was that even after all these interventions I did not get any direct data from this research method. It did give me the chance to reflect on these events, especially on the type of interaction that I, as the researcher, was building with them, which I explained in chapter four. It also gave me the opportunity to observe how difficult it was for each member of this group to have a reflective relation with himself; a practice that I found quite absent during the research period.

The following image shows a screenshot of the blog website, with the instructions shown. It is possible to see that only three of the G7 members have registered and made comments.

NARRATIVAS ESTRATEGIA MLP

ESTE SITIO ES UN ESPACIO VIRTUAL PARA REGISTRO, REFLEXION Y COMUNICACIÓN DEL EQUIPO EJECUTIVO DE MLP. SIGA ESTOS SIMPLES PASOS EN EL REGISTRO DE SU EXPERIENCIA:

MARTES, 1 DE FEBRERO DE 2011

Opiniones respecto de nuestras prácticas como equipo G7

Quisiera instalar como tema el que comentamos como nos sentimos respecto de nuestra operativa como equipo. Así siento hay una linda oportunidad de crecimiento y de lograr ir posicionando esta instancia como una institución de la que nos sintamos orgullosos.

Publicado por **Fuad** en 17:38 3 comentarios

Etiquetas: **Ejecutivo Equipo G7**

MÉRCOLES, 19 DE ENERO DE 2011

Visita a Comunidades y Proyecto de Desarrollo

Me pareció muy buena la jornada de ayer, sentí que nuestros invitados vivieron mas nuestra gestión, palparon a la Comunidad ... fué un acierto.

Buena la presentación del Proyecto de Desarrollo, siento que el G7 debiera estar mas involucrado con el Proyecto... mas informado, mi percepción es que los invitados quedaron con varias preguntas e inquietudes.... que era el objetivo!

Publicado por **Marcio** en 19:10 0 comentarios

MARTES, 31 DE AGO STO DE 2010

EXPERIENCIA EN LA RELACION DEL EQUIPO EJECUTIVO

1. Recuerde algún evento en las pasadas 24 horas que usted considere que afectó positivamente y/o negativamente su capacidad para llevar adelante su trabajo.
2. Registre detalladamente una descripción de los hechos de la situación identificada.
3. Comente luego su reflexión sobre la situación, especialmente sobre su experiencia de la relación que usted ha mantenido con otras personas relevantes de la situación.

Publicado por **Federico Puga** en 19:30 11 comentarios

[Página principal](#)

ME HE BULTO FACIL REGISTRAR MI BITACORA

DE ACUERDO

MAS DE ACUERDO QUE EN DESACUERDO

MAS EN DESACUERDO QUE ACUERDO

EN DESACUERDO

PARTICIPANTE S

[Participar en este sitio](#)

Grupo Frente Consejo

Miembros (2)



¿Ya eres miembro? [Accede](#)

ARCHIVO DEL BLOG

▼ 2011 (2)

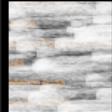
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Opiniones respecto de nuestras prácticas como equi...

► enero (1)

► 2010 (1)

PARTICIPANTE S



Reflecting on the use of the method, I found that there are a number of considerations that can be conveyed as regards the use of this method into my research. I will categorise them in three groups.

The first group refers to the definition of the activity of ‘registering events’ and ‘reflective practice of interaction’ and the use it can have on this research project. The second group refers to the data obtained through this process, how it can be managed and its epistemological status. The third group refers to the use of a website for posting reflection and what this can mean to the dual process of reflection and reflexivity.

It would become rather abstract to reflect on a process that, in reality, I was not able to observe at all. Of course, it would have been different if I had had the opportunity of reflecting on the narratives of the executives, where they might have been able to reflect on their actions and experiences of relating, showing issues of power relationships, emotions, construction of identities and especially on the forming of their own selves. This is a research approach that draws heavily on the Mead (1967) and Elias (2001) notion that the self and subjectivities emerge in social interaction and are not preconditions of interaction. Reflection is, in this sense, a key part of the process of subjectification – a sense making process by which the subject conveys the different materials by which it constructs itself. It is in this reflection that we can observe the subject constitution as a reflexive practice.

