

EXPLORING DISSENT IN TOP-TIER MEETINGS AS COMMUNICATION
CONSTITUTIVE OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEMOCRACY

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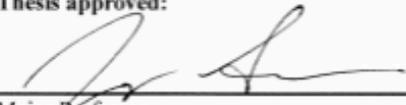
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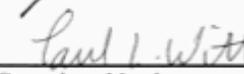
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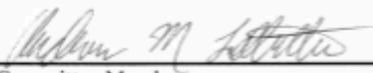
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*Exploring Dissent in Top-Tier Meetings as Communication
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Exploring Dissent in Top-Tier Meetings as Communication Constitutive of Organizational
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This thesis reported the communicative constitution of organizational democracy through the use of dissent. Six board meetings that occurred over six months were coded and then analyzed to examine whether dissent was sufficient for the communicative constitution of organizational democracy and, if so, how dissent constituted organizational democracy. Markov chain and phasic analyses were used to characterize the communicative patterns that occurred during these meetings and predict the trajectory of those conversations. The results indicated that dissent was sufficient for the communicative constitution of organizational democracy. Specifically, the results of this thesis evidenced that dissent contributed to the organization of a dissent climate and the dissolution of a mimetic climate; that dissent is less a predictor of organizational change than other members' willingness to engage with dissent; and that the dissent climate was characterized by behaviors such as relational integration, engagement, and participation in decision-making processes, each of which were indicative of organizational democracy.

Exploring Dissent in Top-Tier Meetings as Communication Constitutive of Organizational Democracy

Meetings are integral components of any organization (McComas, 2003; Tracy, 2007). Thus, they represent unique moments of interaction at which to study organizational communication. Careful observation of meetings can illuminate how policies, practices, and imperatives are communicatively shaped (Lehmann-Willenbrock, Allen, & Kauffeld, 2013) as well as how members organize (Cooren, 2004, 2006; Taylor & Robichaud, 2004). One behavior that affects the organizing role of meetings is dissent. In this thesis, I analyzed meetings of a municipal government board to illuminate the organizing role of dissent as it relates to organizational democracy. The aim of this thesis was to (1) demonstrate the capability of dissent to organize, (2) describe how the process of dissent affects the organization, and (3) examine the association of dissent with organizational democracy.

The study of dissent in organizational communication began with Redding's (1985) seminal piece, but many, such as Botero and Van Dyne (2009), have argued that it is unclear how dissent affects those listening to the dissent and the organization as a whole. Garner (2013) concluded that there are two reasons for this misunderstanding. First, dissent has been studied as an individual's action rather than as an interaction phenomenon that occurs in dialogue, between members. Second, dissent has been conceptualized as a discrete event rather than a process. Moving forward, scholars must *revision* dissent as an ongoing process that plays a part in organizing.

The perspective that communication constitutes organization (CCO) changes the perspective on dissent from viewing it as a discrete event to viewing it as a process. Several

theorists have explicated “communication as constitutive of organizing” (e.g., Boden, 1994; Deetz & Mumby, 1990; McPhee & Zaug, 2000; Smith, 1993; Taylor, 1993; & Weick, 1979), but their explications have relied on philosophical reasoning rather than empirical evidence (Bisel, 2010). Nevertheless, if dissent is communication, and communication constitutes organization, one must consider the question, *What kind of organization does dissent constitute?* As dissent is strategic and members may dissent to gain more voice (Garner, 2009a), it stands to reason that dissent organizes people into an organizational climate, or enduring organizational structure, that promotes the voice of the individual. Such a climate could be described as organizational democracy.

Cheney (1995) defined organizational democracy as “a system of governance which truly values individuals’ goals and feelings ... as well as typical organizational objectives ... which actively fosters the connection between those two sets of concerns by encouraging individual contributions to important organizational choices, and which allows for the ongoing modification of the organization’s activities and policies by the group” (pp. 170-171). Organizational democracy is characterized by subordinate participation (Stohl & Cheney, 2001) and free speech (Kassing, 2000a). Moreover, conflict is one behavior that predicts participation, free speech, and thus organizational democracy (Folger, Poole, & Stutman, 2009; Gouran & Hirokawa, 1996); dissent is one type of conflict (Kassing, 1997).

In this thesis, I sought to uncover the process of dissent that constituted organizational democracy. I examined interactions of board members at a small municipal government entity in Southwest United States to uncover how dissent, in that context, functioned as macro-level talk

that changed the organizational climate. The review of the literature that follows describes the intersection of these ideas before expanding on methods.

Review of the Literature

Communication as Constitutive of Organization

Following Weick's (1969, 1979) call to reconceptualize organization as a verb (i.e., "organizing"), communication scholars of the 1990s adopted a new philosophical paradigm. Among others, Deetz and Mumby (1990), Smith (1993), and Taylor (1993) assumed that communication constitutes organizing (CCO; see Putnam & Nicotera, 2009 for a discussion). *The organization* is not a fixed or stable structure when construed as communication; rather, *organizing* (viewed as a verb rather than a noun) is a process comprising people's interactions, attempts at sensemaking, and coordinated actions. Prior to the introduction of the CCO framework, scholars conceptualized communication as transmission (Shannon & Weaver, 1949). Researchers studying organizational communication from the transmission perspective assumed that communication occurred and affected people within something called an organization. This perspective, however, failed to capture the complex and nuanced nature of organizing. In the years that followed, scholars responded by emphasizing communication as constitutive of organizing. McPhee and Zaug's (2000) seminal work brought the CCO perspective to the forefront of organizational communication scholarship by typifying its potential elements. Concurrently, Taylor and Van Every's (2000) perspective emphasized the need for communication throughout the process of organizing.

McPhee and Zaug (2000) contended that four "flows" (processes) of communication are evident in organizing. During interactions, people negotiate memberships, structure the

organization, coordinate their activities, and collectively position the organization relative to others. McPhee and Zaug's four-flows model depicted organizing as a process of talk that occurs across multiple levels of organization. *Micro-level talk* accounts for activity coordination, *meso-level talk* accounts for membership negotiation, and *macro-level talk* accounts for organizational self-structuring as well as institutional positioning. Across these various levels, communication practices are made distinct; however, these distinctions might be more convenient than accurate.

Taylor and Van Every (2000) countered McPhee and Zaug's (2000) stance, contending that all organization occurs by way of sensemaking. For Taylor and Van Every, there are no distinctions between levels, only organizing that varies in its abstraction. Furthermore, Taylor (2009) argued that each flow hinges on conversation, so conversation must be the only flow. McPhee and Zaug never addressed whether conversation must occur nor did they explicitly state what a "flow" is. Taylor pointed out that, because the definition of term "flow" is unclear, McPhee and Zaug's perspective leaves room for arguments that organization could occur as a result of behavior, material form, or some other means apart from communication. Many scholars have addressed the problems of that implication (e.g., Boden, 1994; Taylor, Cooren, Giroux, & Robichaud, 1996; Weick, 1979). To avoid such definitional problems, Taylor and Robichaud (2004) made clear that "conversation is where organization occurs" (p. 397). For them, conversation is the cornerstone of organizing.

Beyond mere conversation, however, Taylor and Van Every (2000) argued that coorientation is the desired outcome of organizing. It is the coordination of belief, attitude, and emotion through conversation, by medium of text (Taylor, 2001; Taylor & Robichaud, 2004). During coorientation, individuals or collectives position themselves around an object of

conversation, thus becoming a relational unit with three focal points. By emphasizing the object of communication, Taylor and Van Every (2000) diverged from McPhee and Zaug's (2000) explication of the CCO perspective. For McPhee and Zaug, objects of communication were not central components of organizing; rather, objects of communication were consequences, outcomes, or byproducts. In contrast, Taylor and Robichaud (2004) saw the object as "that which serves to anchor a coorientational relationship" (p. 402) and that which allows agents to coordinate meaning. When coorientation occurs, individuals can coordinate shared meaning around the object or objects of conversation. One should note that coorientation is not merely a side-effect of organizing; coorientation emerges as individuals struggle to organize. When individuals manage to organize, a structure is built that is both flexible and routine. The structure is flexible in that people want to establish a coorientation that is positive; i.e., people will adjust their communicative patterns so that they are aligned with others' patterns of communication (Newcomb, 1953). The structure is routine in that organizing involves "many of the same people performing many of the same activities together" (Taylor, 2009, p. 161). Thus, organizing becomes *imbricated*, or routinized, as communicative patterns overlap and become normative over time (Taylor, 2001).

Although the CCO perspective has received much attention from theorists, Bisel (2010) contended that those theorists have failed to address whether communication is necessary or sufficient for organizing. If necessary, nothing can be considered organized apart from the communication about that thing; in this sense, all organization is socially constructed. The literature from Taylor (e.g., 1993) and scholars in his lineage supported the contention that communication is necessary for organizing. McPhee and Zaug (2000) and scholars who support

their claims have advanced the argument that communication is sufficient for organizing. If sufficient, organizing occurs as a result of communication, but it may also occur as a result of some other behavior or pattern. It is important to note that the necessary condition is falsifiable, whereas the sufficiency condition is an assumption that is nonfalsifiable. If researchers identify anything other than communication that organizes, then communication is unnecessary for organizing. Any research providing evidence that communication organizes, however, only supports the sufficiency condition. Unless all communication fails to organize—and this is not the case—it is impossible to falsify the sufficiency condition.

Clearly, the CCO perspective is a hypercomplex, metatheoretical perspective. Partly due to inadequate explication of the CCO perspective, researchers have yet to substantiate claims of the CCO process with empirical evidence (Bisel, 2010), but scholars have both sophisticated statistical techniques and well-argued philosophical paradigms from which to proceed (Miller et al., 2011; Tracy, 2010). Bisel contended that the problem has been rooted in scholars' inadequate linkages of theory to research. Phenomena that evidence claims of *how* communication constitutes organization have remained elusive. One purpose of the present study was to explore whether communication affects organizational structure, which would support the contention that communication is sufficient for organization.

Meetings and Organizing Communication

Previously, scholars have argued that macro-level phenomena can be characterized through careful observation of micro-level communication in meetings (Cooren, 2004). Cooren demonstrated how content analyses of board meetings can reveal “the communicative constitution of collective minding” (p. 517). He went to on to say that “coproducing, amending,

and completing utterances amounts to contributing to the joint solutions and situations collectively constructed by the board meeting” (pp. 541-542). In other words, Cooren argued that conversation between people constitutes something greater than the mere sum of its parts; specifically, people’s dialogues intersect to generate a collective intelligence that is more than any individual’s contribution.

In rebuff, McPhee, Myers, and Tretheway (2006) stated that “everyday conversations can easily exhibit evidence of those three processes and yet amount to heedless, self-centered exchanges” (p. 312). They made clear the distinction between “externally referential communication” and “organizing communication.” Externally referential communication is that which cannot be observed to organize. It might be peripheral, banal, and lack the force that is necessary or sufficient for the constitution of organization. My analysis of board meetings avoided such pitfalls by focusing on communication that affects policy. In the words of McPhee and Zaig (2000), I assessed talk that affected the self-structuring of the organization. By analyzing meetings in which policy was proposed and implemented or rejected, I was able to infer how that talk might trickle down and affect most, if not all, members of the organization. In this way, communication that affects policy might result in organizational change.

