Leaders' Emotion Talk

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Leaders' Emotion Talk

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Prelude

I sing no idle songs of dalliance days,
No dreams Elysian inspire my rhyming;
I have no Celia to enchant my lays,
No pipes of Pan have set my heart to chiming.
I am no wordsmith dripping gems divine
Into the golden chalice of a sonnet;
If love songs witch you, close this book of mine,
Waste no time on it.

Yet bring I to my work an eager joy,
A lusty love of life and all things human;
Still in me leaps the wonder of the boy,
A pride in man, a deathless faith in woman.
Still red blood calls, still rings the valiant fray;
Adventure beacons through the summer gloaming:
Oh long and long and long will be the day
Ere I come homing!

This earth is ours to love: lute, brush and pen,
They are but tongues to tell of life sincerely;
The thaumaturgic Day, the might of men,
O God of Scribes, grant us to grave them clearly!
Grant heart that homes in heart, then all is well.
Honey is honey-sweet, howe'er the hiving.
Each to his work, his wage at evening bell
The strength of striving.

Robert Service

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to

John Coningham and Ignez Sant'Anna, my parents, who triggered in me the interest for

what is cultural and emotional;

Palloma Peterson and Diego Siqueira, my children, whose love and lasting patience have

allowed me to be a mother as well as a scholar, a practitioner, an artist and a traveler;

My little granddaughter, Isabella, whose arrival has renewed my strongest connections

with motherhood and grandmotherhood;

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Sonnet XLI: I Thank All

I thank all who have loved me in their hearts,
With thanks and love from mine. Deep thanks to all
Who paused a little near the prison-wall
To hear my music in its louder parts
Ere they went onward, each one to the mart's
Or temple's occupation, beyond call.
But thou, who, in my voice's sink and fall
When the sob took it, thy divinest Art's
Own instrument didst drop down at thy foot
To hearken what I said between my tears, . . .
Instruct me how to thank thee! Oh, to shoot
My soul's full meaning into future years,
That they should lend it utterance, and salute
Love that endures, from Life that disappears!

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Abstract of Dissertation

Leaders' Emotion Talk

This qualitative study combined heuristic and narrative research approaches to explore how leaders talk about emotion in the workplace in the context of the organizational affective culture (OAC) through the experiences of eight leaders in the national and international security industry. Following the heuristic methodology, the researcher's experience of verbal expression of emotion in the workplace was also included in the data. Narratives were collected through in-depth, semistructured interviews and analyzed through the creation of individual depictions, exemplary portraits, a composite depiction, and a creative synthesis.

The results of this study were discussed through the lenses of the enactive approach in cognitive science (Varela, 1970; Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991; Thompson, 2007). Conclusions suggest that the OAC may play three different roles in how leaders in this study talked about emotions: (a) strict normative system; (b) reference system; and (c) ideal to be attained. The role played by the OAC seemed to be connected to how each leader related to it or what modes of coupling were being experienced between the leader and the OAC. In the imperative mode of coupling, the OAC was a strong normative system that the leader accepted and enforced with little or no questioning. There were no clear boundaries between the OAC and the leader's own perspectives on emotion, and the leader avoided the verbal expression of emotion. In the relative mode of coupling, the OAC played the role of a reference system that the leader respected but could cautiously divert from in specific circumstances. The leader was more open and accepting of verbal expression of emotion and would attempt to express

emotions in ways that mostly respected but sometimes challenged the OAC. In the generative mode of coupling, the OAC was an ideal to be achieved. The leader saw the OAC as a product of his or her own influence and made conscious attempts to shape it according to his or her perspective on emotion. Tempered with respect, the verbal expression of emotion was modeled by the leader as a way to demonstrate that emotion is a natural and integral part of human experience at work.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

Overview

This study has its roots in a core aspect of my personal history: being a part of a multiethnic family scattered across different countries; speaking two and at times three languages; loving people of different nationalities; living, working, and studying in different regions, cities, countries, and companies and with different groups of people—often getting things wrong, often having a wonderful time, often struggling to belong in authentic ways while feeling like the foreigner, the trailblazer, the traveler, or the newcomer.

In choosing a context for this combined inner-outer exploration of the affective and cultural dimensions of human experience, I was drawn to the realm of work, in which I have constantly found myself creating ways to retain my sanity and humanity by breaking out of self and other imposed constraints on the expression of affect—sometimes successfully, sometimes at great cost.

The focal point of this study is the role of organizational affective culture (OAC) in the way leaders talk about their emotions within the workplace. True to my traveling nature, I visit philosophy, anthropology, psychology, biology, and sociology to bring forth the link between emotion and culture and lay the founding concepts for this study.

Culture is believed to have a role in the experience and expression of emotion, offering meaning systems and appropriateness norms from which individuals draw affect-related language and behaviors (Ekman, 1973; Mesquita, 2003; Swidler, 2001; Wierzbicka, 1999). Studies of organizations indicate that organizational cultures too play

a role in the experience and expression of emotion and embed norms regarding what emotions are and are not appropriate to express within the organization, when, to whom, and how (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Ashkanasy, Zerbe, & Hartel, 2002; Barsade & O'Neill, 2004; Bryant & Cox, 2006; Pizer & Hartel, 2005). This phenomenon has been defined as OAC and operationalized as normative systems that include display rules about expressed emotions at the collective level and prescribe what is appropriate or not in terms of emotional expression in the organization (Barsade, Brief, & Spataro, 2003; Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Barsade & O'Neill, 2004).

This introduction continues with several subsections in which I frame the specific problem I attempted to address and the purpose and guiding questions for this inquiry. Next, I discuss the significance of this study, not only for myself but also for the academic and practice communities. I then lay out my theoretical assumptions and some of the aspects of my subjectivity that may have had an influence in how I approached this study. Next, I provide a summary of the conceptual framework and method chosen and a reflection on the limitations of this study. I conclude this chapter with the definitions of important terms that appear throughout this heuristic investigation.

Research Problem

This study contributes to the understanding of the role of the phenomenon of OAC in the way leaders talk about their emotions at work. There is increasing support in the organizational literature for the idea that emotion is part of nearly all aspects of work behavior and should be studied in integration with existing work and organizational research (Barsade et al., 2003; Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Briner, 1999; Fineman, 2003). Because of the influence of the Cartesian paradigm in the past (Fineman, 2000; Stanley &

Burrows, 2001), the workplace was promoted as an environment that is emotion free and where decisions are made on an unemotional basis. However, a recent trend in cognitive science supports the collapse of the rational/ emotional distinction (Pessoa, 2008) and is helping shake beliefs on emotion in organizations, as we now find increasing evidence that cognition is also emotional, and that emotion involves "both cognitive processes (e.g. perception, attention, and evaluation) and bodily events (e.g. arousal, behavior, and facial expressions)" (Colombetti & Thompson, 2007, p. 45). As Fineman (2000) well summarized,

> Rationality is no longer the 'master' process; nor is emotion. They both interpenetrate; they flow together in the same mould. From this perspective, there is no such thing as a pure cognition; thinking and deciding is always brushed with emotion, however slight. (p. 11)

Indeed, Barsade and Gibson (2007), using the term *affect* to mean the same as Fineman's *emotion*, stated,

> Affect permeates organizations. It is present in the interdependent relationships we hold with bosses, team members, and subordinates. It is present in deadlines, in group projects, in human resource processes like performance appraisals and selection interviews. Affective processes (more commonly known as emotions) create and sustain work motivation. They lurk behind political behavior; they animate our decisions; they are essential to leadership. (p. 36)

Advances in affective science are strengthening a new paradigm in which mind and body are seen as integrated, and cognition, that is, "behavior or conduct in relation to meaning and norms that a system itself enacts or brings forth on the basis of its autonomy" (Thompson, 2007, p. 126), emerges "from the coupled interactions of the brain, body, and environment" (Colombetti & Thompson, 2007, p. 46), in the dialectical relation between individual and collective, as further explained by Roth (2007). This dialectical relation is implied in the increased awareness found in the literature that the

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way an individual conveys affect, defined as any emotional or emotionalized activity and used in place of *feeling* or *emotion* (Fineman, 2003), can be influenced by family and social and cultural aspects (Mesquita, 2003; Stanley & Burrows, 2001; Wierzbicka, 1999). In other words, the way we show emotion is partially shaped by our family and the groups and larger society to which we belong and their culture, or the set of distinctive symbolic (Geertz, 1973), spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society or a social group, encompassing, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs (UNESCO, 2002).

In the context of the organizational behavior literature, employees' expression of affect or emotion has been described as being regulated by implicit and explicit organizational norms (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Fineman, 2000), sustained by the attitude and belief that emotion can be undesirable and counterproductive for organizational processes (Mumby & Putnam, 1992). Employees manage or regulate their emotional expression and attempt to suppress or to influence which emotions they feel or convey in order to comply with organizational norms (Gross, 1998; Hochschild, 1983; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989; Simpson & Stroh, 2004).

Recently, the idea of display rules has been expanded into the concept of OAC, thought of as normative systems that include display rules about expressed emotions at the collective level and prescribe what is appropriate or not in terms of emotional expressions in the organization (Barsade et al., 2003; Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Barsade & O'Neill, 2004). Additionally, empirical studies on display rules and emotional labor (Lewis, 2000; Simpson & Stroh, 2004), which focus on overt and covert demands on individuals concerning what emotions and feelings to express, seem to indicate that

people in organizations collectively attach different valence (Varela & Depraz, 2003) to different affect and expect individuals to behave in certain ways in connection to how they manifest affect.