It is in this context where the first group of considerations for the use of this method is to be considered: 'registering events' and 'reflective practice of interaction'. As pointed out by Ricoeur (2006), events are attained in a provisory and uncertain way through the construction of facts. A fact is what constitutes provisional importance to get hold of an event. What actually happened is of little importance in the testimonies of the events, since what is important is what has been brought to the foreground from a number of possibilities. In this sense, registering events has to be considered as 'secondary' to the individual experience in which text constitutes the basic building block. When I asked the executives to reflect on their 'practice of interaction', what they are doing actually is a construction of two sorts. The first is a reflection about how they construct these events; from which they can become aware of the way they construct their experience of relating, revealing issues of power, intentionality

and the importance of the response side of interaction on the construction of subjectivities. The second sort of construction refers to the process by which institutional order is constructed in a temporal dimension, where people interacting in the present construct their future together as the unwanted or desired present.

Making this reflection process available to everyone in the relationship opens up the possibility of becoming aware of how issues of power (enabling or restricting other possibilities) and intentionality are shaping preferences, choices and interaction and, in this way, constructing iterative patterns of organising. This reflection can be quite transformative if the process of reflection is conducted with enough attention to the present living experience of interaction, as has been demonstrated by Stacey & Griffin (2005) in a number of cases.

The second consideration is about how the facts obtained through this process can be managed and their epistemological status. One of the important things to remember is that the results of this process are always going to be in the form of text. As pointed out by Alvesson & Skoldberg (2009, p. 100), “facts are results, not points of departure”, and acquire richer meaning when enlightened by the overarching pattern of interpretation. At the same time, the authors point out that facts influence the pattern of interpretation, enriching and modifying it during the hermeneutic process. Texts, as we have shown, do not stand for action – there is an analogical relation between both (Czarniawska, 2011) where text constitutes meaningful signs in the overarching pattern of interpretation, from where facts emerge. Hence, what is interpreted is text made important by its author, not facts, and we have to be aware of the interpretative

patterns that facts pose when presented in the reflection blog. The challenge, then, is to deal with narratives not as facts themselves, but as revealing the interpreting pattern of the subject and the subjectification process itself. As has been noted earlier, every action is an act of subjectification (Gordon, 1999), so that through any action we can achieve this aim.

Choosing text as the analogy for the action constituting the subject is not a new endeavour and has proven a fruitful task. Foucault (1988, p. 26) uses dream interpretation as a source of interpretation of text and the subjectification process. As Foucault puts it "...there is an exact correspondence between the subject dreaming and the subject of the act as it is seen in the dream". So the narratives posted by executives constitute an interesting source of data for reconstructing the subject and subjectivities.

The third group refers to the use of a website for posting reflections and what this can mean to the dual process of reflection and reflexivity. As I have explained, the website was made available to everyone in order to post their reflections. As a result, the site made the reflection public, not to everyone, but to the group of people that had quite linked relationships, as it is the executive team (G7). This may have raised a number of issues: 1. Posting a comment meant making public what, until then had been private. 2. The control of the content was lost, so that the text was distanced from its author and became something else. 3. The text was inscribed in a different narrative than the one intended by the author.

The private/public issue is relevant for research, as has been noted by a number of authors (Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, 1991). However, it is of special

importance as an action itself, since what is tacit and belongs to the background of interaction is converted into text.

In face-to-face interaction, there may be possibilities of calibration, which may result in a permanent regulatory behaviour depending on how the action is provoked by actions (re-actions). This possibility is different in web-based interaction, since the feedback of reactions has a longer delay and the amount and quality of the clues by which the calibration is possible is not always present. The opposite can also become possible: posting comments and reflections that involve strong emotional content or which have not gained consent from the author to be disclosed, can lead to restriction in an environment where there are low levels of receptivity or where interaction has been predominantly disruptive or conflicting.

In summary, it seems that whilst the blog device represents a valid form of constructing narrative accounts, there has to be careful attention given to the interpretative patterns by which events and facts are posted by the subject. It is exactly this process of narrative construction that becomes relevant to my research project as it reveals the process by which interaction becomes patterned, constructing more stable connections from where subjects and subjectivities emerge.