Additionally, Cooren’s (2006) rejoinder to McPhee and colleagues (2006) stated that conversation analysis, which specifically targets externally referential communication, is “well equipped” to account for the organizational dimension of communication because it is in conversation that we organize. He argued that “conversation analysis should be considered no more than a method ... that enjoins us to pay attention to the detail of organizational interaction” (Cooren, 2006, p. 330). In other words, although McPhee and colleagues made a

valid point when stating that some conversation is peripheral, it was Cooren's contention that, from a CCO perspective, even peripheral conversation constitutes organizing at some level. Thus, content analysis serves to engage the materials that compose organization, that is, the talk used to organize. Especially in board meetings, where individuals share their goals and visions for an organization and implement them through policy, one can observe its constitution.

Meetings are an especially important context to observe CCO principles because meetings can represent a path through which micro-level talk can compose macro-level structure. Putnam (1983) argued that procedural communication can shape a team's work climate, which is a higher level of organization than mere conversation between a few people. A variety of scholars have since characterized how that might happen. They have determined that procedural communication predicts supporting statements and mitigates dysfunctional communication (Lehmann-Willenbrock, Allen, & Kauffeld, 2013; Lehmann-Willenbrock, Meyers, Kauffeld, Neininger, & Henschel, 2011) and reduces conflict (Domenici & Littlejohn, 2001). The culmination of these communicative behaviors organize deliberation to focus on a common goal (Kauffeld & Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012; Sunwolf & Seibold, 1999).

Dissent

In addition to the context of meetings, a particular communicative phenomenon that might allow unique insight into these claims about the CCO perspective is dissent. When dissent is expressed, the organizational status quo might be disrupted, constituting a new status quo, or the routine might be recreated. Weick and colleagues (2005) argued that, in such moments, sensemaking becomes explicit, as "the current state of the world is perceived to be different from the expected state of the world, or when there is no such obvious way to engage the world" (p.

409). Dissenters might reconcile their incongruence by coorientating around an object of communication that is a particular policy, procedure, or imperative; or dissenters might produce a new object of communication as a byproduct. Thus, the dissent interaction represents an opportune moment to examine the constitutive process.

Scholars have developed many definitions for the term *dissent*. Kassing (2000b) contended that those definitions have several commonalities. Kassing (1998) defined dissent as “a multistep process that involves: (a) feeling apart from one’s organization and (b) expressing disagreement or contradictory opinions about one’s organization” (p. 183). Garner (2013) extended previous work by defining dissent as “an interactive process that occurs as a result of one or more subordinates expressing disagreement with policies, practices, or imperatives” (p. 376). This definition not only describes dissent as an interactive phenomenon but also as a communicative process. In Garner’s condition, dissent must be felt and expressed by the dissenter while being recognized and responded to by other members of the organization. One goal of the present study was to support this deeper, more useful definition of dissent.

Organizational leaders have used a variety of tactics to control subordinate behavior, especially dissent. Covert, subtle controls are more effective than overt, explicit controls (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). Supervisors value control, but supervisory controls might be in tension with subordinates’ preferences of autonomy (Gorden & Infante, 1987). Dissent often results when subordinates realize that their experiences are incongruent with supervisors’ expectations (Kassing, 1997). Subordinates may, however, choose to remain silent because they are afraid of organizational sanctions, being labeled “troublemakers,” or other problems related to hegemony (Deetz, 2005; Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003). If subordinates are ostracized

or reprimanded for dissenting, they are less likely to express themselves in the future (Garner, 2013). Silence can be harmful to subordinates and supervisors alike, however, as dissent has been positively associated with many beneficial outcomes such as increased job satisfaction (Avtgis, Thomas-Maddox, Taylor, & Patterson, 2007; Lutgen-Sandvik, Riforgiate, & Fletcher, 2011), decreased intentions for turnover (Spencer, 1986), better decision making (Hegstrom, 1990, 1999; Janis, 1982; Redding, 1985), and better perceptions of procedural justice (Avery & Quinones, 2002). Thus, the many positive outcomes associated with dissent depend on how receptive others are to its expression (Kassing, 1997).

Despite being afraid of consequences, subordinates want their voices to be heard by their supervisors (Gorden & Infante, 1987), and whether through gossip or conflict, some subordinates will find a way voice their opinions. Organizational dissent is simply one form of voice that can be expressed to supervisors, coworkers, or relations outside the organizational (Kassing, 1997), and it can be expressed upward or laterally throughout the hierarchy (Kassing, 2002). Moreover, subordinates may dissent using numerous strategies including: direct factual appeals, repetitive messages, solution presentations, circumvention strategies, or threats of resignation (Kassing, 2002). Dissenters may also use humor, form coalitions, exchange favors, ingratiate others, or seek to inspire their colleagues (Garner, 2009b). Previous work has shown that few of these strategies are effective, however, and that even fewer are appropriate (Garner, 2012). Only solution presentations, direct factual appeals, and inspirational messages were found to be significant predictors of conversational effectiveness and appropriateness. Kassing (2009), however, found that the duration of the dissent (i.e., its repetition) was positively associated with subordinates' evaluations of supervisors' responses, so additional research might be needed on

the effectiveness of individual dissent strategies. Nevertheless, taking these associations into account, it stands to reason that subordinates are strategic in how they dissent because dissent can be triggered by perceived threats to wellbeing (Ashforth & Mael, 1998; Kassing & Armstrong, 2002).

Other work has explained dissent as being triggered by organizational climate, but the CCO perspective suggests that dissent affects organizational climate as well. Some scholars have argued that climate is the most important factor in a subordinate's decision to dissent (e.g., Hegstrom, 1990); in some cases scholars have argued that it is "dictated by the organizational climate" (Sprague & Ruud, 1988, p. 173). These claims have been warranted by some empirical evidence. For example, Kassing (2000a) found that that frequency of dissent is positively associated with supervisors who promote free speech, and Kolodinsky (1993) found that members of the organization want to voice their concerns when they believe supervisors will try to resolve the issue. This creates a double-bind, however, because organizations with supervisors unwilling to listen to dissent are the ones that could most benefit from it. Moreover, these studies were cross-sectional, so causal claims about the relationship of dissent with climate might have been misguided.

The outcomes that follow and processes that undergird dissent clearly require further research (Botero & Van Dyne, 2009). Scholars have only begun to develop a theoretically grounded explanation for how dissent affects organization (e.g., Garner, 2013). In the present study I sought to explore dissent and its relationship with organization; however, a thorough understanding of process was needed before moving forward because scholars must establish the

temporal dependency of the relationship between dissent and climate before inferring its causal direction.

The Process of Dissent

Poole and colleagues (2000) characterized process as sequences of events that lead to particular outcomes. Process approaches differ from variance approaches in two ways. First, process approaches assess the sequencing of events, so researchers are afforded clearer pictures of causal relationships. Second, process approaches seek to describe events as a whole rather than examine specific constructs. Poole and colleagues identified five requirements for process approaches. Researchers must (1) identify events as part of the process; (2) characterize the sequences of events and evaluate their properties; (3) determine the temporal trajectories of each event; (4) evaluate efficient, formal, and final causality; and (5) illuminate any narrative that underlies the process. By examining dissent as a processual phenomenon rather than a discrete one, scholars might be able to better predict outcomes of dissent and understand its causal mechanisms.

Regarding causal mechanisms, the extant social-scientific research has tended to only address efficient causality where one phenomenon affects another. Following Poole and colleagues (2000), however, Garner (2013) contended that formal and final causality must also be addressed. Formal causality describes how the form—the way something is—influences the process, and final causality describes how a desired outcome can cause events to occur (Aristotle, 2008). In the case of dissent, it is likely that a desired outcome, such as a reorganized organization, drives the interaction. It is also likely that the form of the interaction (e.g., a public forum, the language used, the artifacts implemented or addressed, etc.) affects what kind of

dissent is employed. Formal, final, and efficient causality also must satisfy each of the three canons of causality: (1) temporal precedence, (2) covariation, and (3) nonspuriousness (Campbell, Stanley, & Gage, 1963). Researchers need to be aware of different kinds of causal claims and how to test them so that they can better infer the causal mechanisms that underpin interactions.

The causal mechanisms that drive communication processes are called “motors,” and four types of motors exist that can operate separately or in conjunction with one another (Poole et al., 2000). A *life-cycle motor* describes the different phases of a process. In life cycles, a construct will change in function but maintain its form throughout the process, which consists of several distinguishable stages. A *teleological motor* explores how agents’ goals affect outcomes. Teleological motors are pulled by desired outcome; that is, the group will act so that their goals become shared, compatible, or coorientated. A *dialectical motor* accounts for the friction that is caused by opposing forces. Throughout a dialectic, the tension of paradoxical, competing forces serves to drive the interaction. Dialectical motors must resolve in an outcome, however, whether that be the defeat of one side over the other, the creation of a new entity, or the stalemate of both sides. Last, an *evolutionary motor* classifies events through sequences of variation, selection, and retention. Driven by the need to survive in the social world, individuals or groups will vary, select, and retain beneficial behaviors. Often, characteristics of *normal* organizational members will affect what behaviors are retained.

When viewed from a process perspective, dissent is not characterized as an individual’s action; instead, it is viewed as a series of events that are causally linked. Most previous research sought to understand how organizational-, relational-, and individual-level factors such as loyalty

influenced subordinates' willingness and abilities to dissent (e.g., Kassing, 1997). A process paradigm shifts the focus away from those factors and onto the linkages between events. One way to examine such linkages is to look for potential outcomes of dissent. The next section explores how dissent might lead to increased organizational democracy.

Organizational Climate and Organizational Democracy

Assuming the premise of the CCO perspective, dissent is a communication process that constitutes organizing. Nevertheless, some questions remain: What kind of organization does dissent constitute, and what behaviors evidence the constituted organization? Previous studies of organizational climate provide clues for answering these questions. Organizational climates are the enduring attributes of organizations that persist despite individual turnover (Zohar, 1980). Taylor (2001) might characterize these attributes as imbricated. That is, people make sense of organizations repeatedly and in similar ways; thus, attributes of the organization persist. Researchers have conducted several studies on cognition and sensemaking as they relate with climate (e.g., Eisenberg & Riley, 2003; Zohar & Luria, 2004). Relatedly, other scholars have examined knowledge sharing (Bock, Zmud, Kim, & Lee, 2005), creativity, and innovation (Ekvall, 1996). Organizational members repeatedly share their ideas, but this could prove disadvantageous for the organization. Ideas become normative as they are shared time and time again, making change difficult. Dissent, then, is of utmost importance because dissenters often serve as creators of new ideas and instigators of organizational change (Hegstrom, 1990, 1999; Kassing, 1997, 2000a). In the present study, I extended the link between dissent and organizational democracy by examining the process that might link those constructs together.