In the field of organizational behavior, some argue that research has focused mainly on the individual or intrapsychic aspects of how people influence each other affectively (Hartel, Hsu, & Boyle, 2002; Barsade et al., 2003), with the area of collective affect and team behavior being the least studied (Barsade & Gibson, 2007). Within the large body of research on emotions in organizations currently available, very few studies have prioritized the role of the organizational context (Callahan, 2000; Hartel, Hsu, & Boyle, 2002), and, in particular, the OAC (Barsade et al., 2003; Barsade & Gibson, 2007), in the expression of emotions.

This study attempted to make a contribution to the understanding of how the OAC plays a role in how leaders talk about their emotions in the workplace. For the purpose of this study, leaders were defined as employees who are at the director level and above and have formal supervisory roles, thus having institutional status that tends to enhance their ability to influence others (French & Raven, 1959). A focus on leaders is relevant because studies show leaders' affect can influence followers' affect and organizational outcomes (Johnson, 2008). Talk, on the other hand, is one of the ways in which leaders' influence is exerted (Hatch, 1997).

Another aspect to note is the lack of studies that focus on emotional experience (Moore & Hope-Hailey, 2004), causing much of what is said about emotion to seem incomplete, artificial, and dull (James, 1967). Indeed, Lutz and White (1986) reviewed a decade of anthropological research on emotions, focusing on American anthropology.

They started by examining theoretical and epistemological controversies within this body of research, among which is the tension between universalist, positivist approaches and relativist, interpretive ones. As Lutz and White explained, a materialist paradigm has dominated the study of emotion in the social sciences, treating emotions as material things, that is, facial muscle movements and raised blood pressure, hormonal and neurochemical processes.

This study explored the role of OAC in the way leaders talk about emotion in the workplace, viewing emotion as an aspect of an integrated body and mind, assuming that the expression of emotion is an intersubjective process and that subjectivity and culture dynamically coemerge (Thompson, 2007; Colombetti & Thompson, 2007).

A better understanding of the role of the OAC in how leaders talk about emotion in the workplace could help identify and address issues that have a significant impact on workers' well-being (Hochschild, 1983; Lewis, 2000), turnover rates (Hartel et al., 2002), and recruitment of new employees (Callahan, 2006).

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe and interpret the role of the OAC in the way leaders talk about emotions in the workplace. Peshkin (1993) listed four types of outcomes from qualitative research, relating categories of analysis and subcategories of outcomes. Peshkin's categories of analysis included description, interpretation, verification, and evaluation. This study combined description and interpretation. The descriptive component focused on the identification of the dynamics of the interactions between OAC and leaders' emotion talk. The interpretive component was present in the accounts of experience captured through stories told by leaders themselves. It was also

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present in the clarification and deepened understanding of the dynamic complexities of leaders' emotion talk in the context of the OAC.

Research Question

This study sought to understand the role of OAC in the way leaders talk about emotions in the workplace. The research question and subquestions guiding this inquiry were as follows:

What is the role of OAC in the way leaders talk about emotions in the workplace?

a) What are leaders' perceptions of their organizations' OAC?

b) How does the perceived OAC influence the way leaders talk about their emotions in the workplace?

It is important to mention that the word "perceptions" is used in this study not to describe sensorial perceptions but perspectives, different ways of understanding or conceptions (Marton & Pong, 2005).

Statement of Potential Significance

The significance of this study is at least twofold. First, a better understanding of the relationship between OAC and how leaders talk about emotion can empower employees to understand how the environment—in this case, the OAC—plays a role in their affective experience and expression and how they may want to change the environment in order to generate or enhance emotional well-being in the workplace for themselves and others. As Hatch (1997) explained, "If the organization is constructed from language (that is, if we talk it into existence), and talk it out of, as well as into, changing, then creating discourse within organizations offers more opportunities for

organizing and thus for reorganizing—or change" (p. 368). Hatch is the proponent of the cultural dynamics model, according to which there is "mutual influence among artifacts, values, symbols and assumptions such that a change in one can affect the others (though it may not)" (p. 362). This model sees language and discourse as artifacts, and thus, exploring the verbal expression of emotion—or how leaders talk about emotion—can be significant to understanding the possibilities of organizational culture change, particularly OAC change (Barsade & Gibson, 2007). Second, , this study has a personal meaning and significance to me, and it helps me better understand my experience of the role of OAC in the way I talk about emotion at work. I believe emotions need to be named and integrated into how we talk in organizations, and I struggle to find authentic and responsible ways to do that.

Assumptions

This study was based on the following assumptions:

- Every organization has an organizational culture, which is not objective or stable but a dynamic and emergent set of practices, assumptions, and artifacts that are intersubjectively constructed and symbolically embodied through language (Hatch, 1993).
- Organizations also have an OAC, which plays a role in the experience and expression of emotion (Barsade & Gibson, 2007).
- Emotions in organizations have several interrelated dimensions that go from the intrapersonal to the cultural level (Ashkanasy, 2003). The OAC is at the cultural level.

Subjectivity Statement

In terms of my ontological position, I accept that the social world does not exist independently from the individual, for all relationships and collectives assume the presence of individuals. As Creswell (2007) summarized, "Reality is subjective and multiple, as seen by participants in the study" (p. 17). Within this context, it is important to capture subjectivity through participants' words, which requires the researcher to attempt to "lessen distance between himself or herself and that being researched" (p. 17). I acknowledge that biases are present in the research process, and this subjectivity statement is an attempt to lay out what some of my biases may be. I also acknowledge that, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted, positivism "has been remarkably pervasive" and its "grip" is still on (p. 28). Although I have drawn from studies and concepts from multiple paradigms, important concepts in my conceptual framework are postpositivist, according to Lincoln and Guba's definition. Understanding their implications for the study has not always been easy.

Over the course of my academic and professional life, I have often found myself wondering about the expression of subjectivity, the experience of feelings and emotions. Having been trained in linguistics, literature, pedagogy, and psychology, I have nurtured this interest and continued to pursue it into my doctoral studies. I am fascinated by how people learn and see learning in deep connection with the processes of emotion (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007). Cognitive, developmental, and personality psychology provided me with some of the insight I was looking for: Freud, Jung, Lacan, Piaget, Vygotsky, and Carl Rogers introduced me to the intrapsychic. More recently, I have focused my attention on the context of work and organizations, in which the work of

Schein (1990, 1993) on organizational culture is seminal. Bringing together the

intrapsychic and the social and anthropological perspective of organizations, I am

interested in the relationship between the individual and the collective or where they

overlap, intersect, and influence each other, and this interest is implied in the purpose of

this study. I also favor a multidisciplinary approach to scholarly research in general, and

in particular to the study of emotion and organizational culture. It is becoming more and

more obvious that we can better understand phenomena by integrating knowledge from

different disciplines. Therefore, I analyzed and interpreted the data from the perspectives

of different disciplines.

As a doctoral student, I have on occasion experienced some disappointment and

loss of interest in research and academic writing. I have come to the conclusion that one

of the reasons why I felt this way was that something is lacking in much of the sciences,

and that is the experiential dimension of phenomena under investigation. I agree with

Varela et al. (1991), who proposed,

> The current style of investigation is limited and unsatisfactory, both theoretically
> and empirically, because there remains no direct, hands-on, pragmatic approach to
> experience with which to complement science. As a result, both the spontaneous
> and more reflective dimensions of human experience receive little more than a
> cursory, matter-of-fact treatment, one that is no match for the depth and
> sophistication of scientific analysis. (p. xvii)

It is important to me that this exploration of OAC includes the voice of those who

live it, embody it, practice it, create it, and recreate it every day. Their perspective places

emotion in context and maintains its vitality as a construct and as a part of human

experience. While this was not a phenomenological study in the molds of Husserl (1989)

and Merleau-Ponty (1996), and the purpose was not to investigate consciousness or the

structures of experience, narrative accounts were sought as a way to include the

perspective of those who experience the phenomenon under study. So, although this was

not a phenomenological study, it incorporated subjective experience through a heuristic

approach, combining stories from research participants as well as the researcher's

experience of the phenomenon under study. The complexity of the phenomenon under

study called for a method that allowed for rich descriptions of experience, and the

heuristic approach was thought capable of facilitating that.

Conceptual Framework

This study adopted a symbolic-interpretive perspective, according to which

organizations are seen as dynamic processes in a constant state of change as opposed to

static entities (Hatch, 1997). The construct of emotion or affect was articulated with that

of OAC, organizational culture, and culture. Barsade and Gibson (2007) defined OAC as

collectively held implicit or explicit norms "about appropriate emotions to express or

hold in the group and/or organization, which shape the type of emotions that are allowed

and expressed in the group context" (p. 49). In that sense, the OAC is a prescriptive

normative system that defines the appropriateness or inappropriateness of particular

emotional expressions in the organization (Barsade et al., 2003; Barsade & Gibson, 2007;

Barsade & O'Neill, 2004). While this definition reveals a functionalist approach, it

provides a starting point for the discussion of the role of the OAC in how leaders talk

about emotions in the workplace.