CORRELATING MICRONARRATIVES: ABDUCTIVE RESEARCH USING SENSE MAKER

SUITE ©

The next research device I produced was the Sense Maker Collector, for constructing data for a narrative abductive research method. This process involves building the 'signifiers' (specific devices through which the narrator can classify its story according to predefined categories of meaning) and then constructing a website, which allows people to write their stories, interpret them using the *signifiers* (in my case I decided to use a triad for interpreting stories) and *tag* them (giving a name to the story). I then invited the target population (in this case, MMC employees, contractor's employees and the valley inhabitants) to participate in the research process.

I decided to build the signifiers as triads, instead of oppositional poles, to allow a greater level of ambiguity into the self-interpretation of stories, as well as amplifying the interpretation options with the minimum data entry from the people entering their stories.

For building these signifiers it was necessary to get a sample of stories from the different target groups. This meant that I travelled to different locations in the valley in order to interview residents and employees. I processed the results of these interviews and conversations using NVIVO, a software programme which extracts the content of the text. Using this, I established categories of content and obtained the different axes of meaning that could be assigned to the various stories.

As a result of this process, I identified themes in the relationships of the targeted stakeholders with MMC via an analysis of the narratives. This also allowed me to identify the different forms or 'topics' by which they interpreted their stories.

Stakeholders	Most valued	Less valued
Residents of nearby villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development. • Source of employment and growth for younger people. • Improvement of public services such as communications, education and health. • Source of indirect jobs and income. • Productive initiatives in agriculture and related industry. • Valuation of land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contamination in the long term. • Employment for few. • Not enough “help” for improvement of public services like communications, education and health. • Security issues because of the amount of floating population in the villages. • Safety issues because of the transportation through the roads in the valley. • Division and exclusion dynamics

changed to fifteen per cent with the social and environmental value taking primacy over the economic value in the economic incentives to MMC employees.

Stakeholders	Most valued	Less valued
		<p>within communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disappearance of cultural customs.
<p>Residents of villages and towns not in the immediate vicinity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of public services such as communications, education and health. • Source of indirect jobs and income. • Productive initiatives in agriculture and related industry. • Compensation income to organisations, which lose their livestock because of contamination (fishermen, farmers). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contamination of what? in the long term.

<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Most valued</i>	<i>Less valued</i>

I decided that there were five topics around which the respondents could interpret these themes.

1. How the present relates to the past and future. The present is interpreted as better, similar or worse than the future and the past.
2. The relation with the company in two areas:
 - a. Collaboration, dependence and opposition. These were the most common viewpoints found when the respondents were asked to interpret their relationship with the company.
 - b. Trust in three areas: sincerity, competence and commitment. Trusting relationships usually referred to how, if at all, promises were fulfilled. These areas refer to the type of acknowledgement used to explain why these promises were fulfilled or not.

The following topics refer to MMC and the contractor's employees only.

3. The intention of action in relation to MMC. To accomplish what was assigned, commit to a result or fulfil a significant need. This refers to levels of passivity or antagonism in the objective.
4. The sense of belonging or purposes of their actions – as a contribution to their teams, to their individual jobs or to a wider organisational net.
5. The Placement of leadership – on someone else, shared or on his/her own actions.

To develop these topics, I kept in mind the question of, 'what is the broad topic which they are talking about here?' while analysing the interviews.

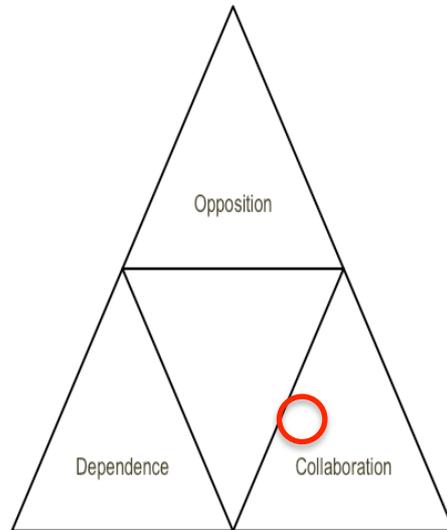
As an example, an old man told me a story about how the walnut trees were drying out and the product obtained from the trees had diminished compared with the years prior to the MMC operation in the valley. He did not see that the situation would get any better even though there had been promises from the company management. What is the subject he was talking about, as a villager close to the operation's site? He is comparing the present with the past as being worse in terms of his environment. At the same time he is talking about his opposition to the company and his mistrust of the company management.