Cheney (1995) defined organizational democracy as “a system of governance which truly values individuals’ goals and feelings ... as well as typical organizational objectives ... which actively fosters the connection between those two sets of concerns by encouraging individual contributions to important organizational choices, and which allows for the ongoing modification of the organization’s activities and policies by the group” (pp. 170-171). Consistent with Gorden and Infante’s (1987) findings, organizational democracy allows organizational members to voice their opinions and get involved in decision-making processes. Participation and voice, then, are essential characteristics of organizational democracy (Stohl & Cheney, 2001). Subordinate participation can be defined as a “process to use the entire capacity of workers, designed to encourage employee [subordinate] commitment to organizational success” (Cotton, 1993, p. 3). A large body of research has demonstrated the benefits of subordinate participation, including feelings empowerment and self-efficacy (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Jackson, 1983; Marshall & Stohl, 1993; Thomas & Griffin, 1989) and increased organizational commitment (Spector, 1986).

Organizational members are more likely to participate when supervisors promote free speech (Cotton, 1993). In turn, free speech might allow for the constitution of an organization within which dissent is embraced. Participation works against constraints such as hierarchy and policy, which stifle subordinates’ voices (Kassing & Avtgis, 2001). In workplaces that promote free speech, subordinates are more likely to speak up, especially when supervisors are argumentative and unaggressive. Argumentative and unaggressive supervisors are perceived as affirming, friendly, attentive, and unlikely to engage in compliance gaining strategies, which are often viewed as manipulative (Infante, Anderson, Martin, Herington, & Kim, 1993; Infante & Gorden, 1987; Kassing, 2000b; Kassing & Avtgis, 2001). As a whole, organizations with

climates that promote free speech also foster more participation in decision-making processes (Gorden & Infante, 1991).

One type of interaction that evidences subordinate participation is involvement in decision making. Researchers have supported claims that participation in decision-making processes is positively associated with the ability to manage conflict (Gouran & Hirokawa, 1996). Anytime one participates in decision making, however, there is potential for conflict (Folger, Poole, & Stutman, 2009). Researchers have produced an extensive body of literature on conflict and its relationship with group decision making (see Garner & Poole, 2013 for a review). In particular, Poole (1983) identified several phases that characterize the decision-making processes. These phases include focused work, critical work, opposition, open discussion, tabling, capitulation, and relational integration. Opposition and open discussion represent moments of conflict, whereas tabling and capitulation represent attempts at conflict resolution. Some phases or sequences of phases might indicate beneficial decision making while others indicate poor decision making; however, no discernable patterns of beneficial or poor decision making have arisen (e.g., Poole & Roth, 1989). Even so, it is likely that the prevalence and sequence of these phases characterize certain organizational climates.

Two climates that might yield very different sequences of interaction were identified by Hegstrom (1990). The first is the *mimetic* climate, in which dissent is constrained. Hegstrom contended that this is “the prevalent condition” (p. 144). The mimetic climate is identifiable by external or internal organizational communication that is “slogan mongering” (p. 144), is directed down the hierarchy, and emphasizes chain of command. The second is the *dissent* climate, which not only allows for but also encourages dissent. A dissent climate “gives rise to

the hope that democratization of the workplace is possible” (p. 146). Here, workers are not forced to supplant their values for those of the organization. Hegstrom assumed, however, that climate constrains or enables subordinates’ abilities to dissent. As outlined in a previous section, dissent may also affect climate. This not a novel assertion. Recall that Putnam (1983) argued that procedural communication affects group working climate because procedures eventually routinize into group norms.

Thus, participative democratic organizations yield higher worker satisfaction and job performance. Both of these outcomes are also positively associated with dissent (Lutgen-Sandvik, Riforgiate, & Fletcher, 2011; Ng & Feldman, 2012). Dissent is likely a communicative behavior that constitutes the form of organization known as organizational democracy. By definition, organizational democracy requires the participation of its constituents, and members are more likely to participate when supervisors encourage free speech (Cotton, 1993; Hegstrom, 1990, 1999). Freedom of speech is evident when subordinates participate in decision-making processes, which in turn results in greater feelings of empowerment and control (Stohl & Cheney, 2001). Empowered subordinates are more committed to the organization (Spector, 1986) and thus more likely to voice their dissent (Kassing, 2000a), so the process begins again. As the system is reenacted, the organizational structure becomes increasingly reflexive—more open to change; more open to free speech; more open to new ideas, rules, and resources. I contend that dissent, then, is a communicative behavior that reorganizes the prevailing climate into one that is more democratic.

Summary

Although theorists have yet to reach consensus on how communication constitutes organization (Bisel, 2010), there is evidence to suggest that the CCO perspective might be the link between communicative action and organizational structure (e.g., Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). For example, a number of scholars have argued the many ways by which organizing may occur (see Putnam & Nicotera, 2009 for a review). In the present study, I examined how dissent organizes. Though scholars have assumed climate affects whether subordinates will dissent (Hegstrom, 1990; Kassing, 2000a), it is unclear how dissent might affect organizational climate. If climate is an indicator of subordinate dissent, and dissent constitutes organizational climate, as the CCO perspective suggests, it stands to reason that dissent constitutes a climate that fosters and encourages the voices of individuals in the organization. One dimension of organizational climate that, by definition, values the individual is organizational democracy (Cheney, 1995). Thus, I posed research questions relevant to the association of the CCO perspective, dissent, and organizational democracy. I then assessed those research questions by observing the temporal trajectories of events in dissent interactions as well as the association of dissent with communication indicative of organizational democracy.

The first step toward understanding dissent from a CCO perspective is to observe its role in group meetings. The second step is to observe how it changes the group working climate (Cooren, 2004, 2006; Putnam, 1983). Previous research has illustrated that dissent predicts improved decision making (Hegstrom, 1990, 1999; Janis, 1982; Redding, 1985). Specifically, Poole and Roth's (1989) work illustrated how certain sequences of events in group discussion might lead to better decision making than other sequences. Thus, I sought to identify the way in which dissent situated itself in the group meetings. Careful observation of the events that precede

and follow dissent expressions might reveal its role in constituting organization. Therefore, I posed the following research question:

RQ1: In what ways is dissent situated within group meetings?

In addition to revealing the role of dissent in constituting organization, I aimed to identify the type of organization that dissent constitutes. The previous literature suggested that dissent might constitute organizational democracy. Cheney's (1995) definition of organizational democracy specifies the importance of valuing "individuals' goals and feelings." Moments of relational integration, especially following conflict or dissent, likely suggest that group members value each other's feelings because socioemotional facets of group decision making, such as relational integration, play an important role in shaping interactions at meetings (Kauffeld and Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012). For instance, Lehmann-Willenbrock, Allen, & Kauffeld (2013) found that procedural communication triggered supporting statements, and Lehmann-Willenbrock, Meyers, Kauffeld, Neiningner, and Henschel (2011) contended that relational integration can sustain proactive patterns of interaction. Thus, if careful analysis of talk during meetings can reveal larger truths about organization, as Cooren (2004) suggests, the frequency and placement of relational integration throughout the conversation could indicate the constitution of a participative, democratic climate. Taking these associations into account, I posed the following research question:

RQ2: To what extent is relational integration present in post-dissent conversation?

If dissent plays a part in constituting organizational democracy, it stands to reason that this process would happen over an extended period of time. Because I employed a process research design, following Garner's (2013) contention that dissent must be researched as a process to be fully understood, I was able to assess how group members changed their responses to dissent, if at all. As Poole and colleagues (2000) highlighted, one strength of process research is observation over time. Researchers already have identified repetition as an important strategy used by dissenters (Garner, 2009b; Kassing, 2002), and Kassing (2009) found that the frequency of dissent was unrelated to subordinates' perceptions of their supervisors' responses, whereas duration was perceived as related to supervisors' responses. It might be, however, that dissenting at the right time is more important than duration or frequency. Additionally, organizational members might change their strategy each time they dissent, so it is not the repetition but the strategy implemented that matters. Repetition, then, would only increase a subordinate's chances of implementing an effective dissent strategy. To clarify and extend these findings, I posed the following research questions:

RQ3: How do the communication processes that follow dissent differ each time dissent is repeated?

Recall the four types of motors, or generative mechanisms, identified by Poole and colleagues (2000): life-cycle, teleological, dialectical, and evolutionary. Identifying which motors are at play might illuminate how dissent functions as a constitutive force of organization. For example, Garner (2013) described how a life-cycle motor fit a dissent conversation but suggested that other motors could be operating simultaneously at other levels of analysis. It

seems logical that I will find a dialectic motor of mimesis and dissent in this study because some communication will be used to constrain dissent and other communication will be used to promote dissent (Hegstrom, 1990). This motor would operate at the macro-level of analysis because mimesis and dissent are climates, or enduring attributes, of organizations (Zohar, 1980). Moreover, this motor would likely emerge as a dialectical tension because dissent and mimesis are competing, contradictory entities. As indicated by Poole and colleagues, evidence of this motor would be enduring conflict on a particular topic that has the capability to change an important attribute of the organization. Because dissent is a form of communication that seeks to change the policies, practices, and imperatives of the organization, it is likely indicative of a dialectical motor. Exploring the motors that are present in dissent interactions could illuminate how dissent constitutes organizational democracy and reveal patterns so that outcomes of dissent are more easily predicted. Therefore, I posed the following research question:

RQ4: What types of generative mechanisms characterize dissent processes?

Method

I explored the research questions by coding archival data of meetings of board members operating within a small municipal government entity in Southwestern United States. The interactions were coded using the Group Working Relationship Coding System (GWRC; Poole, 1983) and analyzed using Markov chain and phasic analyses.

Context

The board was composed of several long-time incumbents and one new member who was openly challenging the practices of the organization. This particular organization was

responsible for the acquisition and distribution of water to a large metropolitan area in the Southwestern United States. Generally, few people pay attention to municipal water boards; however, the organization had garnered much public attention and scrutiny as news media and lobbying groups questioned its operations. In the months previous to this study, rumors had spread about the organization's misappropriation of funds, unethical business practices, and violations of the state's Open Meetings Act (Campbell, 2013). The organization had also lost an important lawsuit in the Supreme Court that resulted in further public distrust, and several media outlets had reported these miscues, including National Public Radio, the Star-Telegram, and the Fort Worth Business Press (e.g., Richter & Ragland, 2013; Smith, 2014; Wertz, 2013).

Citizens began to frequent meetings of the board and began to request information about the organization's dealings under the Freedom of Information Act (Dickson, 2014). The transcripts of the meetings revealed that citizens also voiced their complaints about the organization with greater frequency. In the midst of increased citizen awareness and involvement, an incumbent lost a bid for reelection to the board and was replaced by a newly-elected member (hereafter referred to under a pseudonym, Ruth) who perceived a mandate for challenging the board's practices ("Election a slap in the face," 2013). Many viewed this mandate as an important characteristic of a champion of democracy. Ruth's campaign, however, was funded by a wealthy landowner who was refusing to allow the organization to build a pipeline through his land. It is possible that Ruth used the landowner's situation to gain access to public office, suggesting that her motives might have been less than altruistic (Smith, 2014). Ruth immediately called for a third-party law firm to evaluate the board's compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. Ruth's request was promptly denied by other long-time incumbents.

In response, she refused to vote on any issues until the board was evaluated by a third-party law firm (Richter & Ragland, 2013; Ragland, 2013). By refusing to vote, Ruth expressed disagreement with the board's policies, practices, and imperatives—thus satisfying the definition for dissent outlined by Garner (2013). After several months, the board gave in to Ruth's demands and voted to hire an independent, third-party law firm. Afterward, Ruth began to vote during the board meetings (Richter, 2013).