Indeed, the link between emotion and culture is well supported in the literature,

and culture is seen to have a role in the experience and expression of emotion (Ekman,

1973; Mesquita, 2003; Wierzbicka, 1999). Caution, however, is needed with the idea that

a culture (national or organizational) is prescriptive. In a large study of love talk and

culture, Swidler (2001) attempted to find out how people use culture and how culture influences action. She stated,

> Because people hold multiple, sometimes ambiguous, sometimes competing cultural understandings, and because they know much more culture than they use at any given time, we must examine why people mobilize the culture they do and how they adapt or rework it before we can analyze how culture shapes experience and action. (p. 160)

Swidler proposed thinking of culture as a repertoire and suggested that "people have an array of cultural resources upon which they can draw" (p. 25), like a set of skills. According to Swidler, individuals "select among parts of a repertoire, picking up and putting aside cultural themes" (p. 25). This proposition seems to have human agency as an underlying principle, allowing the individual an active role in negotiating the culture, as opposed to being determined by its norms.

Because an organization's affective culture lives within its broader organizational culture, it is important to discuss and clarify the view of organizational culture adopted for this study. The work of Schein (1990, 1993) is the foundation. Schein defined organizational culture as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learns as it solves problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that has worked well enough to be considered valid and to be taught to new members as the right way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. It is possible that the explicit and implicit norms of the OAC fall under what Schein described as shared basic assumptions.

Advancing the work of Schein, the cultural dynamics model, based on Schein's theory of culture, "focuses not on the elements of assumptions, values, and artifacts, but on the processes linking these elements" (Hatch, 1997, p. 362). This model defines culture as "the processes through which artifacts and symbols are created in the context

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of organizational values and assumptions. It also explains how values and assumptions are maintained and altered by using and interpreting artifacts and symbols" (Hatch, 1997, p. 362). Hatch's model depicts organizational culture as a dynamic process, and it pays particular attention to the symbolic dimension of organizational culture and the role of language in its creation, maintenance, and change. Applying Hatch's model to the concept of OAC, we could say that the systems of norms that define what is appropriate or not in terms of emotional expression in organizations are part of a dynamic process in which language has a central role.

Tomasello (1999) also highlighted the role of language as the medium for a shared social reality to develop through the construction of cognitive categories, relations, analogies, and metaphors. Linguistic interactions with others can lead to individuals' taking different conceptual perspectives, including the perspective of the other on their own discourse (Tomasello, 1999).

For this study, I took Hatch's dynamic model even a little more radically and reframed it within an enactive approach to the notion of culture (Baerveldt, 1998; Baerveldt & Verheggen, 1999a, 1999b; Baerveldt, Voestermans, & Verheggen, 2000). This approach is founded on the work of Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela (Maturana, 1978, 1980; Maturana & Varela, 1980; Varela et al., 1991). It accepts culture as a system of symbols and meanings, and like Hatch, it challenges the idea that culture is a preexisting order to be internalized. An enactive approach to culture emphasizes the idea that the mind (the domain to which emotion is usually assigned) is social, and it is not so because it appropriates cultural meanings, but because it evolves in dialogical relations to other minds (Baerveldt et al., 2000). Baerveldt et al. maintained that instead

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of taking for granted the meaningfulness of already produced cultural entities, it is important to investigate how cultural meanings are produced and how people's actions become culturally patterned. This is a very similar question to the one proposed by Swidler (2001) and to the one asked in this study, that is, how culture influences action (Swidler, 2001) or the role of the OAC in the way leaders express their emotions verbally (this study).

We now turn to the construct of emotion and how it is employed in this study. *Emotion* is used here as an umbrella term that can be interchanged with *affect*. In their *Handbook of Affective Sciences*, Davidson, Scherer, and Goldsmith (2003) distinguished six major and most frequently studied affective phenomena: emotion, feelings, mood, attitudes, affective styles, and temperament. According to these authors, emotions are of a brief nature and combine brain, autonomic, and behavioral changes that produce a response to an event significant to the individual. Feelings are the representations of emotions. Moods refer to affective states that may be of lower intensity than emotions but last for a longer period of time. Attitudes are more enduring combinations of beliefs, preferences, and predispositions toward objects and persons. Affective style is the set of ways in which an individual usually perceives and responds to objects and people with a certain emotional quality, dimension, or mood. Temperament is the affective style apparent in an individual's early life and is possibly genetically determined. The authors cautioned that there is some overlap among these phenomena. For example, an individual in a hostile mood may be more prone to experience anger. Furthermore, these relatively distinct phenomena do not occur in separate neural substrates.

The distinction of different forms of affect proposed by Davidson et al. (2003) is certainly helpful and necessary for certain types of studies and is thus important to acknowledge here. However, it is not useful or relevant to this study, since it is not usually how people in general talk about it. Additionally, the above distinction relies on the dichotomy between emotion and cognition, emotion and thought or reason. This dichotomy was purposefully avoided in this study. It is also crucial to notice that, since this study attempted to integrate accounts of experience, definitions of different kinds of affect that are related to a physical-computational, linear temporality may become limiting. As Varela (1999a) explained, lived time is not physical-computational or linear. It actually involves a complex texture where there is a center or a now moment of present time consciousness bounded by a horizon that is already past while at the same time it projects in the direction of the next moment (Varela, 1999a). Varela proposed a triple-braided analysis of temporal consciousness that links a neurobiological basis, formal descriptive tools derived mostly from nonlinear dynamics, and the nature of the lived temporal experience studied. His analysis was utilized in this study as a way to better understand the experience of affect and its duration.

Thus, while Davidson et al.'s definition of affect is important to acknowledge in this conceptual framework due to its influential presence in the literature, it does not fully express how emotion/affect is understood here. Rather, I have drawn from Colombetti and Thompson's (2007) sketch of an enactive approach to emotion, which "implies that we need to move beyond the head/body and subjective/objective dichotomies that characterize much of emotion theory" (p. 20). The authors emphasized how, "at the neural level, brain systems traditionally seen as subserving separate functions of appraisal

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and emotion are inextricably interconnected. Hence appraisal and emotion cannot be mapped onto separate brain systems" (p. 21). In addition, emotion and appraisal constitute each other and are therefore integrated at the psychological level.

Thompson (2007) provided a definition of emotion that is consistent with the enactive approach:

> Emotion is a prototype whole-organism event, for it mobilizes and coordinates virtually every aspect of the organism. Emotion involves the entire neuraxis of brain stem, limbic areas, and superior cortex, as well as visceral and motor processes of the body. It encompasses psychosomatic networks of molecular communication among the nervous system, immune system, and endocrine system. On a psychological level, emotion involves attention and evaluation or appraisal, as well as affective feeling. Emotion manifests behaviorally in distinct facial expressions and action tendencies. Although from a biological point of view emotion comprises mostly nonconscious brain and body states, from a psychological and phenomenological point of view it includes rich and multifaceted forms of experience. (p. 363)

This encompassing definition proposes an alternative to the Cartesian approach to body/mind by integrating what we normally consider distinct and separate components of emotion. It does not, however, account fully for its intersubjectivity or, in other words, how it emerges through the individual's conversation with the cultural environment that he or she also embodies and is therefore also part of his or her subjectivity. This still seems to be a less explored aspect of emotion—and thus, one of the reasons why this study focused on emotion and culture, hereby understood as one domain in which the intersubjectivity of emotion can be explored.

Summary of the Method

Through stories or narrative accounts of experience, this study attempted to better understand the role of OAC in how leaders talk about emotion in the workplace. In order

to include lived experiences in a way that honors their complexities, a qualitative heuristic approach was chosen for this study. Drawing from Moustakas (1990), the heuristic approach was found to be compatible with the assumptions of the enactive approach regarding the importance of capturing the subjective experience of participants (Varela et al., 1991). In addition, heuristic research makes it possible to utilize a variety of forms of data, including artistic expression, which human beings have used to tell stories and convey emotion since the beginning of human history, and which has consistently been a crucial source of information in anthropologic studies of contemporary and past cultures (Boaz, 1927; Stecker, 1984). Furthermore, Douglass and Moustakas (1985) reminded researchers using a heuristic method to "openly and energetically accept the way in which knowledge can be most authentically revealed, be it through metaphor, description, poetry, song, dance, art or dialogue" (p. 59).

Heuristic inquiry includes the researcher's subjective experience, exploring prior familiarity with the topic, personal experience of the phenomenon, and experience of the research process together with that of the participants. Heuristic inquiry is based on the idea that understanding a situation well requires having experienced it. So, the researcher needs to experience the same phenomenon as the participants or a similar one (Moustakas, 1990; Patton, 2002). In addition to conducting a self-interview with the same protocol used with research participants, the researcher included a self-created individual depiction and utilized poetry to express her creative synthesis of the research experience.

Sample

Participants of this study consisted of leaders, defined as employees at the executive level (director and above) who have formal supervisory roles. This definition is

based on the assumption that a formal authority position facilitates an employee's ability to influence others (French & Raven, 1959). Furthermore, in order to narrow down the sample, participants were drawn from a specific industry, that of national and international security. In her case study of a not-for-profit organization in the field of aerospace and national defense, Callahan (2000) found that the expression of emotion was considered a weakness or an obstacle for the achievement of the mission. This belief is possibly representative of the larger field.