Further on, a contractor's employee explained to me that he received equal treatment compared with MMC management and that this had led to the opportunity to assume larger responsibility and to learn. In this way, he felt much more qualified and committed to contributing to the

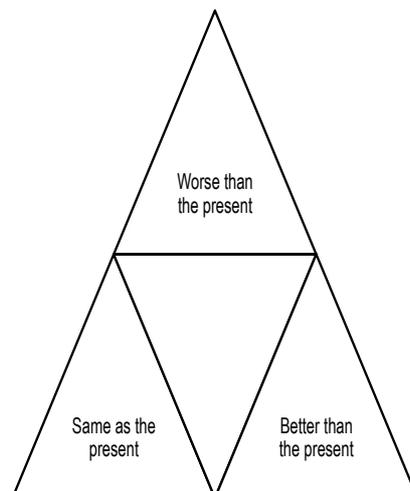
success of MMC, and armed with more professional opportunities than before. He told me that the present is better than the past; that he had a collaborative relationship with MMC, with some level of dependency; that he trusted the company management; that he worked with high levels of commitment to fulfil an organisational need; that he contributed to the wider organisation; and about his own leadership.

I provided seven triangles (which represent seven triads) for interpretation. The interpretation action is carried out by moving a red circle, using the mouse cursor, near to the position that best represents the meaning of the story for the person telling it.

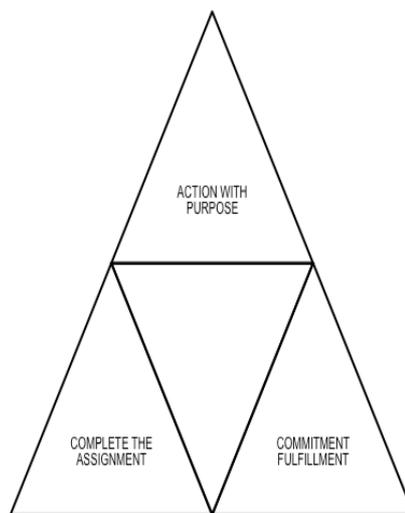
The first question asks about the type of relation that the story represents, giving the options between a collaboration, oppositional and dependence relation. The red circle in the triangle is nearest to the 'collaboration' axis, suggesting that the story is interpreted with most importance given to the 'collaboration' side. However, it is not on the axis itself, which would imply 100% collaboration, but is positioned slightly towards the 'dependence' axis and further away from the 'opposition' axis. As a result, this interpretation given to the story can be read as a collaboration relation with a slight degree of dependence. If the circle had been situated between collaboration and opposition, it could be read as relation collaboration in opposition to MMC.



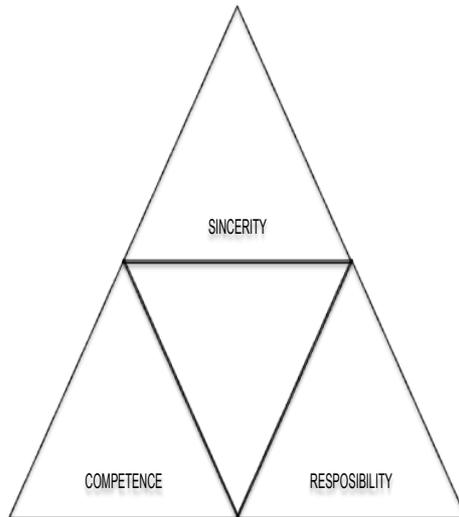
The second and third triangles ask to interpret the story separately, in relation to how the present is experienced in relation to the past and future. The second triad asks how the story reflects the present compared to the past – with the options either 'better', 'worse' or 'the same'. The third triangle asks the same question, but compares the present in relation to the future.