Because board meetings are open to the public and were recorded by media representatives, these meetings represented a unique opportunity to study dissent as a process that constitutes organizational democracy. I obtained recordings and transcribed them, yielding 96 pages of single-spaced data. The recordings began when Ruth was sworn in to office and continued until the final capitulation. Transcribing recordings of the meetings that followed the final capitulation might have been helpful in analyzing the dataset, but time constraints did not allow for me to do so. The following sections describe the coding and analysis of these data.

Coding: The Group Working Relationship Coding System

The GWRCS was developed by Poole (1983) through inductive analysis of decision-making processes. The GWRCS attempts to capture the nature of short segments in group interactions usually lasting between 30 and 45 seconds. Poole and Dobosh (2010) contended that relationships, particularly in conflict management, “can only be understood through focusing on interchanges among members” (p. 412).

The GWRCS outlines seven patterns of interaction: focused work, critical discussion, opposition, open discussion, tabling, capitulation, and relational integration. For the purposes of this study, Poole's (1983) original codebook was adapted to better characterize the present case.

The first change was made to critical discussion. It was collapsed into opposition because two sides were clearly represented in every disagreement. The new, combined code was labeled “conflict.” The second change was made to characterizations of conflict. Instead of typifying four kinds of conflict (denoted as “3a, 3b, 3c, and 3d” by Poole), I subdivided conflict into two kinds of conflict—dissent and not dissent—because I was primarily interested in dissent for this study. I found no conflict that was not dissent because the board meetings were clearly centered on the policies, practices, and imperatives of the organization. The final change was made to capitulation. Knowing that the effects of dissent might not be immediately evident (Garner, 2013) and that these meetings occurred once a month for six months, I concluded that capitulation can also occur if dissent was resolved after it had been tabled. The other codes remained relatively unchanged (see Appendix A to view the adapted codebook). Per Poole’s distinctions, three of the six patterns—focused work, conflict, and relational integration—are primary forms of interaction indicative of the working climate within a group at any given point in time. The other three patterns—open discussion, tabling, and capitulation—are secondary forms of interaction only occurring in response to an opposition and are modes of conflict management. I provided a brief description of those codes here:

1. *Focused work* refers to patterns of communicative behavior where members are focused on the primary task, and there is no disagreement.
2. *Conflict (a)* that is not dissent refers to patterns of communicative behavior where members openly express disagreement on issues unrelated to the policies, practices, or imperatives of the organization. *Conflict (b)* that is dissent refers to

patterns of communication where members openly express disagreement on issues related to the policies, practices, or imperatives of the organization.

3. *Open discussion* refers to patterns of communicative behavior where parties in conflict attempt to resolve conflict through problem-solving strategies, negotiation, or compromise.
4. *Tabling* refers to patterns of communicative behavior where the discussion of a certain topic is postponed.
5. *Capitulation* refers to patterns of communicative behavior where one party concedes to the other because members are convinced of others' correctness or have been forced to do so.
6. *Relational integration* refers to patterns of communicative behavior where the group is not focused on conflict management and, instead, is focused on positive socioemotional interaction.

These six interaction patterns can indicate how degrees of confrontation vary throughout the conflict-management process as well as between groups and individuals. Focused work indicates a lack of expressed conflict and implies that little confrontation is present. Relational integration is also indicative of harmony between members because the interaction is usually not substantive. In conflict, distinct parties have usually formed and incongruent goals are realized. Strategies for managing conflict are dependent on each member's willingness to engage in resolution strategies. Tabling implies that either both parties are willing to deal with conflict at a later time or, more likely, that they are trying to avoid conflict on a particular topic entirely. If

conflict is managed through open discussion, members must be willing to bargain with one another. Both parties acknowledge the conflict and are willing to openly confront the issue. Compromise, competition, and collaboration are possible in such a situation (e.g., Poole & Dobosh, 2010).

My thesis advisor and I coded the interactions. Each of us trained using data different from the archival records that were analyzed in this study and then independently coded the dataset pertaining to the present study separately. Following the method employed by Poole and Dobosh (2010), each page of the transcript was divided in half and coded as a continuous interaction. If the interaction changed within one of the units, it was further divided in half. If the interaction changed within that unit, it was divided in half again until there was a single code characterizing each event. Thus, some pages of transcript were represented by two codes while others were represented by up to eight codes. Guetzkow's U was used to examine the degree to which we reliably unitized the data, and Krippendorff's alpha was used to examine the reliability of coded units. Interrater reliability on unitizing was reported as Guetzkow's U , calculated to be 0.01. Interrater reliability on categorizing was reported as Krippendorff's alpha, calculated to be 0.79 ($p < 0.01$). Both were within acceptable parameters (Folger et al., 1984; Guetzkow, 1950; Krippendorff, 2004). My thesis advisor and I reached consensus by discussing disagreements.

Micro-Level Interaction: Markov Chain Analysis

Micro-level interactions in this study were modeled as homogeneous Markov processes. Markov Chain Analysis is a method used to predict the probable distribution of a set of events at time $t + k$, referring only to the probable distribution of the same set of events at time t . This model is structured as a transition matrix, illustrating the probability of transitions from one

communicative pattern to another over time. Units at Time 2 are dependent on the distribution of units at Time 1. A unit might be dependent on the distribution of the preceding two units, three units, and so forth. The order of a Markov process is determined by how many units a particular behavior is dependent. For example, if a unit is dependent on the distribution of the preceding two units, that behavior is considered a second-order Markov process. The order of the process sheds light on the complexity of any given interaction (see Poole et al., 2000 for a review of Markov analysis in organizational research).

Sequential data found in a Markov chain model requires the researcher to calculate contingency matrices and then test whether these matrices satisfy assumptions of order, stationarity, and homogeneity (Poole & Dobosh, 2010). To satisfy the assumption of order, generating models of unit dependencies between time $t + k$ and time t must be possible. To satisfy the assumption of stationarity, the same transition matrix T must operate throughout the entirety of the discussion. These first two assumptions—order and stationarity—can be tested using log-linear models described by Poole and colleagues (2000). Finally, to satisfy the assumption of homogeneity, the transition matrices of subgroups that may be variable must be compared. Homogeneity, however, is only assessed when comparing subgroups. If no subgroups are compared within a larger group, there is no need to test for homogeneity of matrices. Only one Markov matrix for an interaction that was assumed to be contiguous was operationalized in this thesis, and it is impossible to test the single matrix for homogeneity. Thus, there was no need to test for homogeneity.

Macro-Level Structure: Phasic Analysis

Phasic analysis was employed to partition coded units into periods of communicative patterns. An algorithm similar to Holmes and Poole's (1991) phase mapping algorithm was used to accomplish this task. Poole & Dobosh (2010) defined a phase as "a sequence of contiguous units that share the same code" (p. 416). They also contended that, when using the data series of the GWRCs, discerning markers between phases can easily be done by the researcher, so the data were manually applied to the algorithm. The first use of the algorithm divided the six meetings into a primary set of phases. The second use of the algorithm enhanced the analysis in two respects: first, shorter phases surrounded by a larger surrounding phase were merged into that phase; second, alternating short phases were merged into phases considered combinations of units. The result was a layered analysis of a primary phase sequence and a revised phase sequence. These sequences were then compared to illuminate the temporal trajectories of dissenting interactions, and the temporal trajectories of interactions with dissent were compared with those without dissent to expose differences.

In addition to the phasic analysis, all points where groups attempted to make a decision and breakpoints were marked (Poole, 1983). Breakpoints are moments when interaction is interrupted and could include an intermission, moving into a closed meeting otherwise known as an executive session, or the adjournment of a meeting. During these times, groups are afforded the opportunity to make discontinuous shifts in decision-making processes (Fisher & Stutman, 1987; Poole & Roth, 1989). If breakpoints go unmarked, the researcher could infer a false sense of process. For example, interactions occurred that were not recorded, and such interactions might alter the direction or effect of an event. As this occurrence could confound the results, I was careful to treat breakpoints appropriately when analyzing the interaction.

The Markov chain analysis revealed the temporal dependencies of each coded interaction, that is, the likelihood that a communicative event will follow a preceding event, and the phasic analyses characterized the macro-level patterns of interaction. If any patterns emerged during the analysis, the processes relevant to RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 were extrapolated by examining the patterns of interaction that followed or preceded dissent. RQ1 was addressed by examining what behaviors predict and follow dissent, RQ2 was addressed by examining the behaviors that surrounded relational integration, and RQ3 was addressed by examining the behaviors that followed dissent across time. RQ4 required that the researcher take the entirety of dissent interactions into account and thus could only be answered after the preceding research questions were assessed and phasic analysis was conducted. If the patterns of interaction satisfied the criterion for particular motors (see Poole et al., 2000 for a review of these criterion), I then characterized the interaction by its generative mechanism(s).

Results

The coding process yielded sequences of interaction units for each meeting. In total, 344 interaction units ($N = 344$) were identified across six board meetings that occurred once per month. I used both Markov chain analysis and phasic analysis to examine these units. Before proceeding, however, I had to test the validity of the Markov chain model. In order to do so, the model had to satisfy assumptions of stationarity, order, and homogeneity. First, the assumption of stationarity is satisfied when a single transition matrix, which displays the probabilities that Event 1 will lead to Event 2 (events are denoted as U), operates throughout the entirety of the interaction. In the next section, the matrices used to test for stationarity are denoted as T_{Total} and T . To test for stationarity, researchers must break the interaction into segments (denoted as S),

then test whether those segments fit a single transition matrix using a partial chi-square statistical test, which is one form of log-linear analysis. Each new segment began after a breakpoint, so they represented each of the six meetings. Stationarity requires that any given segment does not differ from the transition matrix T apart from random chance, so nonsignificant values indicate fit. Second, the assumption of order is satisfied when Event 2 is significantly dependent on Event 1. To test for order, researchers must assess the probability that Event 2 is reliant on the effect of Event 1. Because events are required to have a high interdependency, and there are usually many units being analyzed, a conservative significance value of $p < 0.001$ is used. If the association of Event 2 and Event 1 is significant, the assumption of order is satisfied. Third, the assumption of homogeneity is satisfied when all subgroups are operating on the same transition matrix T . Recall that my thesis did not assess differences between subgroups, so there was no need to test for homogeneity.

In order to satisfy the assumption of stationarity, I had to show that sequences of events were predictable only by chance, so nonsignificant values indicated models that fit. The partial χ^2 for $[S_1 T_{\text{Total}}]$ was 158.77 ($df = 17, p < 0.01$), where S_1 represents the transition matrix of segment one and T_{Total} represents the transition matrix that would have characterized the duration of the interaction across the six meetings. No segments were found to be nonsignificant when assessed using T_{Total} . This indicated that sequences of events in the interaction differed significantly from what would be expected across the interaction. Because a significant difference was found, I tested a new contingency matrix T that might have been a better fit for the first two segments. The partial chi-square test of these segments of interaction revealed that the first two segments should be included in the model. The partial χ^2 for $[S_1 T]$ was 17.66 ($df = 10, p > 0.05$), and the

partial χ^2 for $[S_2T]$ was 4.63 ($df = 10, p > 0.05$). Because T represented a transition matrix for the first two segments of interaction, no other segments could be tested using T . Other segments were tested using their respective transition matrices, but T was the only stable one. The assumption of stationarity, then, was only satisfied during the first two segments of interaction, so results suggested that this was a meaningful breakpoint. This also suggested that an event occurred after S_2 that changed the model into one that was unpredictable.