Participants were recruited through an announcement in the newsletter of WIIS, the association of Women in International Security, of which the researcher is a member, making it easier to access and communicate with leaders. The same announcement was posted in the doctoral student e-mail list for the Executive Leadership Program of the George Washington University, in order to reach out to current and former students who are leaders in the national and international security industry. Finally, I reached out to another association, Women's Foreign Policy Group, and to my contacts in the security industry. By the time I completed the eighth interview with people who had come forward in response to the announcements, saturation was reached (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), i.e., no new information was obtained from new sampled units.

Data Collection

All participants underwent a screening interview and then an interview aimed at capturing their stories of recent emotional events. The interview protocol consisted of questions intended to elicit each respondent's experience of emotions within the organization through narratives and followed a sequence very similar to the one described by Fitness (2000) in her study of anger scripts in organizations. I conducted a self-

interview using the same interview protocol. Interviews, conducted during the summer and fall of 2008, ranged in length from 45 to 90 minutes and were transcribed. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant to protect confidentiality.

Participants were encouraged to share information in other formats as well: an expressional piece using collage, sculpture, painting, drawing, song, poem, cartoon, short story, essay, play, or photography describing an event in the last 6 months; a set of open-ended guided journal questions to allow optional record keeping and reflection; and a letter to the organization's leadership team suggesting ways to create an organizational culture that is appropriate in terms of how leaders talk about their emotions. However, only one participant chose to provide data in addition to the interview, opting for the letter.

Data collection thus included five steps, some of which occurred simultaneously: (1) identification of the initial sample and researcher's completion of data collection tasks as a study participant; (2) screening interviews; (3) interviews until saturation was achieved; and (4) collection of additional expressive pieces (letter). In addition, complementary information about participants' organizations was gathered from the organizations' websites.

Data Analysis

After transcription of the interviews, I immersed myself in the data, reading and rereading all written material. Themes and subthemes in participants' responses were identified. To identify themes, an adaptation of the constant comparative method as summarized by Merriam (1998) was used. A sample of the transcribed interviews and

identified themes was sent to two peer reviewers for a validity check. Peer reviewers confirmed the researcher's analysis.

Using the data available, each participant's experience was organized in the form of a single descriptive narrative named "individual depictions," giving the researcher and the readers a sense of "what it was like" for the participant to experience the phenomenon under study. Each individual narrative was checked against the individual participant's raw data to see if the narrative seemed to portray her or his experience as completely as it was described, including all themes and subthemes. Each participant also had the opportunity to read his or her individual depiction and verify accuracy.

Following this step, exemplary portraits, a composite depiction, and a creative synthesis were developed. The purpose of the exemplary portraits was to add richness and depth, or thick rich descriptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) that humanize results and promote an empathic connection with researchers and readers. The composite depiction included the most prominent qualities of the phenomenon as experienced by the participants. The final stage of the heuristic analysis was a poetic reflection on the researcher's experience of the inquiry process (Moustakas, 1990).

Limitations of This Study

This study assumed that emotion is part of each person's subjectivity. It also assumed that subjectivity is intersubjective, or, in other words, integrated to a dynamic in which individual, social, and cultural aspects are one whole system. So, individuals' beliefs on what emotions may be discussed with whom could influence their willingness or openness to talk about emotions with the researcher. To counterbalance that, I attempted to establish a good rapport with participants and create a safe environment

where they could express themselves candidly. However, there may still have been blind

spots as well as some self-censoring of information by participants, which may have

limited the quality of the data collected (Bryant & Cox, 2006). I noticed, for example,

that no stories of romantic emotions were included by participants, which perhaps has to

do with the strongly imbued censorship in the United States to anything that may lead to

or indicate sexual harassment.

Bryant and Cox also cautioned that there may also be "a further distinction

between the emotions of that time and the emotions in what is later *told or recounted*"

(p. 125). This is consistent with the literature on narratives regarding the idea that we

position ourselves in relation to an audience and adjust our stories to the audience's real

or imaginary responses (Bakhtin, 1973; Czarniawska, 1997). Interestingly, the way in

which we adjust our stories can actually be important information on cultural norms, and

the fact that this may happen does not pose a problem for this study.

The design of this study, including interviews with people coming from different

organizations, did not allow for a comparison between the OAC perceived by an

individual and the OAC perceived by other individuals within the same organization.

This might be a fruitful path for further research.

Definitions of Terms

Some of the key terms used in this dissertation are defined in different ways in the

literature. Below are the definitions adopted for the purposes of this study.

Emotion: A broad term that refers to subjective and expressive aspects of affect (Varela

      & Depraz, 2003) and based on Colombetti and Thompson's (2007) claim that

      "feelings are not separate constituents of emotion, but emergent features of the

whole complex system (animal or person) as it enacts an emotional interpretation"

(p. 21). Emotion is not distinguished from feelings or moods on the basis of

duration, but includes both.

Feeling: Same as emotion (Fineman, 2003).

Affect: A broader expression that includes any emotional or emotionalized activity and

may be used in place of *feeling* or *emotion* (Fineman, 2003). This term was used

to refer to subjective feelings, displayed emotions, or moods (Davidson et al.,

2003; Varela & Depraz, 2003).

Culture: A complex system of meanings and symbols (Geertz, 1973) created, sustained,

and changed in the dialogical relations of social actors (Baerveldt, 1998;

Baerveldt & Verheggen, 1999a, 1999b; Baerveldt et al., 2000).

Organizational culture: Hatch (1993) conceptualized organizational culture as a dynamic

process whose elements include assumptions, values, artifacts, and symbols. For

this study I propose reframing Hatch's dynamic model of organizational culture

within an enactive approach to the notion of culture (Maturana, 1978, 1980;

Maturana & Varela, 1980; Varela et al., 1991; Baerveldt, 1998; Baerveldt &

Verheggen, 1999a, 1999b; Baerveldt et al., 2000). Through the lenses of the

enactive approach, the elements of an organizational culture are not a preexisting

order to be internalized. The mind (and therefore emotion) is social, not because it

appropriates cultural meanings but because it evolves in dialogical relations to

other minds (Baerveldt et al., 2000). Baerveldt et al. highlighted the central role of

human experience in the constitution of social reality, viewing cultural forms as

consensual domains or cooperative domains of interaction that exist only between

experiencing agents, placing social actors in the role of culture makers.

Organizational affective culture (OAC): Collectively held implicit or explicit norms

"about appropriate emotions to express or hold in the group and/or organization,

which shape the type of emotions that are allowed and expressed in the group

context" (Barsade & Gibson, 2007, p. 49). In that sense, the OAC is a prescriptive

normative system that defines the appropriateness or inappropriateness of

particular emotional expressions in the organization (Barsade et al., 2003; Barsade

& Gibson, 2007; Barsade & O'Neill, 2004).

Leader: For the purposes of this study, someone who holds a formal position of authority

in an organization, being at a director level or above and with a formal

supervisory role.

Subjectivity: The ever-emerging ways in which the knowing and feeling subject

experiences the inner and outer world, partially shaped by the relations and

conditions in which the living bodily subject finds himself or herself and by his or

her personal history, previous experiences, professional training, affective style,

attitudes and beliefs about leadership, emotion, and what it means to be

professional. As Thompson (2007) explained, "Individual subjectivity is from the

outset intersubjectivity, as a result of the communally handed down norms,

conventions, symbolic artifacts, and cultural traditions in which the individual is

always already embedded" (p. 409). In other words, "The individual human

subject is the enculturated bodily subject" (Thompson, 2007, p. 411).

Intersubjectivity: The relations and mutual influences between two or more subjects of

    experience.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review examines prior research and thought that were found to be relevant to this dissertation study. To be included in this review, literature had to fulfill one or more of the criteria below:

- Focus on the individual key constructs of this study: emotion, affect, culture, organizational culture, and organizational affective culture (OAC)

- Focus on the key constructs of this study within the workplace context: affect or emotion in the workplace or in connection with organizational culture

- Focus on the key constructs of this study with a connection to the conceptual framework adopted

The literature search was conducted online through the George Washington University library service. The online databases searched were PsychINFO, ABI-Inform, Anthropology Plus, JSTOR, Web of Sciences (Sociology), Dissertation & Theses Online, and Biology/Neuroscience. The search terms employed were affect in organizations, emotion(s) in organizations, emotional organization(s), organizational affect, affective culture, emotional workgroup climate, organizational cultural orientation to emotions, collective affect, and collective emotion. Additionally, authors commonly cited in relevant articles whose work did not come up in the online database searches were pursued separately. Online searches were limited to peer-reviewed journals with articles available online. No time range limit was employed. As a way to organize the literature identified, the chapter was structured into smaller subsections, indicated through subheadings.

Affect and Emotion: Definitions and Distinctions

This literature review starts with an overview of important terms related to affect and emotion as a way to provide the reader with an understanding of how these terms are used in the literature and in this study. Affective phenomena and emotion, in particular, are defined in many different ways. In their *Handbook of Affective Sciences*, Davidson et al. (2003) distinguished six major and most frequently studied types of affect or affective phenomena: emotion, feelings, mood, attitudes, affective styles, and temperament. Emotions, according to Davidson et al., are of a brief nature and combine brain, autonomic, and behavioral changes that produce a response to an event significant to the individual. Feelings are the representations of emotions. Moods refer to affective states that may be of lower intensity than emotions but last for a longer period of time. Attitudes are more enduring combinations of beliefs, preferences, and predispositions toward objects and persons. Affective style is the set of ways in which an individual usually perceives and responds to objects and people with a certain emotional quality, dimension, or mood. Temperament is the affective style apparent in an individual's early life and is possibly genetically determined. Davidson and his colleagues cautioned that some overlap may exist among these phenomena. For example, an individual in a hostile mood may be more prone to experience anger, which is considered an emotion. Furthermore, they pointed out that these relatively distinct phenomena do not occur in separate neural substrates, implying some integration and overlap at the somatic level as well. In agreement with Davidson et al., but adding more specificity, Barsade and Gibson (2007) offered a useful table with the definition of key terms from affective sciences often used in research on affect in organizations (see Table 2-1).