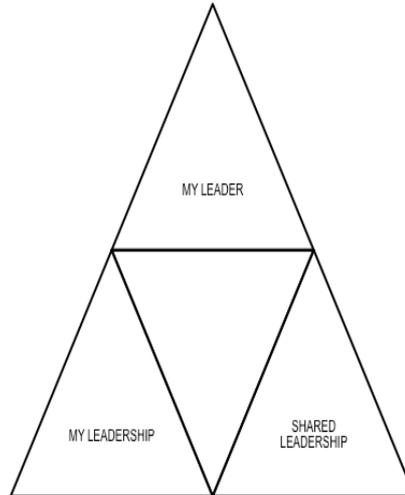
The fourth triangle gives the option to interpret the action's intentionality, with the options being 'complete and assignment', 'act because a commitment has been done' and 'act with no specific action definition but to achieve a purpose'.



The fifth and sixth triangles provide the possibility to interpret the story if it was related to fulfilled or unfulfilled promises and gives the option of attributing the reasons for this interpretation as being due to the presence or lack of sincerity, responsibility or competence in the promises done.



The seventh triangle allows the interpretation of how the story reflects the leadership characteristics within the person telling the story, shared with others and of a designated leader.



The most difficult questions, as implied in the previous chapter, were:

1. I used to/didn't work in the valley before the year 2000. This was the year that MMC began its operations in the valley.

2. I am male/ female. There were some differences detected during the field research that showed that women valued the relationship with the company in different ways to men – especially when referring to the improvement in the quality of life and future of their children.
3. I live in a rural/urban location.
4. I have/don't have a close relative working with MMC. It is not a clear distinction to be an employee, a contractor and valley inhabitant, as sometimes two of these categories fit. MMC employs local inhabitants as do its contractors.
5. I work/don't work as an MMC employee.
6. I work/don't work for a Contractor of the MMC Company.
7. I am younger/older than 25. This age is to define full adulthood.
8. I have worked with MMC for more/less than 5 years.
9. I have/don't have supervisory responsibilities.

The abductive research process allows us to pose hypotheses on the relationship between these nine difficult questions and the sixteen labels of the signifiers, which makes a total of 189 questions (9 questions for each of the 21 categories). Add the combination of the categories between themselves, and this opens up further possibilities for each of the categories involved in the research and 3942 questions (9 questions for each of the 21 categories

multiplied by the same 21 categories less the three categories combined against the rest). Considered all together, this results in an interesting variety of data for establishing connections and formulating hypotheses in an abductee way.

The fifth and sixth triads are the ones that had the most relevance in relation to our research question, because they are directly related to building trust or mistrust. The plan, therefore, was to relate these two triads to the rest of the data.

Cognitive Edge, based in Singapore, then built the website with the information I provided, which included each of the triangles, as well as the difficult questions and instructions and material which I previously tested with a selected sample of the target populations where it would be applied (valley residents and employees of MMC and its contractors).

Once the technicians of Cognitive Edge developed the site, I decided to begin collecting stories from the valley's residents. For this I contacted the local representatives of different villages and arranged meetings with each of them to explain the purpose of my research and the contribution that the villagers' participation would provide. I chose three villages near to the operation; three villages further away from the operation and one larger town in the valley. The local representatives of each village convened an open meeting where I explained and invited the residents to participate in the research project. To do the same in the town, I met representatives of the leaders of local organisations, such as sport associations, women's clubs, small entrepreneur

associations, water channel associations, youth clubs, etc., explaining the aim of the research project and the type of contribution hoped for.

In general terms, I sensed very good feedback from the people I met that wished to contribute with their storytelling. There was some concern regarding the proficiency in using the website provided within some segments of the population, especially older people who had a lower level of computer literacy. I spent about two days a week for four weeks in the villages, explaining the use of the site and distributing leaflets explaining how to access and work with the site.

Independent of the Cognitive Edge site, I constructed a landing page of my own, where I could design specific instructions and add counters of visits with more flexibility. By September of 2011, a month before the close of my research period, the counter of my site registered 460 hits. Not all those were expected to complete the process, but I calculated that at least half the people who accessed the site went through the process of telling their stories, labelling and interpreting them and adding new comments. Unfortunately, as confirmed by Cognitive Edge, the file with the registered data was lost in one of the server upgrades. This was hugely disappointing and after many conversations with Cognitive Edge representatives, I was left with none of the data collected.

Because of this experience, I decided to stop implementing this methodology with employees of MMC and its contractors and stopped collecting data from the valley's residents.