Because no other transition matrix could satisfy the assumption of stationarity, only the first two segments were tested for order. The test for order assessed whether events were dependent on previous ones and, if so, which events predicted the later ones. I compared transition matrices at lag0, lag1, lag2, and so forth up to lag5, which revealed the events on which subsequent events were reliant. Each lag sequence represents a contingency matrix for how an interaction could change over time. Lag0 represents a distribution of units that have been dispersed randomly. Lag1 represents an observed distribution of units. Lag2 represents an expected distribution of units based on lag0 and lag1. Lag3 represents an expected distribution of units based on lag0, lag1, and lag2—and subsequent lag sequences follow the same rule. Each lag sequence corresponds with the order of a Markov chain model. Poole and colleagues (2000) noted that there is no reason to test beyond fifth-order matrices (i.e., testing for lag5) because most are impossible to interpret or are not meaningful. Moreover, they recommended using a conservative test for significance (i.e., $p < 0.001$) because tests for order should indicate a strong dependency on preceding events, not random chance. The test for order indicated that the dataset best fit a first-order Markov model. The partial χ^2 for the one-step transition $[U_1U_2]$ was 74.66 ($df = 25, p < 0.001$), and the partial χ^2 for the one-step transition $[U_2U_3]$ was 62.24 ($df = 25, p <$

0.001); no higher-order dependencies were found to be significant. Therefore, only one-step transitions from Event 1 to Event 2, $[U_1U_2]$, and Event 2 to Event 3, $[U_2U_3]$, were significantly dependent on each other; then the probabilities reset to a random distribution.

Thus, two phases emerged from the data: Phase 1 was a predictable sequence of events (described below) that included the first two segments, and Phase 2 comprised unpredictable sequences of events that included the remaining segments. Because the Markov models for later meetings did not satisfy the test for stationarity, Table 1 displays a first-order Markov chain model for the first two segments of interaction rather than the full duration of the interaction. The log-linear test for T_{Total} indicated that the subsequent interactions were unpredictable using Markov chain analysis. Thus, the Markov analysis revealed a hypercomplex shift from patterned distributions to random distributions of micro-level events. Because this shift was statistically apparent, I was careful to examine what behaviors characterized the shift during the next stage, phasic analysis. Additionally, the results of the test for order indicated that the phases identified through phasic analysis should only include up to three events because three events were found to be significantly dependent on each other.

Table 1. First-Order Markov Transition Matrix for Months 1 through 2

	FW₂	DIS₂	OD₂	TAB₂	CAP₂	INT₂
FW₁	0.69	0.24	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06
DIS₁	0.00	0.49	0.05	0.46	0.00	0.00
OD₁	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.50	0.00	0.00
TAB₁	0.76	0.24	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

CAP₁	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
INT₁	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Note: FW = focused work; DIS = dissent; OD = open discussion; TAB = tabling; CAP = capitulation; INT = integration; subscript 1 = Time 1; subscript 2 = Time 2.

After completing Markov chain analysis, I turned to phasic analysis to assess “broader patterns of development ... comprised of individual events ... meaningful not only in their own right, but also as constituents of a broader developmental sweep represented by the phase” (Poole et al., 2000, p. 229). Phasic analysis did not directly rely on the findings of the Markov analysis; however, it was likely that the shift from a stable Markov model to a random model indicated a turning point in the interaction. The phasic analysis revealed that the interaction shifted after the first capitulation, precisely when the Markov chain model stopped being able to predict sequences of events in the interaction. At this time, group members were attempting to resolve an issue of how much water should be treated by water treatment plants in the area. The wetlands had yielded a surplus of 90 million gallons, but the plants only planned to treat 45 million gallons. Because this area had been in a drought for a number of years, Ruth was pushing for them to treat all 90 million gallons. Other members contended that it would not be economical to do so. After some deliberation, Ruth capitulated to the other members.

Accordingly, Table 2 and Table 3 represent the observed distributions of transitions before the first capitulation and after the first capitulation (hereafter referred to as Phase 1 and Phase 2, respectively). Whereas Table 1 represents the prerequisite data used to identify the patterns of

conversation before the major shift in phases, Table 2 and Table 3 represent the relevant data used to answer each research question.

Table 2. Phase 1: Observed Distributions of Transitions Before the First Capitulation

	FW₂	DIS₂	OD₂	TAB₂	CAP₂	INT₂
FW₁	-	0.79	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.21
DIS₁	0.00	-	0.11	0.89	0.00	0.00
OD₁	0.50	0.00	-	0.50	0.00	0.00
TAB₁	0.72	0.28	0.00	-	0.00	0.00
CAP₁	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	0.00
INT₁	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-

Note: FW = focused work; DIS = dissent; OD = open discussion; TAB = tabling; CAP = capitulation; INT = integration; subscript 1 = Time 1; subscript 2 = Time 2; dash = absorbing classes are not possible.

Table 3. Phase 2: Observed Distributions of Transitions After the First Capitulation

	FW₂	DIS₂	OD₂	TAB₂	CAP₂	INT₂
FW₁	-	0.59	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.35
DIS₁	0.00	-	0.25	0.42	0.17	0.17
OD₁	0.40	0.00	-	0.20	0.00	0.40
TAB₁	1.00	0.00	0.00	-	0.00	0.00
CAP₁	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	0.00

INT₁	0.60	0.10	0.20	0.00	0.10	-
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Note: FW = focused work; DIS = dissent; OD = open discussion; TAB = tabling; CAP = capitulation; INT = integration; subscript 1 = Time 1; subscript 2 = Time 2; dash = absorbing classes are not possible.

The first research question asked: In what ways is the dissent process situated within group meetings? The results of Markov and phasic analyses revealed that dissent was most often preceded by focused work and followed by tabling. Table 2 illustrates the probability distribution prior to the first instance of capitulation. As seen in this table, focused work preceded dissent 79% of the time, and dissent was followed by tabling 89% of the time. Dissent was only resolved through open discussion 11% of the time and was never resolved through capitulation. Moreover, dissent arose 28% of the time after tabling. Thus, in Phase 1, dissent was situated between times when groups were focused on a task and times of tabling. Additionally, the results of phasic analysis revealed a marked shift in how dissent was situated after the first capitulation. Table 3 represents Phase 2, which illustrates distributions after capitulation. During Phase 2, dissent most often situated itself between focused work and tabling; however, dissent occurred less after focused work (59%) and was tabled (42%) less often than in Phase 1. Open discussion (25%) and capitulation (17%) resolved dissent as often as tabling during Phase 2. Furthermore, relational integration began to interrupt sequences surrounding the dissent process, arising out of dissent 17% of the time and leading back into dissent 10% of the time. Thus, in Phase 2, dissent led to a greater variety outcomes than in Phase 1, and other group members engaged with the dissenter more often in Phase 2 than in Phase 1.

The second research question asked: To what extent is relational integration present in post-dissent conversation? The results of Markov and phasic analyses revealed that relational integration was rarely present (6%) in post-dissent conversation. In observing the distributions in Phase 1 and 2 (see Tables 2 and 3), however, relational integration accounted for 17% of the interactions that followed dissent after the first capitulation, whereas relational integration never followed dissent before the first capitulation. Thus, relational integration was present and prevalent during dissent in Phase 2 but not in Phase 1.

The third research question asked: How do the communication processes that follow dissent differ each time dissent is repeated? The results of Markov and phasic analyses revealed only three recurrent patterns of communication following dissent, marked by a shift after the first capitulation. Prior to the first capitulation, phasic analysis revealed that the dissent interaction was characterized by dissent-tabling-focused work (see Appendix B to view the full results of phasic analysis). Although this pattern continued after the first capitulation, it accompanied patterns of dissent-open discussion and dissent-capitulation. Thus, members of the group became increasingly willing to engage with dissent over time, especially after they first capitulated.

The fourth research question asked: What types of generative mechanisms characterize dissent processes? The results of Markov and phasic analyses yielded data that were used to identify or discount each of the possible generative mechanisms. Each potential generative mechanism was tested using criteria for basic change models that were proposed by Poole and colleagues (2000). They outlined two sets of criteria for basic change models. The first set of criteria was for the dataset. The second set of criteria, which would be checked if the first set was

satisfied, is for the narrative that underpins the dataset. Each motor was tested according to these guidelines.

First, I tested for a life-cycle motor. To satisfy the criteria for a life-cycle motor, I had to identify a unitary sequence, a sequencing device, an individual entity as the central subject, and a predictable sequence of events. The data identified no unitary, or repeating, sequence of events throughout the interaction. If a unitary sequence had been functioning, the partial chi-square test for $[S_1 T_{Total}]$ would have been nonsignificant (i.e., any change in the pattern would have been predictable only by chance) throughout the entirety of the interaction. Because there was no predictable unitary sequence, it was impossible to identify a sequencing device, which would have revealed the function of the sequence. Additionally, a life-cycle motor requires that the entire group act as one entity; however, two central subjects were present in the conversation rather than one. This, however, may have been due to the coding process that was used; the GRWCS was developed to assess the communication of groups often characterized by two or more parties, not individuals. Finally, the partial chi-square test revealed that individual cases were unpredictable. After the first capitulation, neither first-order nor higher-order Markov processes could be used to predict sequences of events. Thus, a life-cycle motor could not have operated throughout the interaction. The second set of criteria for narrative was not tested because data could not satisfy the criteria for a life-cycle motor.

Second, I tested for a teleological motor. To satisfy the criteria for a teleological motor, I had to identify a goal-setting process, an individual entity as the central subject, and a predictable sequence of events. Unlike a life-cycle motor, a teleological motor does not require the entire group to act as one entity. Instead, an individual could act as the entity. Ruth might have

represented one entity whose goals caused her to communicate in a certain way. Thus, she was identified as the individual entity making up a central subject. Moreover, the qualitative data revealed the goal-setting process of Ruth. Her proximal goal was to hire in a third-party law firm to evaluate the board's compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, and she achieved that goal. The log-linear analysis indicated, however, that sequences of events became unpredictable after Phase 1. Thus, a teleological motor could not have operated throughout the interaction. The second set of criteria for narrative was not tested because data could not satisfy the criteria for a teleological motor.

Third, I tested for an evolutionary motor. To satisfy the criteria for an evolutionary motor, I had to identify a sequencing device of variation, selection, and retention; a set of entities vying to survive; unpredictable sequences of events; and conflict between entities. Multiple entities were identified—the dissenter and the incumbents—and individual cases were unpredictable, as the log-linear analyses indicated that a first-order Markov process was the model of best fit. A sequencing device of variation, selection, and retention could not be identified, however, because T_{Total} did not operate throughout the entirety of the interaction. If an evolutionary motor had been at play, T_{Total} would have represented the culmination of varied, selected, and retained behaviors across the process. Thus, an evolutionary motor could not have operated throughout the interaction. The second set of criteria for narrative was not tested because data could not satisfy the criteria for an evolutionary motor.