Table 2-1
Translating Affective Terms

Terms used in research	Formal definition	Colloquial terms
Affect	Umbrella term encompassing a broad range of feelings that individuals experience, including feeling states, such as moods and discrete emotions, and traits, such as trait positive and negative affectivity (all defined below).	"I feel . . ." "She seems to be feeling . . ." "He is usually unemotional . . ."
Discrete emotions	Emotions are focused on a specific target or cause—generally realized by the perceiver of the emotion; relatively intense and very short-lived. After initial intensity, can sometimes transform into a mood.	For example, love, anger, hate, fear, jealousy, happiness, sadness, grief, rage, aggravation, ecstasy, affection, joy, envy, fright, etc.
Moods	Generally take the form of a global positive (pleasant) or negative (unpleasant) feeling; tend to be diffuse—not focused on a specific cause—and often not realized by the perceiver of the mood; medium duration (from a few moments to as long as a few weeks or more).	Feeling good, bad, negative, positive, cheerful, down, pleasant, irritable, etc.
Dispositional (trait) affect	Overall personality tendency to respond to situations in stable, predictable ways. A person's "affective lens" on the world.	"No matter what, he's always ___." "She tends to be in a ___ mood all the time." "He is always so negative."
a) (Trait) Positive affectivity	Individuals who tend to be cheerful and energetic, and who experience positive moods, such as pleasure or well-being, across a variety of situations as compared to people who tend to be low energy and sluggish or melancholy.	"She's always so energetic and upbeat!" "He's such a downer all the time!"
b) (Trait) Negative affectivity	Individuals who tend to be distressed and upset, and have a negative view of self over time and across situations, as compared to people who are more calm, serene and relaxed.	"She is always so hostile in her approach." "Why is he always so anxious/nervous?" "I admire his steady calmness and serenity."
Emotional intelligence	"The ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189).	"My manager is terrible at expressing his emotions." "My teammate is great at knowing how everyone else on the team is feeling." "The CEO is brilliant at dealing with her employees' emotions—a real motivator!"
Emotional regulation	Individuals' attempts to "influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions" (Gross, 1998, p. 275).	"He handles his emotions really well, even under high pressure situations."

Terms used in research	Formal definition	Colloquial terms
Emotional labor	Requires an employee to "induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others" (Hochschild, 1983, p. 7).	She has to put on a smile when dealing with customers, because it's part of the job.
Emotional contagion	Processes that allow the sharing or transferring of emotion from one individual to other group members; the tendency to mimic the nonverbal behavior of others, to "synchronize facial expressions, vocalizations, posture, and movements" with others, and in turn, to "converge emotionally" (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994).	"And when we feel good, it's contagious." (Advertising slogan from Southwest Airlines) "I don't know why, but every time I talk to him I feel really anxious afterwards." "Infectious enthusiasm."
Collective affect	A "bottom-up" approach to collective affect emphasizes the affective composition of the various affective attributes of the group's members. That is, the degree to which individual level affective characteristics combine, often through emotional contagion, to form group level emotion or mood. A "top-down" approach to collective affect emphasizes the degree to which groups are characterized by emotion norms for feeling and expression.	"Our group has a ___ feel to it." "What a negative group!" "In our group showing positivity is very important."

Note. Reprinted from "Why Does Affect Matter in Organizations?" by S. Barsade and D. Gibson, 2007, *Academy of Management Perspectives, 21*, p. 38.

Varela (1999a) offered a different perspective. Drawing from the uncommon combination of phenomenology and the neurosciences, he defined emotion as "the *tonality of the affect that accompanies a shift in transparency*. Affect, on the other hand is a broadening of the dispositional orientation which will pre-condition the emotional tone that may appear" (p. 132). Drawing on Husserl, Varela distinguished three scales of affect associated with three scales of temporality as experience:

> (1) The first scale is *emotions*: the awareness of a tonal shift that is constitutive of the living present.
> (2) The second is *affect*, a dispositional trend proper to a coherent sequence of embodied actions.
> (3) Finally, *mood*, the scale of narrative description over more or less long duration. (p. 132)

With the above distinction, Varela attempted to account for subjective, lived emotional and temporal experience. He saw emotion as a specific kind of affect: emotion is the awareness of a tonal shift in the overall dispositional trend or affect, awareness that is part of the experience of the living present as well as of a being's "ontological readiness" (p. 133) or predisposition for action.

Davidson, Scherer, and Goldsmith's definition of emotions and feelings (above) appears similar to LeDoux's (1996), to whom emotions are biological functions of the nervous system for the most part generated unconsciously, while emotional feelings, using LeDoux's terminology, result from the conscious awareness of emotions. Fineman (2003) proposed a somewhat different distinction. He described feelings as the subjective aspect of an emotion and used the term *emotion* to refer to what we show or display. Fineman went on to say that the way in which we display emotions is influenced by social conventions or, in other words, "*socially constructed*" (p. 8). As Fineman explained, a social perspective of emotion emphasizes "the effects of different cultural experiences and everyday social expectations; emotion roles and scripts; language and interpretation" (p. 15). In other words, while emotions have a physiological basis, since they occur in the mind (and, therefore, in the body), the meanings of feelings are culturally constructed and unique to a person and to a social and communicative setting.

Similarly to Davidson et al. (2003), Fineman distinguished between emotions, feelings, and moods, explaining that the first two are usually short term. Fineman added that emotions and feelings are attached to a particular object, while moods may linger and may not be linked to any specific object or event. The term *affect* was explained by Fineman as a broader expression that includes any emotional or emotionalized activity

and may be used in place of *feeling* or *emotion*. In this study, the word *affect* was used to refer to the subjective feeling or the displayed emotion, as well as to moods. The word *emotion* was also used as a broader term, to include both the subjective and expressive aspects, since the distinction proposed by Fineman was not useful for the purposes of this study. This study inquired into individuals' experiences of emotions as well as their verbal expression or display, and therefore both the subjective and expressive dimensions were relevant. This choice of definition is also consistent with the enactive approach to emotion proposed by Colombetti and Thompson (2007), which stated that "feelings are not separate constituents of emotion, but emergent features of the whole complex system (animal or person) as it enacts an emotional interpretation" (p. 21). It is also important to note that, as Varela (1999a) pointed out, "time in *experience* is quite a different story from a clock in linear time" (p. 112). Indeed, distinguishing emotions from other affect through their duration loses meaning when we are interested in the subjective experience of emotion. For a person who is terrified, 5 minutes may seem like an eternity. In addition, a particular emotion may be intermittent, mixed with or interrupted by other emotions, which makes duration a difficult criterion to maintain.

Approaches to Emotion

The discussion of definitions above illustrates the existence of different approaches to the study of emotion. This dissertation study attempted to integrate knowledge from different perspectives and approaches; thus the relevance of reviewing the most significant ones. Fineman (2003) summarized several approaches to the study of emotion, among which four seemed to be prevalent: the biological, the psychodynamic, the cognitive, and the social approach.

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The Biological Approach to Emotions

According to Fineman (2003), this approach focuses on basic emotional responses believed to have been wired into all human bodies through evolution and to be a result of genetic heritage. Emotional responses, within this approach, are part of our genetic program and are useful for survival; thus, the recent interest of evolutionary psychologists in the study of emotions. Advances in the understanding of the human brain have supported the biological approach to the study of emotion, since here emotions are seen as biological functions of the nervous system (LeDoux, 1996). However, while there seems to be evidence of the presence of some kind of primitive programming to our emotions, Fineman (2003) reminded us that social theories of emotion contest the idea that we have a "genetic destiny, regardless of the social systems we create" (p. 10) and went on to state that physiological-emotional processes "are not stand-alone. The thinking, or cognitive, parts of the brain are constantly conversing with the emotional parts. They need each other" (p. 10). Furthermore, besides their biological backcloth, Fineman cautioned, human emotions "are also embedded in a lifetime of accumulated experiences and learning. We need to look at other perspectives to unravel these influences" (p. 11).

The Psychodynamic Approach to Emotions

This approach is based on the principle that present feelings have been shaped by past events, and the connection between them is not always easy to identify (Fineman, 2003). It is heavily influenced by the work of Sigmund Freud and the concepts of psychoanalysis, particularly those of unconscious psychological processes and repressed material (memories of past events) that may be linked to current affective experience

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(Freud, 1949). Its contribution is sound support to the idea that our personal histories play a significant role in our emotional life. We should not, however, underplay how the social and political environment in which we are *presently* immersed affects our feelings (Fineman, 2003).