In the Analysis Chapter I will return to this event, which has a number of implications for my research process and analysis, especially in two areas: firstly, that I lost the 'voice' of the communities in my account and, secondly, on how I am able to fulfil the promises related to the provision of the data collected.

This research method appears promising in constructing data of a narrative nature but careful consideration should be shown from an interpretative perspective. As in the reflection logs of the Complex Responsive Process Research, facts should be considered secondary to text, which means that they are constructed as an interpretation themselves. This method adds another layer of interpretation with the signifiers – a rather imposed one, since the process of constructing the signifiers (as shown by the process of construction) reveals the level of intervention of the researcher as an interpreter of the narratives. Even when a careful validation of the signifiers was carried out to reduce possible biases of interpretation (either by the respondents or the researcher), it is important to consider that the responses to this research device are not context free and acquire their meaning by inscription by the specific context in which each respondent is interpreting the clues that offer the method. As a result, its interpretation poses a number of issues, which are not to be discussed here because of the little use I gave to this method in my research.

APPENDIX 2: MMC AND EMPLOYEES

Something that became salient, as a very strong theme, is the type of relationship people recognise within the company. Many of them compared the relationship they experienced while being employees of a contractor company or in other mining companies before working with MMC, saying that in this company

“You have the feeling that there are no boundaries on the relationship between managers and employees”;

“I worked with MMC as a contractor’s employee. In 2005 I was invited to participate in the team as an MMC employee; the relation is so different; you feel part of a team and have a close relationship with managers and other fellow employees. In the contractor’s companies this is very different”;

“ A manager said some years ago that in this company we work a lot; even with personal sacrifice; I refer to family sacrifice because sometimes we extend shifts to weekends; but I feel that we feel compelled to work shoulder to shoulder as a team because everyone is committed to getting the job done”;

“ I worked in the coal mining industry and when I came here thought I was in paradise; it is a much closer and collaborative relationship; this

makes me have a much closer relation with my work and the company; a caring (cariño) relationship”.

”Here you see how your manager is concerned with your professional development and the ‘other side’ (personal life) too...”

“ I have seen how committed are managers with their team members when someone has a personal problem; I have not seen this in any other company”.

At the same time that they value close, caring and mutual collaborative learning relationships, there are a few themes which appear as missing and some extended in the relationship between management and employees; the most salient is recognition;

“ Sometimes I wonder if there is the possibility that there are more concrete ways by which we can get recognized for what we contribute; I think that this is a very weak subject. It is uncommon that someone says you have done a good job; it is simple, but for some reason it is not there. Please do not think it is a complaint; it could be much better if it was there”.

A subject that is bringing tension is that the company has declared its values and people see that still there is a road to walk through;

“They declared respect relationships as a value, but I see we need to improve in that area; there is no respect for your personal life; we work over shifts or overtime and this is not good”.

A third topic that became recurrent is that MMC, for many of them, is a place where they have made progress in fulfilling their personal expectations and growing in their professional careers and knowledge.

“I am always learning here; we are always doing some sort of innovation, which means I am up to date in my subject of expertise. We learn here with a lot of resources and I value that a lot. In my old company we were always working with red numbers; here it is different, there are no shackles to learn.”

“It is true that there are ‘viejos’ in which you put them there on Monday and they go through the week as if nothing has happened; they do everything as a routine; but at least I have a wire to earth, as many of us, and see the possibility of improving in everything we do; and there is no limitation from your manager if you propose to change something.”

“I remember when Karlos talked to us a few years ago and said, ‘your attitude, not your aptitude will make your altitude’, and I think it is true in this company”;

“I have learned how to do many things and also have learn what not to do; my manager has been a good guide in this.”

“I think that no one here can say that it is the same since he works in this company; I think that I have a different sense of what I can do after the years I have been working here.”

“Here we see a lot of leadership; Karlos is a great leader; but I learned that my job here is not to expect from my manager; we have almost free access to improve whatever is needed.”

A fourth topic that becomes recurrent is the sense of belonging to a place which gives them pride and prestige. It was common to hear that “MMCinos” (anonymised for members of MMC) as they name themselves is a privilege.