Fourth, I tested for a dialectical motor. To satisfy the criteria for a dialectical motor, I had to identify a set of interacting entities as the central subject and a contradiction that is important to the change process. The phasic analysis clearly revealed two communicative entities (i.e.,

Ruth and those who supported the status quo), and the qualitative evidence suggested that Ruth represented the antithesis and that the incumbents represented the thesis. The qualitative evidence also suggested that there was a clear contradiction between what Ruth wanted and what the incumbents wanted. The phasic analysis revealed something similar. Its algorithm revealed two alternating sequences of events (see Appendix B), one where dissent led to tabling and another where dissent led to either open discussion or capitulation. It was likely that these sequences of events were the communicative expression of two competing entities. Because the data satisfied the criteria for a dialectical motor, the second set of criteria for narrative was tested.

Narratives that are driven by dialectical motors are characterized by (1) competing and contradictory entities that exist; (2) that struggle against one another; and (3) that resolve themselves as an entirely new entity, the defeat of one entity by the other, or a stalemate (Poole et al., 2000). Competing entities—one promoting dissent and the other suppressing it—recurred throughout the interaction. Qualitatively, I identified those entities as the incumbents, who suppressed dissent, and Ruth, the dissenter. The incumbents' communications represented the thesis, or prevalent mode of communication, and Ruth's communication represented the antithesis, or encroaching mode of communication. Each entity was also evidenced in the phasic analysis, where sequences of dissent-tabling (antithesis-thesis) characterized most of the interaction prior to the first capitulation. Afterward, dissent-open discussion and dissent-capitulation became equally as prevalent (see Table 3 or Appendix B). The Markov chain analysis also indicated that a shift in the interaction occurred after the second meeting. Markov chain analysis relies on the assumption that the trajectory of an interaction will not change apart from the introduction of a new effect. It might be that this shift indicated the introduction of a

new entity, antithesis, because the partial chi-square test revealed a shift that could not be explained apart from the presence of a new effect after the second meeting. Incumbents engaged with the dissent after the second meeting, indicating a shift in climate. Although the dissent climate did not defeat the mimetic climate until the final capitulation, the mimetic climate, which was clearly dominant during Phase 1, came into contest during Phase 2. Both integrative and suppressive approaches were used to respond to dissent throughout Phase 2. Group members were increasingly willing to engage with the dissenter, and new avenues of discussion opened that were previously closed (e.g., relational integration).

This section reviewed the results as they pertained to each research question. First, during Phase 1, dissent was followed by tabling, indicating that group members refused to manage the conflict. Group members might have tabled dissent in hopes that it would subside. Dissent was followed either by tabling, open discussion, or capitulation during Phase 2; both open discussion and capitulation indicated integrative approaches to conflict management. Second, relational integration rarely emerged in conversation during Phase 1 but was prevalent during Phase 2, even in the midst of dissent. Third, group members responded to dissent differently over time. These differences were characterized by a major shift in interaction. The major shift in is represented here as Phase 1 and Phase 2. The Markov chain analysis indicated that a major shift occurred, and the phasic analysis allowed me to identify that the shift was marked by the first capitulation. The phasic analysis also revealed that this shift in conversational tenor was indicative of a shift in the group's conversation, where they became increasingly likely to engage with dissent. Finally, each possible generative mechanism, or motor, was tested along two sets of criteria. The first set of criteria was for the dataset, and the second set of criteria was

for the narrative that underpinned the interaction. The narrative was only tested if the dataset satisfied the first set of criteria. Of the four motors tested, only a dialectical motor satisfied the first and second sets of criteria. The Markov chain analysis indicated that the changes observed throughout the interactions could not be accounted for by random chance. Therefore, another entity must have been present in order to account for the altered the patterns of interaction. Moreover, those entities were evidenced by unpredictable, competing phases of thesis and antithesis and a marked shift in those phases following the first capitulation (see Appendix B). The findings of the phasic analysis were consistent with the findings of Markov chain analysis, so frequencies of transitions were reported for Phase 1 and Phase 2, that is, interaction before and after the first capitulation, respectively.

Discussion

The Markov chain and phasic analyses yielded results that could alter how scholars approach the CCO perspective, dissent, and organizational climate. The results of this study indicated that dissent was expressed when group members were focusing on their work, then was either suppressed or engaged by other members of the group. Relational integration arose only when other members were willing to engage with dissent, and dissent was expressed several times before group members were willing to do so. Moreover, a dialectical motor drove dissent interactions, represented by modes of thesis and antithesis marked by members' utterances that either suppressed or engaged dissent. The following section discusses the results relevant to each research question and their contributions to theory, methods, and practice.

Theoretical Implications

Each research question contributed to the extant literature on the CCO perspective, dissent, or organizational democracy. The first research question asked how dissent was situated in conversations that occurred during meetings. The results indicated that dissent was either suppressed or engaged by other group members. These behaviors might have been indicative of competing climates. Recall that Cooren (2004, 2006) argued for “careful content analysis,” which could reveal how micro-level communication organize into macro-level structure. In the same vein, Putnam (1983) contended that procedural communication can change group working climate because it eventually routinizes into group norms. Taylor (2001) might have described this process as *imbrication*. From this perspective, tabling would have been considered a micro-level event that contributed to a climate of suppression. Open discussion and capitulation would have been viewed as micro-level events that contributed to a climate of engagement. Hegstrom (1990) described these climates as *mimesis* and *dissent*, respectively. Contrary to Cooren (2004, 2006), however, Hegstrom contended that communicative behaviors are constrained or enabled by climate. Specifically, he argued that a climate of mimesis or dissent constrains or enables dissent expression. Dissent is suppressed in a mimetic climate and expressed in a dissent climate, but the phasic analyses suggested that dissent occurred more often in mimetic conditions than in dissent conditions, so climate might not dictate the expression of dissent as Hegstrom claimed. Instead, the relationship of climate and dissent might be recursive. It is well accepted that climate affects how group members communicate, but the Markov and phasic analyses evidenced a notable shift in the group decision-making process after the first capitulation; dissent was more likely to be promoted than suppressed. It is possible that such a shift was due to the fact that climate was changed by the micro-level communication of individual members.

The second research question asked about the role of relational integration in the interaction. The results indicated that relational integration only occurred when others were willing to engage with dissent. During Phase 1, relational integration never preceded or followed dissent. During Phase 2, relational integration preceded and followed dissent. If one accepts these phases as indicative of mimesis and dissent conditions, respectively, then these findings might have illustrated one of the necessary links between dissent and organizational democracy. Remember that the democratization of the organization occurs when its constituents value others' goals and feelings as well as organizational objectives, then allows the group to balance those concerns by encouraging participation in group decision making (Cheney, 1995). The results suggested that relational integration interrupted dissent in the dissent climate. This interruption of dissent could have been a manifestation of encouraged participation that fostered the connection between "individuals' goals and feelings" as well as "typical organizational objectives." This did not occur, however, in the mimetic climate. During mimesis, dissent was suppressed and failed to generate open discussion. Thus, relational integration might have been a characteristic of the dissent climate that evidenced democratization.

The third research question asked how the behaviors that followed the dissent expression changed over time. The results of the Markov and phasic analyses indicated that group members were increasingly likely to engage with dissent over time. This finding supported Kassing's (2009) contention that responses to repetition are positively associated with the overall duration of repetition. In this case, Ruth achieved her desired outcome after six months of repeated dissent. Kassing also contended that the efficacy of repetitive dissent was not dependent on the frequency or amount of time between dissent episodes. Interestingly, this thesis indicated that

dissent was more frequent during Phase 1 than Phase 2, suggesting that frequency may be a function of engagement. That is, if other members are willing to engage with dissent the first time, the dissent need not be repeated. In contrast, dissent might need to be repeated if it is continually tabled. As Kassing noted, however, dissenters should be careful when their requests are tabled because “delaying responses elongate a repetition process that tends toward less competent outcomes as the process extends” (p. 431). In particular, tabling can lead to greater feelings of futility on the part of the dissenter (Kassing, 2009; Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003). The findings of this thesis, however, seemed to contradict Milliken and colleagues’ findings. They reported that subordinates held their tongues when they believed their efforts were futile and that subordinates were more likely to speak up when they felt that supervisors would try to make a change. In the present study, Ruth spoke up even when her efforts seemed futile. This might be indicative of the political sphere; even if Ruth didn’t enact change, she had to uphold her charge to challenge the status quo.

The fourth research question asked about the generative mechanisms that underpinned the interaction. Each motor was tested using the criteria proposed by Poole and colleagues (2000). Neither a life-cycle, a teleological, nor an evolutionary motor were observed in these data. The evidence supported only a dialectical motor. Hegstrom’s (1990) conditions of mimesis and dissent can be overlaid on the phases to demonstrate this dialectic. The results of the phasic analysis indicated that two distinct phases occurred. The first, representing the mimetic condition, was predictable using Markov chain models and was primarily characterized by the tabling of dissent. The second, representing the dissent condition, was unpredictable using Markov chain models but was primarily characterized by engagement with dissent via open

discussion or capitulation. The phasic analysis revealed that the group's willingness to engage with the dissenter indicated a shift from a climate of mimesis to one of dissent. As discussed in the results, this shift satisfied the criteria Poole and colleagues (2000) set forth for a dialectical generative mechanism. They proposed the following criteria for dialectical generative mechanisms: (1) Two entities that contradict each other must exist; (2) the opposing entities must engage with one another in a social venue; and (3) the outcome of the engagement must result in a new entity, the defeat of one entity, or a stalemate. The Markov and phasic analyses satisfied the criteria for a dialectic. During Phase 1, dissent was tabled the vast majority of the time (89%), and the Markov chain analysis suggested that this pattern would continue. It did not, however. During Phase 2, dissent was both suppressed and promoted; it led to tabling 42% of the time and led to open discussion or capitulation 42% of the time. One interpretation of these data is that a climate of mimesis was prevalent during Phase 1, followed by a climate of dissent during Phase 2. Interactions that occurred during Phase 1 primarily represented a mode of thesis (suppression of dissent). Interactions during Phase 2 represented modes of both thesis (suppression of dissent) and antithesis (dissent), culminating in a long sequence of capitulation. The qualitative evidence suggested that the final series of capitulations, which included five of the nine total codes for capitulation, represented the defeat of mimesis because the group gave in to the dissenter's initial demands.

Contributions to Research Methods

The answers to the research questions contribute to research methods as well as extant theory. Namely, this thesis highlighted the need for process research in the field of organizational communication. To answer the third research question, I observed sequences of events following

dissent over time, following Garner's (2013) contention that dissent should be studied from a process perspective. Insofar as the outcomes of dissent changed across time—so much so that the interaction became significantly unpredictable using Markov chain models—these results illuminated how limiting the scope of cross-sectional analysis can be when studying organizational communication. If I had only assessed the data at any one point in time, the analysis would have yielded very different results. For example, the phasic analysis demonstrated that the turning point was not a particular type of dissent message, *per se*, but instead the first integrative attempt at dissent resolution (in this case, capitulation). Moreover, if I only assessed dissent during Phase 1, I would have concluded that the dissent was ineffective. If I only assessed dissent during Phase 2, I would have concluded that the dissent was effective, but I would not have known that the dissent was effective because other group members opened up and became willing to engage with the dissenter. Therefore, the results of this thesis supported Garner's (2013) call for dissent to be regarded as a process rather than an event and for dissent to be approached as an interactive phenomenon rather than one person or group of people voicing grievances.