The Cognitive Approach to Emotions

Within this approach, emotion does not exist in any meaningful psychological sense before a situation is appraised and we try to make sense of it. In other words, "feeling and emotion follow the appraisal process" (Fineman, 2003, p. 14). This basic principle takes for granted a separation between thinking and feeling that may not really exist (Colombetti & Thompson, 2007; Thompson, 2007). In fact, as Fineman pointed out, appraisal processes themselves are likely to be emotional, and thinking and feeling interpenetrate. Additionally, the cognitive perspective on emotion does not explore the social and cultural environments in which appraisals and emotions occur, something that is particularly important in the human and organizational studies field (Fineman, 2003). This brings us to the social approach.

The Social Approach to Emotions

Fineman (2003) described the social approach to emotion as one that highlights the cultural settings in which emotions occur and are expressed. It takes into account the impact of social learning over evolutionary impulses and is based on the belief that physiological changes connected to emotions do not provide us with an understanding of the meaning of those feelings because meaning "is a cultural artifact, something that is peculiar to the personal, social and communicative setting" (p. 16). Studies with a social

perspective tend to focus on the interaction between culture and everyday social expectations and the impact of language and interpretation on emotion, emotion roles, and scripts, that is, "ways of expressing our feelings that are already inscribed into the language and stories that make up a culture" (p. 20). As Fineman summarized, these are the key elements connected to the view of emotions as socially constructed.

Manstead (2005) gave three main reasons for the social quality of emotion. First, emotions are always directed or intended at an object, which is often a person, a social group, a social event, or a cultural artifact. Second, many emotions would not be experienced without the presence of other people.

> Emotions such as compassion, sympathy, maternal love, affection, and admiration are ones that depend on other people being physically or psychologically present. Fear of rejection, loneliness, embarrassment, guilt, shame, jealousy and sexual attraction are emotions that seem to have as their primary function the seeking out or cementing of social relationships. (p. 485)

Third, we have a strong tendency to share with others the emotions we experience, which in turn triggers emotional reactions in the listeners that they themselves may share with others.

The work of Manstead and his colleagues on the social dimension of emotion is very relevant to this study, as it explored the role of OAC in how leaders talk about emotion, placing emotion in a social context. Fischer, Manstead, and Rodriguez (1999) looked at how cultural values influenced the experience and expression of emotion. Manstead, Jakobs, and Fischer (1999) studied how the social context shapes the facial displays of emotion, and Manstead and Fischer (2001) explored the influence of the social world on the appraisal process, arguing that our appraisal of the significance of an event takes into account the reactions of others to the same event, including the emotional

response of others and likely implications of our own emotional response for others. In other words, much like children who look to their caregiver for clues on how to proceed in an ambiguous situation, explained Manstead and Fischer, we watch the emotional reactions of others to interpret the emotional meaning of situations. We also anticipate the reactions of others to our emotional expression or display and how that may affect our relationships with them. Manstead (2005) argued:

> Emotion and social relations are intimately intertwined, much more so than is commonly recognised in theorising and research on emotion. On the one hand, the ways in which people express emotion are shaped by their social appraisals and their social motives. On the other hand, the emotions that people express carry information that enables others to make strategic adjustments to their social behaviour. So while emotions are regulated by social relations, they in turn help to regulate these relations. (p. 487)

Integrative Approaches to Emotion

The above description of different approaches may generate the idea that approaches are clearly delineated and separated. However, as Colombetti and Thompson (2007) pointed out, that is not always the case, and overlap occurs. They explained that current emotion theory conceives emotion "as involving both cognitive processes (perception, attention, and evaluation) and bodily events (arousal, behavior, and facial expressions)" (p. 1). As an example, Lewis (2005) attempted to integrate emotion, with its arousal and action constituents, with appraisal. The author proposed that emotion and appraisal merge in what might be called an emotional interpretation, resulting from the fast interaction between the cognitive interpretation of a situation and an emotional state. For Lewis (2005), emotion and appraisal are integrated in such a deep and complex way that it is very difficult to separate one from the other, if at all possible. Elfenbein (2007) went a step further. Starting from a cognitive approach, Elfenbein explained that the

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emotion process begins with an individual's exposure to an eliciting stimulus and continues with the individual assigning meaning to the stimulus and experiencing feeling state and physiological changes that have a further impact on "attitudes, behaviors, and cognitions, as well as facial expressions and other emotionally expressive cues" (p. 315). Externally visible behavior, continued Elfenbein, adds a social dimension and becomes stimuli for interaction partners. Additionally, Elfenbein explained, "For each stage of the emotion process, there are distinct emotion regulation processes that incorporate individual differences and group norms and that can become automatic with practice" (p. 315). Elfenbein attempted to combine, therefore, the somatic, psychological, and social dimensions.

The relationship of the term *emotion* with the body is well documented in the literature. William James (1967) chose to restrict the term *emotion* to mental affections "that have a distinct bodily expression" (p. 12), or what he called "the more complicated cases in which a wave of bodily disturbance of some kind accompanies the perception of interesting sights or sounds, or the passage of the exciting train of ideas" (p. 12). For James,

> Surprise, curiosity, rapture, fear, anger, lust, greed, and the like, become then the names of the mental states with which the person is possessed. The bodily disturbances are said to be the "manifestation" of these several emotions, their "expression" or "natural language" and these emotions themselves, being so strongly characterized both from within and without, may be called the *standard* emotions. (p. 13)

Therefore, James narrowed the term to include a particular number of what he had identified as emotions, having associated bodily reactions as a precondition.

This persisting tendency, explained by Colombetti and Thompson (2007), as regarding cognitive and bodily events as separate constituents of emotion, reinforces

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what the authors described as a "disembodied conception of cognition" (p. 1), a conception that they and others have challenged in favor of embodied and situated approaches in cognitive science (Varela et al., 1991). According to Colombetti and Thompson (2007), the dynamical systems approach, for example, proposes that cognition is not the manipulation of abstract representations but emerges from the coupled interaction of the brain, body, and environment. Within this approach, the notion of emergence implies that it is not possible to establish clear links between cognitive functions and specific subsystems in charge of controlling the body. Instead, cognitive abilities are global and emergent from systems that cut across the commonly understood boundaries between brain, body, and the world.

Still within the dynamical systems approach, Scherer (2000) proposed that emotion is a system comprising five subsystems that continuously interact: a cognitive subsystem responsible for appraising functions; the autonomic nervous system, responsible for the internal regulation of the organism and generation of energy for action; the motor subsystem, whose function is the expression of emotion; the motivation subsystem, responsible for preparing and executing actions; and the monitoring subsystem, in charge of controlling the states of other subsystems and providing support for feeling states. The interaction between these subsystems was illustrated by Scherer (2000) when he acknowledged that feedback or arousal from the physiological system or changes in motivation can affect the cognitive subsystem. Scherer's propositions can be linked to Croswell and Gajjar's (2007) when they explained emotion as the energy of transformation, as well as Freeman's (1999) definition of emotions as dynamic processes in the brain and body that prepare the body for future actions and enable it to carry them

out. The dynamical systems approach, as Colombetti and Thompson (2007) pointed out, illustrates the rediscovery of the body by recent emotion theory. However, it still sees bodily constituents of emotion as separate from cognitive components, thus Scherer's (2000) description of emotion as five distinct subsystems. Additionally, it continues to attempt to identify cognitive functions with specific subsystems instead of seeing cognitive abilities as "global and emergent capacities of self-regulation that cut across the brain/body/world divisions" (Colombetti & Thompson, 2007, p. 14). Another aspect to note, according to Colombetti and Thompson, is that recent emotion theory still sees the appraisal component as subjective and responsible for individual differences in emotional responses, while arousal and behavior are seen as objective. Thus, emotion remains within a Cartesian conception of mind and body and the subjective/objective dichotomy.

The Enactive Approach: An Integrative Approach to Emotion

We now come to the approach that constitutes one of the main components of the conceptual framework of this dissertation study: the enactive approach to emotion outlined by Colombetti and Thompson (2007) and based on the enactive approach in cognitive science (Varela, 1970; Varela et al., 1991; Thompson, 2007). Below are the key ideas that comprise this approach:

1) Living beings are autonomous agents who, rather than simply processing information, enact their own cognitive domains and generate and maintain their own identities. Furthermore, the "inner" and "outer" domains are mutually specifying and enacted in and through the structural coupling of the system and its environment.

2) The nervous system is an autonomous system. It does not simply process information in the computationalist sense. It generates and maintains meaningful and coherent patterns of activity.

3) Cognition is a form of embodied action. The term *embodied*, as explained by Varela et al. (1991), highlights two points. First, it is through the experiences we have through our body and its sensorimotor capacities that cognition becomes possible. Second, our sensorimotor capacities do not occur in an isolated manner or within the boundaries of the individual, but in a broader biological, psychological, and cultural context. The term *action* highlights the fundamental link between sensory and motor processes—perception and action—in lived cognition. Sensorimotor coupling between the organism and the environment does not determine but modulates the formation of endogenous neural activity. This neural activity in turn informs sensorimotor coupling and positions the organism as an autonomous system that creates meaning (Varela et al., 1991).

4) A cognitive being's world is a relational domain. It is not a prespecified external realm that is represented by the brain. This relational domain is enacted by that being and its mode of coupling with the environment in a way that indicates that cognition bears a constitutive relation to its objects.

5) Any understanding of the mind requires the investigation of experience in a phenomenological manner. This is why the enactive approach maintains that cognitive science and phenomenology should inform each other.