“ You know that you belong to a company which is going to become a world reference in copper mining; what happens here does not happen in other ‘coppers’; I am surprised that it is still the way it is in the industry”;

“I find it challenging and like it (the strategy); but still it is a bit away from us; the ‘viejos’ have not done the connection with their daily work; I feel that the relation with the community is key; if we do not improve in that area we will need to tunnel and do all our transport from Argentina; as Barrick Gold is doing. I feel proud about what we are doing with our neighbours; but there is a lot to do, like with transportation, everything that has a wheel in this company is a risk; but I am proud of what this company has achieved.”

“The company has close collaboration with the mining engineering department of University de la Serena; we have conferences with the students; sometimes they come here and they look at us as if we are gods; they are learning from us.”

They show concern with what is going on in the relationship with the communities of the valley;

“I do not feel as before when I go to town; people are kind with us because they know we have the money and spend there; but because of the incidents I have the sense that we are not liked anymore.”

“Most of our people who live in the valley are having a difficult time; because they cannot show themselves as proud anymore about working in the company; some of them are hesitant to talk about issues of the company with the people there; but some are not so gentle and have had problems.”

APPENDIX 3: VALLEY RESIDENTS NARRATIVES TOPICS

1. MMC as *a source of employment and personal progress* for younger people is named a number of times in my conversations. A woman in one of the villages says,

“...It has been very good because before the young have to leave their home villages; now they can stay, some of them have married and built their houses in the village; other have gone to the nearby town, where they have more entertainment”;

A man in his sixties tells me,

“... It has not been for many of the people in this village (jobs) and the nearby villages, but there is no family here that does not have a relative working in the company”

Someone else adds,

“Not always do our people get the better jobs; most of the jobs are with contractors, which are many times temporal and not that well paid as the company ones; but if not they will have no chance to work because agriculture is not ‘giving’”

“There are not always stable jobs; but they get trained and some of them have been able to get a contract with the company”.

Another housewife, with some pride says,

“My nephew is now an operator of those huge trucks they have in the mine; he has been trained to operate other machines; imagine if not; he will be with a shovel and earning nothing”.

Other people have a more negative view of the employment of valley people by the company. A woman in her thirties says,

“Most of the jobs go to people from outside the valley; and if they give us jobs, they are temporal and with contractors, which have a very different economic treatment than the company with its employees”

She points out when they had to allow the company to operate in the valley; that was in 1997 where they were promised that most of their operators would be hired from the valley.

“This has not become true; most of their people come from the large cities outside the valley”.

A middle aged woman tells me

“ ... I am happy because my daughter is finishing university and she intends to apply to work with the company; we have talked to someone we know there and he will move her bios”.

Talking with two young men they tell me about what for them a job with the company means:

“We are studying, so we are not interested in working with the company; we are here because it is our village and we are on a

school break. We study in La Paz (a large city, about 200 miles north from the valley). What has happened is that our friends working with the company are not friends anymore; some of them look down on us; like we were an inferior status to them; working with the company and earning so much money has made them feel superior to us; we are not friends anymore.”

2. The company and its influence in the *improvement of public services like communications, education and health* also brings different views from the people I met.

“Things have changed a lot since the company was installed up there; imagine, we only had gravelled roads; the few streets of the village were a lot of dust and mud during the winter; now we have electricity, before we had a generator that worked for a few hours”.

“I do not think it was the company which did all this progress; it was the government; probably the ‘municipio’ (the city council) that has more money for making improvements; but since the company is here we at least have a better school for our children; the health service has improved and you see that we have mobile phones; before there were just a few land lines”.

“There has been a lot of progress; the neighbouring organisation goes to the company and asks for lighting in the streets; or a computer room, and they get it”.

A young mother says,

“ ... I am happy with the company here because my children will not need to go to boarding schools in town; now they can finish primary school here.”

Others complain about the health centre;

“There is still not an ambulance here; imagine if there is an accident with one of those lorries that transit everyday through the main road; the ambulance will need to come from the town and that is at least half an hour to get here and then half an hour to get back to the hospital; this is not good enough.”

A middle aged man commented about the firemen,

“They have a small truck; very ill equipped...there is no tank truck here, so if there is a fire they will not save anything”.