Additionally, Markov chain and phasic analyses were used to characterize the dissent process and assess its outcomes, thus answering the first research question. At the micro-level, Markov chain analysis can be used to predict the order and complexity of conversations and can also reveal notable shifts in phases (i.e., when Markov chain models can no longer predict the trajectory of an interaction). Subsequently, phasic analysis can be used to measure organizational change by observing what McPhee and Zaugg (2000) called “macro-level talk.” Both organizational self-structuring and institutional positioning occur at a macro level.

Organizational self-structuring represents “authoritative metacommunication,” and institutional positioning represents “communication outside the organization, to other entities” (pp. 37-39). Because phasic analysis measures “macro level events (phases) [that] may be comprised of micro level events (individual events just one order above the incidents in the data file)” (Poole, et al., 2000, p. 229), those metacommunicative acts of authority might have been represented in the dataset. Throughout the dataset, the group had to decide how to respond to Ruth’s dissent. For example, one board member asked the question, “Can she abstain?” in response to Ruth’s declaration that she would abstain until achieving her goal. Because such questions represented metacommunication about dissent, this thesis captured organizational self-structuring. Although institutional positioning was more difficult to assess, it also affected the interaction. At certain points, board members would make comments or reiterate statements for “people watching this out there” and “all those [who are] watching.” As such, board members were aware of their position relative to their “watchers” and adjusted their communication accordingly. Through careful observation and content analysis, organizational self structuring and institutional positioning were identified, adding to the compelling narrative that must undergird process research (Poole et al., 2000).

Finally, my results highlighted the need for careful examination of the causal mechanisms that underpin interactions. Other scholars have explained how understanding the generative mechanisms of communication processes can demonstrate the co-construction of interactions (Poole et al., 2000). If scholars only approached communication from variance perspectives, it would have been difficult to illuminate the interdependencies of many events that occur in interaction. Motors are the blueprints of those events. Only by assessing the motors can scholars

truly understand interaction and thus co-construction. Though it is difficult to control for spurious variables with process research, especially if analyzing data from outside the laboratory, process approaches take into account temporal dependency. Therefore, researchers are able to make stronger claims for causation. The combination of longitudinal analysis and the identification of generative mechanisms translated into a more comprehensive understanding of communication than variance perspectives would have allowed. Variance approaches, however, are better at determining the effects of individual communicative behavior. Therefore, both process and variance approaches should be used together to develop the most accurate picture of any communicative behavior.

Practical Application

The answers to the research questions contribute to the practical application of dissent in the organization. In particular, the findings related to the first research question supported Kassing's (1997) claim that the efficacy of a dissent message is contingent on how others respond to it. Therefore, supervisors must learn to respond to dissent competently. For many years now, scholars have highlighted the importance of attending to subordinates' voices (Hirschman, 1970), specifically dissent (Hegstrom, 1990, 1995, 1999; Redding, 1985). Hegstrom (1995) went so far as to claim that "the acid test for an organization's communication system is its reaction to those who dissent" (p. 84), and Tyler (2005) suggested that dissent aids the organization by forcing supervisors to have the kind of self-awareness necessary to survive a crisis. Other scholars have argued that there are optimal levels of, and tolerances for, dissent. For example, Kassing (2011) contended that the optimal organization has members who voice dissent on principle and to advance their work, has subordinates who voice dissent in moderate

amounts, has members who voice dissent for various durations of time, and has a moderate tolerance for dissent. During Phase 1, dissent was expressed with high frequency and was tabled often. This suggested that the dissenter overloaded a group of people who had a low tolerance for dissent, perhaps to bring the climate to an optimal level. This became apparent during Phase 2, when dissent was suppressed and responded to with equal frequencies, so the group likely transitioned into an optimal state of tolerance.

The findings related to the second research question might also have implications for practical application. The results suggested that supervisors were handling dissent competently when dissent conversations were interrupted by moments of relational integration, at least in group settings. This finding supported claims made by Lehmann-Willenbrock, Allen, and Kauffeld (2013), who found that supporting statements significantly promote proactive communication and suppress dysfunctional meeting behaviors. The phasic analysis also revealed that relational integration predicted open discussion and capitulation—from one side or the other—as consequences of dissent. The presence or absence of relational integration during meetings, then, might indicate whether supervisors are competently managing dissent. This could be used as an assessment tool by higher management or by supervisors and subordinates who are dissatisfied with the way meetings are conducted in their organization.

The findings related to the third research question might also have implications for practical application. Repetition has been identified as a dissent strategy (Garner, 2009b; Kassing, 2009), and Garner (2012) found that repetition was reported to be an effective dissent strategy. The findings in the present thesis might illustrate why it is important for dissenters to repeat their appeals in contexts where dissent is not well accepted. Recall that, when the other

party attempted to use an integrative approach at conflict resolution (i.e., when the opposing party capitulated), it signaled a shift to a dissent climate. In the dissent climate, the opposing side was willing to engage with the dissent. Here, collaboration and compromise were possible, and such a condition gave “rise to the hope that the democratization of the workplace [was] possible (Hegstrom, 1990, p. 146).

Democratization, however, may only be possible when supervisors are willing, or forced to, listen. As previous scholarship suggested, supervisors who are argumentative but not verbally aggressive are more likely to encourage subordinates to voice their opinions (Infante, Anderson, Martin, Herington, & Kim, 1993; Infante & Gorden, 1987; Kassing, 2000b; Kassing & Avtgis, 2001). This thesis is consistent with those findings, indicating that integrative approaches used by supervisors were indicative of increased frequencies of relational integration and thus a more positive socioemotional tenor than before they used integrative approaches. Afterward, supervisors were able to table dissent, if needed (tabling occurred 20% of the time after open discussion). It might be that the willingness to engage with dissent lead to better decision making because the dissenter was listened to rather than merely heard by other group members (Hegstrom, 1990, 1999; Janis, 1982; Redding, 1985).

Finally, the results related to the fourth research question have implication for practice. Many scholars have seemed to regard climate as unchangeable (e.g., Bolkan & Goodboy, 2013; Hegstrom, 1990, 1995, 1999; Sprague & Ruud, 1988). My findings suggested, however, that a climate of mimesis can be changed into a climate of dissent through repetition. Persistence, then, might be key for subordinates who are trying to change the organization. Previous advice on expressing dissent, such as Garner and Bishop’s (2012) white paper, has recommended that

subordinates express dissent in the form of solutions and facts. Although these strategies may be perceived as effective and appropriate (Garner, 2012), it is unclear whether they have the efficacy to change climate. This study showed how repetition might be able to change climate. It is also possible that the climate changed after group members realized that the dissenter was willing to give on some issues. Interestingly, the shift in climate occurred after Ruth capitulated. Some norm of reciprocity may have dictated that, if the dissenter can be flexible, the other members should also be flexible. Thus, it might be important for subordinates to give in order to get.

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the potential contributions of my thesis, its results should be interpreted in light of the inherent limitations of the research design. Breakpoints and sample size were key limitations. The longitudinal nature of the data allowed for many breakpoints that could have affected the predictability of the Markov chain models. Additional research that better tracks patterns of interaction is needed. Moreover, my thesis was a case study. Although the actual units of analysis were plenty ($N = 344$), only one group within one organization was analyzed. It would have been helpful to analyze multiple groups within the same organization to better capture the organizing process. Despite these limitations, my thesis had many strengths in design. Foremost, the analysis focused on a highly publicized event that qualitatively reinforced the quantitative findings. Scholars would do well to bolster their research with assessments from multiple perspectives.

Scholars extending the CCO perspective have typically advanced philosophical arguments but have generally not provided observable data to support those arguments. This

thesis provided a theoretical argument with empirical evidence. The field of organizational communication is in need of research that is dedicated to grounding the CCO perspective in empirical evidence. To date, the majority of scholars have assumed that all communication is constitutive of organizing (Bisel, 2010). If all communication organizes, however, what separates organization from communication? Is there a difference at all? When examining the generative mechanisms of these interactions, I observed that the interaction surrounding dissent failed to maintain predictability and instead became unpatterned, at least at the micro-level of interaction. The partial chi square tests for fit supported this claim; predictable sequences of interaction before the first capitulation shifted to unpredictable sequences of interaction after the first capitulation. It is possible that there is order in those interactions that I could not detect from these data and analyses. On the other hand, these data could indicate a level of randomness in organizational communication. By definition, randomness is not organized. Because the randomness came in the second phase, dissent might be seen as leading toward disorder and chaos rather than organized communication, but the CCO literature has not dealt with this possibility. Future research and theorizing should be dedicated to this question.

Although this thesis demonstrated how Markov chain models and phasic analysis can be used to predict and describe the organization of micro-level communication, further theorizing on the implications of this analysis is needed. One way to test the limits of these modern statistical techniques is to apply them to complex, inductively-developed ideas such as the CCO perspective. Previously, the constitutive properties of communication could only be assessed using qualitative methods. Quantitative process methods, however, are uniquely poised to assess such communicative phenomena because they are more comprehensive than older statistical

techniques, accounting for both the narrative and the variables (Poole et al., 2000). Narrative should be used to observe and understand the event of inquiry, and variables should be tested to see whether those observations are valid. An ideal model of communication research should aim to inductively-develop theory using rigorous qualitative methods (Tracy, 2010), then test the validity of those theories using advanced quantitative methods such as Markov chain analysis (Miller et al., 2011).

In addition to using process methods in organizational communication, researchers might also aim toward extending Kassing's (1997) model of dissent and organizational climate. For example, it would be helpful to explore the degree to which relational integration strategies mediate the link between dissent and organizational democracy. Researchers might look at the strategies used by dissenters to change organizational climate; dissent might need to be expressed more frequently in mimetic conditions than in dissent conditions. These possibilities should be explored.

Conclusion

The results of my thesis indicated that (1) dissent contributed to the organization of a dissent climate and the dissolution of a mimetic climate; (2) dissent is less a predictor of organizational change than other members' willingness to engage with dissent; and (3) the dissent climate was characterized by behaviors such as relational integration, engagement, and participation in decision-making processes, each of which were indicative of organizational democracy. The results supported my contention that dissent plays a role in constituting organizational democracy. It is unclear, however, what that role is. It might be that dissent breaks down existing organizational structures that are nondemocratic, or dissent might aid in the

construction of organizational democracy. Future research and theorizing should be dedicated to this question.