Varela et al. (1991) also explained the word *enaction*, which encompasses two important notions: "(1) perception consists in perceptually guided action and (2)

cognitive structures emerge from the recurrent sensorimotor patterns that enable action to be perceptually guided" (p. 173). In their summary of this approach, Colombetti and Thompson (2007) further clarified it by saying that "according to the enactive approach, the human mind is embodied in our entire organism and embedded in the world, and hence is not reducible to structures inside the head. Meaning and experience are created by, or enacted through, the continuous reciprocal interaction of the brain, the body, and the world" (p. 18). The authors went on to explain that, within this reciprocal interaction, three modes of bodily activity can be distinguished:

1) Self-regulation: Evident in conditions such as being awake or asleep or in the distinctive patterns of emotions and feelings.

2) Sensorimotor coupling: Evident in the combination of perception and action and the understanding of perception as a kind of action that involves knowledge of how sensory stimulation varies with movement.

3) Intersubjective interaction: The cognition and affectively charged experience of self and other.

As well as the above, an idea from phenomenological philosophy that Colombetti and Thompson highlighted as being particularly relevant to the enactive approach is that of the body as a subjectively lived body. "To experience one's own embodiment," they said, "is to be a bodily subject of experience, a lived body" (p. 19).

With the enactive approach as a framework, Colombetti and Thompson (2007) sketched an enactive approach to emotion, which "implies that we need to move beyond the head/body and subjective/objective dichotomies that characterize much of emotion theory" (p. 20). The authors emphasized how, "at the neural level, brain systems

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traditionally seen as subserving separate functions of appraisal and emotion are

inextricably interconnected. Hence appraisal and emotion cannot be mapped onto

separate brain systems" (p. 21). In addition, emotion and appraisal constitute each other

and are therefore integrated at the psychological level.

Thompson (2007) provided a definition of emotion that is consistent with the

enactive approach when he said:

> Emotion is a prototype whole-organism event, for it mobilizes and coordinates
> virtually every aspect of the organism. Emotion involves the entire neuraxis of
> brain stem, limbic areas, and superior cortex, as well as visceral and motor
> processes of the body. It encompasses psychosomatic networks of molecular
> communication among the nervous system, immune system, and endocrine
> system. On a psychological level, emotion involves attention and evaluation or
> appraisal, as well as affective feeling. Emotion manifests behaviorally in distinct
> facial expressions and action tendencies. Although from a biological point of view
> emotion comprises mostly nonconscious brain and body states, from a
> psychological and phenomenological point of view it includes rich and
> multifaceted forms of experience. (p. 363)

This encompassing definition proposes an alternative to the Cartesian approach to

body/mind by integrating what we normally consider distinct and separate components of

emotion. It does not, however, account for its social dimension and intersubjectivity. In

fact, while the enactive approach clearly integrates intersubjectivity, this still seems to be

a less explored aspect of emotion within the approach.

To close this section of this literature review, it is worth including Varela's

(1999b) synthesis of what he believed are the successive stages of the evolution of

cognitive science. Varela proposed three stages (see Figure 2-1):

1) Other as problem: This relates to computationalism and connectionism in

   cognitive science, for which "the other's mind is mostly a problem, an open

   question that needs proof" (p. 87).

2) Other as inter-action: This relates to embodied cognitive science, for which the

   other appears as "a given fact but still to be generated as a separate entity, for

   which links must be built between two independent, constituted minds" (p. 87).

3) Other as inter-being: Varela named this the generative stage, in which "the other

   and I are a common ground, a joint tissue which is tangibly present in empathy

   and affect, which offer a possible level of analysis if we avail ourselves of the

   means to do so" (p. 87).
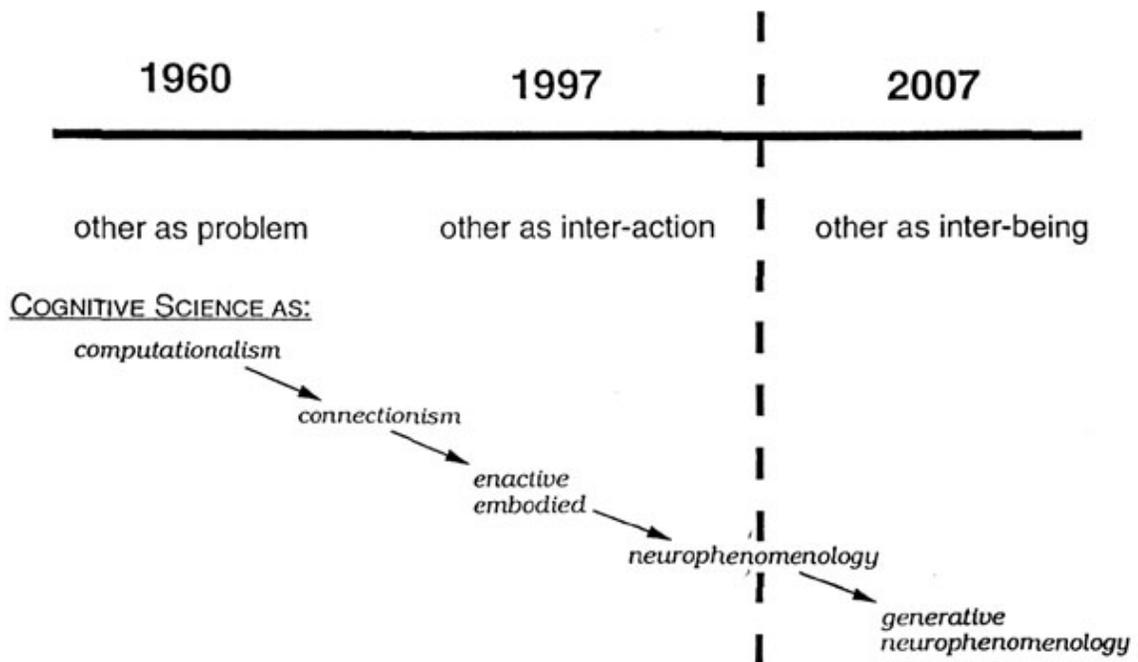
Figure 2-1. The building site: toward a science of inter-being. Reprinted from "Steps to a Science of Interbeing: Unfolding the Dharma Implicit in Modern Cognitive Science," by F. Varela, in S. Bachelor, G. Claxton, and G. Watson (Eds.), *The Psychology of Awakening: Buddhism, Science and Our Day to Day Lives,* New York, NY: Rider/Random House, p. 88.

Emotion, Language, and Culture

An Anthropological Perspective of Emotion

For Lutz and White (1986), "In going beyond its original psychobiological framework to include concern with emotion's social, relational, communicative, and cultural aspects, emotion theory has taken on new importance for sociocultural theory proper" (p. 405). The authors reviewed a decade of anthropological research on emotions, focusing on American anthropology. They started by examining theoretical and epistemological controversies within this body of research, among which is the tension between universalist, positivist approaches and relativist, interpretive ones. As Lutz and White explained, a materialist paradigm has dominated the study of emotion in the social sciences, treating emotion as material things, that is, facial muscle movements and raised blood pressure, hormonal and neurochemical processes. In some research on cultural knowledge about person and emotion, however, emotions are treated as ideas or evaluative judgments, with emphasis on volition and cognition. This is particularly relevant to this study, which, in an attempt to overcome the mind-body dichotomy, is clearly positioned within an interpretive research paradigm, whereby emotion is conceptualized simultaneously as a biological, psychological, social, cultural, and linguistic phenomenon. As Varela (1999a) put it, "Studies of human emotional responses, even in relatively artificial situations, reveal the extent to which the biological endowment of 'basic' emotional patterns is enfolded in the historical recurrence of an individual, its historicity and language" (p. 133).

Wierzbicka (1999) discussed the meaning of the word *emotion* in English, explaining that it includes a reference to the body, feelings, and thoughts, and both feelings and thoughts are often shaped by culture. Wierzbicka argued:

> All these things can be and need to be studied: ways of thinking, ways of feeling, ways of living, the links between ways of living and ways of thinking, the links between thoughts and feelings, the links between what people feel and what happens inside their bodies, and so on. (p. 5)

According to Wierzbicka, besides offering the language for the conceptualization of emotions, every culture contains suggestions of how people should feel, express their feelings, and think about their own and other people's feelings.

Wierzbicka's (1999) work compares emotion words across different languages and the differences and nuances between them. Fineman (2003) also pointed out that emotion words are socially and politically loaded, that is, we attribute some value to them, and that value varies according to the context and culture in which those words are being used. An example provided by Fineman is the notion of being 'highly emotional.' In many professional environments this is a pejorative label but may be applied more freely to children, actors, and artists. Thompson (2007) discussed this phenomenon, which Varela and Depraz (2005) described as the valence of affect. The dynamics of affect or the fluctuations of the body's feeling and movement tendencies contain a particular affective force.