A woman comments,

“I remember that when I was younger, we could not go to buy goods so easily in town; we have to take the morning bus and get the evening one back; it was a whole day to get there; because of the road, now buses go each hour and there are ‘collectives’ (taxis with a fixed rate shared by passengers); I can go for a couple of hours.”

Another woman adds a new subject,

“ We have satellite TV here; we can watch films and programmes around the world; not everyone has one but at least in this place

there are a few; men go to watch international football matches, some of our children have become fans of Barca (Barcelona Football Club)".

3. Another topic raised about the company is that *its presence has become a source of income* for many people not even working directly for the company or contractors; they have seen increased economic activity and job opportunities. A shopkeeper tells me

" ... has been a great change for me; I used to have only a few products and I was the only one working in the shop; now I have much more activity and have someone else working with me; when there is major maintenance in the company we prepare to sell a lot more; because the population of the village doubles".

A woman owner of a small restaurant and a 'residencial' (a B&B) says that she was widowed some years ago and

"The company people ...help me to expand the business we had with my husband; now I own three houses and the restaurant is always full; my daughter and son work with me now."

A man I met in the central 'plaza' of one of the towns tells me,

"You have to look around, there is progress all around; supermarkets; the 'municipality' new building; there is a lot of money around; brothels are 'bursting'".

A middle aged woman tells me that she now cannot recognise her town;

“We used to have trouble here; but now this is a different town; we recognise people in the streets; light trucks and lorries go around; there are so many new shops and even supermarkets you saw before only in the larger cities; it is true that we now have everything; but we are not anymore the same”

It is not mentioned very frequently by the people on the streets of the towns, when talking to people who have some kind of village responsibility; as the head of the old people’s club; the irrigation channel association; or the neighbourhood association. They name a number of initiatives, which the company has contributed through its independent foundation (MMC Foundation).

“They have helped with plants to introduce the walnut in the valley”,

says one of the directing fellows of the canal association (the organised owners of the irrigation canal); then he adds

“They have helped us with improving the repair of the canal when we have asked for help”;

Others say

“Seed capital program of the MMC Foundation”

which is in place for people beginning self-employed small businesses;

“ There are people doing all sorts of activities, like the mom selling prepared meals for the people who come; she bought an industrial cook and is able to sell hundreds of meals to the restaurants and ‘residential’ which host these people.”

Another initiative is the financing of an apiculture industry;

“Now they are able to produce different type of products derived from honey and wax; even exporting their products.”

Speaking with a group of fishermen they say that they get loans to buy new equipment and repair their fishing nets, lines and poles; they also mention that because of the advice of an expert they have been able to cultivate sea food which has a very high price.

4. *Economic valuation* of land is a subject that also is mentioned a number of times. The agricultural activity seems to be going downwards; they produce grapes for producing ‘pisco’, a spirit drink well appreciated in the country; two large companies have plants in the valley, where it is elaborated. The price of the grape is low and the alternative harvests, corn, ‘aji’ (the name of hot chili) and other horticulture products aren’t that good either. However, the price of the land has gone to its highest level because there are large investments, from external investors, planting avocado and walnut, which require levels of investment, which the small farmers cannot afford. So, because of their precarious income and the price of land going up, they are tempted to sell their lots; which some are doing, especially when they get to old age and do not feel capable of cultivating anymore, and their children have migrated or work in other

activities. The other reason why the land price has gone upward is because of the prices the company has paid for the lots through which pipelines or other equipment are constructed. It was so essential to continue the building of a second tail dam by 2007, in a nearby valley that they paid ten times the price of the land at that time. This has led some people to speculate that the company will buy whole villages and the nearby land if needed.

5. *Contamination in the long term* is probably the most common of all the topics mentioned during my conversations with people from the villages and towns. Many mention that the actual harvests are less than before, because of the soil, water and air contamination caused by the company operations;

“ At the end mining has a limit; they will leave and we will be left with nothing”

It was a common way of expressing their concern. For some, the company operations are responsible and even the walnut trees are drying. For the fishermen,

“Before we were able to collect shellfish all around the bay; or to go fishing nearby; now this is not possible because around the port very little is left in the seabed”.

A shopkeeper in the coastal towns says,

“ I think that something will happen in the future; I was told that the water we are drinking comes from nearby the mine operation; this will have an effect on our health because people say that water is contaminated”.

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