In addition to exposing a relationship between dissent and organizational democracy, the results of my thesis supported Garner's (2013) call for process research to be conducted in the field of organizational communication. Recall that Garner highlighted two existing problems of research on dissent. He pointed out that previous research has addressed dissent as an individual's action and observed dissent as a discrete event. Doing so, however, might lead to incomplete understandings of dissent. Regarding dissent as an individual's action, my results illustrated that it was not dissent that changed the organizational climate; rather, it was how group members responded to dissent. Although the dissent may have been the impetus for this change, it was not until other members engaged with dissent that the co-construction of a new climate could be achieved. As such, dissent must not be studied as merely an individual's action; instead, dissent must be studied in light of the conversation that occurs between people. Regarding dissent as a discrete event, the results of this thesis indicated that dissent must be studied as a process instead of an event. If dissent had not been assessed longitudinally, the results of the analysis would have yielded vastly different results. In particular, a cross-sectional analysis could not have exposed the interactional nature of dissent. By definition, organizational climates can only persist through repeated interaction. A major contribution of this study that otherwise might have been overlooked was providing empirical support for Hegstrom's (1990) climates of mimesis and dissent, as well as characterizing the process by which those climates can change. Thus, the shift in climate that occurred during, and the dialectical generative

mechanism that underpinned, the interaction would have gone unnoticed if not assessed as a process.

The processual nature of this research also allowed for a new way to use the CCO perspective. The CCO perspective posits that communication constitutes organizational structure. Given that there are various forms of communication, it stood to reason that any particular form of communication would constitute a particular type of organization. Thus, by using Markov and phasic analyses, I might have been able to uncover a process by which communication constituted organization. Specifically, I assessed the process by which dissent constituted organizational democracy. My results supported the claim that dissent plays a role in the constitution of organizational democracy. Though the role of dissent in constituting organizational democracy is not entirely clear, the results of this thesis warrant further research on the relationship between dissent and organizational democracy. It is through these types of investigations that researchers may further scholarship on the CCO perspective, dissent, and organizational democracy.

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Appendix A

Codebook: Dissent in Group Working Relationship Coding System

This codebook is an adaptation of Poole's (1983) Group Working Relationship Coding System based on his inductive studies of group decision making. Poole recommended that you code short segments of interaction, usually lasting between 30 and 45 seconds (i.e., one half of a page of transcribed interactions). Three patterns—focused work, conflict, and relational integration—are primary forms of interaction which indicate the working climate of the group at any given point in time, and the other three patterns—open discussion, tabling, and capitulation—are secondary forms of interaction which occur only in response to conflict. The latter represent modes of resolving conflict (Poole & Dobosh, 2010).

General Rules: Read the guidelines before you begin coding, then take frequent breaks to read them again. The unit of coding is one half-page segment of group discussion. Identify the type of message within each segment. All categories are independent and usually last the entire segment. If part of the message fits one type of code and another part fits a second, break the segment in half and code each half as a new segment; repeat this process until all independent segments have been coded accordingly.

1. Focused work refers to patterns of communicative behavior evidencing that members are focused on the primary task and there is no disagreement. Often there is much idea development, and the socioemotional tenor of the interaction is usually positive—sometimes relaxed and other times excited. If someone asks for clarification or states something in an attempt to clarify a

misunderstanding, code as focused work unless the attempt at clarification is preceded by conflict—in that case, code it as open discussion.

2. Conflict refers to any period of time in which the group disagrees about an issue and desired outcomes seem incompatible. Sometimes parties will form explicitly; other times they will not. Members can be critical of others' contributions and/or oppositional. Criticism is usually incorporated into the idea development process. Conflict often seems “jerky” and the socioemotional tenor tense. Non-agreements can be coded as conflict if a previous disagreement indicates that it should be interpreted as such. Moreover, conflict can manifest as either dissent or not. Dissent often presents as one member opposing the status quo. Code messages that oppose organizational norms as dissent. Code conflict that is not dissent as “2(a)” and conflict that is dissent as “2(b).”

(a). Conflict that is not dissent refers to patterns of communicative behavior evidencing that the group disagrees on an issue and desired outcomes seem incompatible, and the conflict is focused on ideas unrelated to the policies or practices of the organization.

(b). Conflict that is dissent refers to patterns of communicative behavior evidencing that the group disagrees on an issue and desired outcomes seem incompatible, and the conflict is focused on ideas related to the policies or practices of the organization (as policies and practices are often explicit representations of implicit organizational norms).

3. Open Discussion refers to a conflict resolution method that is characterized as an “integrative approach,” and it must follow a conflict code; however, moments of relational integration may be scattered throughout segments of open discussion. Parties try to discuss the conflict in a way that can lead to a mutually-acceptable resolution. Conflict gives way to more collaborative discussion. Parties will begin to dissolve during this phase. Open discussion may resemble focused work, but it is distinct in that it follows conflict and directly addresses the topic of contention. Open discussion ends when the topic changes to one different from the original topic of contention, that is, by reaching a “meeting of the minds” or tabling the issue. Both sides must be engaged in the collaborative process.

4. Tabling refers to a conflict resolution method evidencing that the discussion of a certain topic has been postponed. Sudden topic changes also function as tabling. Tabling may be accomplished with a single statement, or it may occur over a period of time. Even single statements can be coded as tabling. Tabling must follow a conflict code. If a group tables the conversation and moves back to the conversation that preceded the conflict, it is likely that it should be coded as focused work.

5. Capitulation refers to a conflict resolution method evidencing that one party is conceding to another because members are convinced of the other’s correctness or have been forced to do so. It always occurs in response to conflict but may not immediately follow a conflict code; capitulation can occur if an attempt is made to resolve a previously-tabled conflict. Moreover, capitulation can occur in one statement. Silence often indicates capitulation, especially of someone asks for feedback and no one responds.

6. Relational integration refers to patterns of communicative behavior evidencing that the group is focused on positive socioemotional interaction. During relational integration, the group is “off topic”; that is, relational integration cannot be communication about the organization unless it is humor. Code laughter as integration if more than one person laughs at the same time. Do not code a single member’s laughter as integration because it often evidences conflict. Integration periods may be considerably shorter than one half of a page, and they too may be single statements. Moreover, relational integration could occur at any time, even during conflict or attempts at resolution—but relational integration itself never resolves conflict.

Appendix B

Phasic Analysis

Unit	Code	Breakpoint	Phasic I	Phasic II
1	1		FW	FW-INT
2	1			
3	1			
4	6		INT	
5	1		FW	
6	1			
7	1			
8	6		INT	
9	1		FW	
10	1			
11	1			
12	2		DIS	DIS
13	2			
14	2			
15	4		TAB	
16	1		FW	
17	1			
18	1			
19	1			
20	6		INT	
21	1		FW	
22	1			
23	2		DIS	
24	2			
25	2			
26	2			
27	2			
28	2			
29	2			
30	2			
31	4		TAB	
32	4			
33	2		DIS	
34	2			
35	2			
36	4		TAB	
37	2		DIS	

38	2			
39	3		OD	
40	1		FW	
41	2		DIS	DIS-TAB-FW
42	2			
43	2			
44	2			
45	4		TAB	
46	1		FW	
47	1			
48	2		DIS	
49	4		TAB	
50	1		FW	
51	1			
52	1			
53	1			
54	1			
55	1			
56	1			
57	2		DIS	
58	4		TAB	
59	1		FW	
60	1			
61	2		DIS	
62	4		TAB	
63	1		FW	
64	1			
65	1			
66	1			
67	2		DIS	
68	4		TAB	
69	1		FW	
70	1			
71	1			
72	1			
73	1			
74	2		DIS	
75	4		TAB	
76	1		FW	
77	1			
78	1			
79	1			
80	2		DIS	

81	4		TAB		
82	1		FW		
83	1				
84	1				
85	2		DIS		
86	4		TAB		
87	2		DIS		
88	4		TAB		
89	2		DIS		
90	2				
91	3		OD		
92	3				
93	4		TAB		
94	2		DIS		
95	2				
96	2				
97	4		TAB		
98	1		FW		
99	1				
100	2		DIS		
101	4		TAB		
102	1		FW		
103	1				
104	1	***			
105	1				
106	6		INT		
107	6				
108	1		FW		
109	1				
110	1				
111	1				
112	1				
113	2		DIS		
114	4		TAB		
115	1		FW		
116	2		DIS		
117	4		TAB		
118	1		FW		
119	1				
120	1				
121	1				
122	1				
123	2		DIS		

124	4		TAB	
125	1		FW	
126	1			
127	1			
128	2		DIS	
129	5		CAP	CAP
130	1		FW	FW
131	1			
132	1			
133	1			
134	6		INT	
135	1		FW	
136	1			
137	1			
138	1			
139	1	***		
140	1			
141	1			
142	1			
143	1			
144	1			
145	1			
146	1			
147	1			
148	2		DIS	DIS-OD
149	3		OD	
150	3			
151	3			
152	3			
153	3			
154	3			
155	3			
156	3			
157	3			
158	3			
159	3			
160	3			
161	3			
162	6		INT	
163	3		OD	
164	3			
165	3			
166	3	***		

167	3			
168	3			
169	3			
170	6		INT	
171	3		OD	
172	1		FW	FW
173	1			
174	1			
175	1			
176	1			
177	1			
178	1			
179	1			
180	1			
181	2		DIS	DIS-CAP
182	2			
183	2			
184	6		INT	
185	2		DIS	
186	2			
187	2			
188	6		INT	
189	5		CAP	
190	1		FW	FW
191	1			
192	1			
193	1			
194	1			
195	1			
196	1			
197	1			
198	1			
199	1			
200	1			
201	1			
202	1			
203	1			
204	1			
205	1			
206	6		INT	
207	6			
208	1		FW	
209	1			

210	1			
211	1			
212	1			
213	1			
214	1			
215	1			
216	1			
217	1			
218	2		DIS	DIS-TAB-FW
219	4		TAB	
220	1		FW	
221	1			
222	1			
223	1			
224	1			
225	1			
226	1			
227	1			
228	1			
229	1			
230	2		DIS	DIS-CAP-FW
231	5		CAP	
232	1		FW	
233	1			
234	1			
235	1			
236	1			
237	2		DIS	
238	2			
239	3		OD	
240	3			
241	3			
242	3			
243	3			
244	3			
245	1		FW	FW
246	1			
247	1			
248	1			
249	1			
250	1	***		
251	1			
252	1			

253	1			
254	1			
255	1			
256	1			
257	2		DIS	DIS-TAB-FW
258	4		TAB	
259	1		FW	
260	1			
261	2		DIS	
262	4		TAB	
263	1		FW	
264	1			
265	1			
266	1			
267	1			
268	1			
269	1			
270	1			
271	1			
272	1			
273	1			
274	1			
275	1			
276	2		DIS	
277	2			
278	3		TAB	
279	3			
280	1		FW	
281	1			
282	1			
283	1			
284	1			
285	2		DIS	
286	3		OD	
287	3			
288	3			
289	3			
290	4		TAB	
291	1		FW	FW
292	1			
293	1			
294	1	***		
295	1			

296	1			
297	6		INT	
298	6			
299	1		FW	
300	1			
301	1			
302	1			
303	1			
304	1			
305	1			
306	6		INT	
307	6			
308	1		FW	
309	1			
310	1			
311	1			
312	6		INT	
313	6			
314	1		FW	
315	1			
316	1			
317	1			
318	1			
319	1			
320	1			
321	1			
322	1			
323	1			
324	6		INT	
325	1		FW	
326	1			
327	1			
328	1			
329	1			
330	5		CAP	CAP
331	5			
332	5			
333	5			
334	5			
335	5			
336	1		FW	FW
337	1			
338	1			

339	2		DIS	DIS-TAB-FW
340	4		TAB	
341	1		FW	
342	1			
343	1			
344	1			