> As movement tendencies, they exhibit movement and posture valences—toward/ away, approach/withdrawal, engage/avoid, receptive/defensive. As feeling tendencies, they exhibit social valences—dominance/submission, nurturance/ rejection. And as culturally situated, they exhibit normative and cultural valences, that is to say, values—good/bad, virtuous/unvirtuous, wholesome/unwholesome, worthy/unworthy, praiseworthy/blameworthy. (Thompson, 2007, p. 378)

The contributions of the social approach to emotions are very relevant to the focus of this study. Talking about our emotions is a way of displaying emotions and therefore needs to be understood in relation to, among other factors, the social rules of emotional display in an organization (Lewis, 2000; Manion, 2002; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989) and the emotion conventions embedded in the social etiquette (Fineman, 2003) of the organization. It is also important to consider emotion words and the language used to express and talk about emotion (Bamberg, 1997; Wierzbicka, 1999), since, in culturally transmitted ways, language can be a medium through which emotions are expressed, thus providing access to emotion, and a tool to making sense of emotion. Talking about emotions also shapes the emotional act, by passing judgment (Harré & Gillett, 1994). For example, by describing a person as *angry*, we provide an orientation towards a particular positioning of that person within a specific interaction.

Emotion, language, and culture come together nicely in story narratives, or the tales we tell in order to convey our feelings (Fineman, 2003). Stories not only reveal the emotional coding of the self or of an organization, they also are constitutive of those codings. In other words, the stories we tell both say something about who we are and shape who we are as we position ourselves in relation to an audience and adjust our stories to the audience's real or imaginary responses (Bakhtin, 1973; Czarniawska, 1997).

Utilizing principles from developmental psychology, neurosciences, phenomenology, and social cognition, Gallagher and Hutto (2008) provided fundamental support to this idea, proposing the narrative practice hypothesis, or that "repeated encounter with narratives of a distinctive kind is the normal route through which children acquire an understanding of the forms and norms that enable them to make sense of

actions in terms of reasons" (p. 1). Gallagher and Hutto defended the idea that narratives

are a source of guidance on what is or is not acceptable, or the norms attached to our

social roles. Additionally, they explained:

> What begins as perceptual and emotional resonance processes in early infancy, which allow us to pick up the feelings and intentions of others from their movements, gestures, and facial expressions, feeds into the development of a more nuanced understanding of how and why people act as they do, found in our ability to frame their actions, and our own, in narrative ways. Our everyday abilities for intersubjective engagement and interaction are, in the later stages of childhood, transformed by encounters with narratives. (p. 34)

Furthermore, Gallagher and Hutto (2008) claimed that the exposure to narratives

is responsible for the development of sophisticated skills in understanding human

behavior that remain importantly in play in our adult life.

Another concept that a social approach to emotion contributes and that is very

much in agreement with the fundamental ideas defended by Gallagher and Hutto (2008)

is that of emotional scripts, found embedded in the language used to express and describe

emotion and in stories. Fitness (2000) explained:

> From the moment of birth people learn from their families and communities how to think about, talk about, express, and regulate different emotions. That is, people acquire socially-shared, culturally-specific knowledge about emotions, including details of what typically causes them, what they feel like, how people feeling them are likely to behave, and what their likely outcomes are. Such emotion knowledge structures are currently referred to as emotion scripts, in recognition of the fact that emotion episodes tend to be played out over time between two or more inter-actants. (p. 148)

Understanding people's emotion scripts is important, Fitness argued, because they play

an important role in shaping and influencing our perceptions, expectations, judgments,

and memories of emotional episodes (Fitness, 2000).

Most relevant for this study is the idea that, as Fitness added, scripts vary according to the context and the relationship between the people involved in the narrative. In her study of the expression of anger in the workplace, Fitness (2000) found a common theme: the perception that one's needs, wants, expectations, or assumptions about how others should behave had been somehow violated or thwarted. She also found that context played an important role in the form and function of anger scripts. For example, there were similarities among the offenses reported by most angered superiors in comparison with those reported by coworkers, pointing to the influence of power and structure in emotion scripts. It is probably fair to say, then, that emotion scripts may be worth exploring as indicators of the emotion expression conventions of an organizational culture in relation to hierarchy and structure, power and status. They are available discourses (Fairclough, 1995), or ready-made ways of talking and expressing emotion (Fineman, 2003) that embed cultural norms. However, it is important to note that even though individuals may resort to scripts, they may abide by them or transform them in their interactions with others, the degree of influence of scripts being, therefore, the result of a complex dynamic.

Emotion Across Cultures

This section of this literature review briefly explores a body of knowledge that relates culture in general or national or ethnic group culture with emotion. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that although there is some controversy, there is also an important amount of consensus in the literature about how culture shapes emotional experience and expression, which supports the concept of an OAC. Less common is the

idea that affect has a role in the creation of culture (Demerath, 2002), included in the section immediately following this one.

Pinker (1997) pointed out that there certainly are variations in how members of different cultures express, describe, and act on various emotions. However, cautioned Pinker, there is evidence that all human beings, no matter where they come from, are able to feel and recognize a number of basic emotions. In other words, they may differ in what they say or even express in public, but they are similar in what they feel. Without distinguishing between national, group, or organizational culture, Pinker (2002) sought to emphasize the psychological, computational, genetic, and evolutionary roots of culture, which he defined as a "pool of technological and social innovations that people accumulate to help them live their lives, not a collection of arbitrary roles and symbols that happen to befall them" (p. 65). With this definition, Pinker (2002) expressed his opposition to the concept of culture as a system of meanings that is handed down to people. The author saw culture as a "tool for living" (p. 66) instead, that is, for satisfying human needs and wants.

Mesquita's (2003) work on emotions as dynamic cultural phenomena is also worthy of mention. Within her framework, emotional experience is interdependent with its sociocultural context, which in turn is a constituent of emotional experience itself. Referring to culture at the national or ethnic group level, the author recognized the evidence for universal constituents of emotions and, not unlike Pinker, believed that the emotional experience of people in different cultures is not always similar. Mesquita offered, however, a very different explanation for the phenomenon. She described the components of emotion, including the antecedent event, appraisal, action readiness,

autonomic nervous system activity, expression, instrumental behavior, and conscious regulation. Each component has its determinants and can influence each other. Each also varies cross-culturally, independently from the others.

Mesquita utilized two interesting concepts: emotional potential and emotional practice. Emotional potential comprises the available responses within each emotion component, whether these responses are hardwired or socially learned. The accessibility of certain responses is higher when they are congruent with the cultural model or importantly incongruent with it. The accessibility of desirable responses increases the likelihood that they will occur, while the accessibility of undesirable emotions promotes their suppression. Emotional practice is the combination of responses that actually or typically occur in specific contexts (Mesquita, 2003). At the level of patterning, it refers to the probability of associations between certain responses, thus being predictive of the emotion patterns that occur with lower or higher frequency in a specific culture. Differences in the rate of occurrence of certain emotions can also be connected to culture-specific emotional contexts, meaning that there may be cross-cultural differences in the prevalence of certain contexts, which in turn invoke certain emotions, affecting the frequency of their occurrence.

A Self-Organizing Self That Draws from Culture

The idea that individuals will regulate their expression of emotions and feelings to some extent according to the culture also finds support in Summers-Effler's (2002, 2004) model of the self as a self-organizing system. Consistent with a definition of culture as "the tools, resources, or repertoires for strategic action" (Summers-Effler, 2004, p. 274) and combining systems theory, cognitive science, and neuroscience, Summers-Effler

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proposed a self that is fundamentally emotional energy seeking, detailing the mechanisms

through which individuals draw on culture as a resource and in turn diffuse new symbols

and mechanisms into the larger culture. In a nutshell, through parallel processing of

somatic and symbolic information, emotions in the body are connected with symbols that

in turn guide future action.

Summers-Effler's model may shed some light on how individuals uncover and

interpret the organizational culture through its symbols and why they may or may not feel

the need to adapt to a culture. It also bears some similarity with the enactive approach in

that it illustrates perceptually guided action and sensorimotor coupling with its definition

of the self as emotional energy seeking. With its dynamic understanding of the

mechanisms through which people incorporate and produce culture, Summers-Effler's

model may be an instance of what Varela et al. (1991) defined as enaction, since it claims

not only that individuals process somatic and symbolic information, but also that somatic

and symbolic information in turn guides future action, which may include the creation

and diffusion of new symbols.

The Role of Affect in the Creation of Culture

Another theory of culture that is relevant to this study and shares some

resemblance with the enactive approach is Demerath's (2002). In an effort to respond to

the question of why and how individuals construct culture, defined as a consensual

system of meanings, Demerath (2002) proposed an epistemological theory of culture,

which posits "three dimensions of cultural production: we articulate, typify, and orient

our experiences to make them meaningful" (p. 208). Demerath claimed that the

production of culture is motivated by a need to feel "as if we understand our world, and

to perceive it as ordered; this in turn triggers an aesthetic response of knowledge-based affect" (p. 208). Demerath's key premise is that "the desire to know our environment motivates us to create and maintain culture. By sharing our interpretations with others, we verify, strengthen, and expand our understandings of our environment. In doing so, we create consensual meanings and, thus, culture" (p. 208). If we read this premise from the perspective of the enactive approach, the desire to know the environment may be that which guides perception, and culture is a result of the dynamic process of enaction. In trying to understand the environment—which includes culture—and express their understandings, human beings collectively create culture.

Interestingly, Demerath also addressed the role of affect in the creation of culture, asserting that "we feel positive affect when meaningfulness increases, and negative affect when it decreases" (p. 209). Additionally, "The more we know about something, the more gratified we are by reinforcements of that knowledge, and the more upset we are by contradictions" (p. 209).

Demerath highlighted the role of storytelling in the creation of culture by explaining that we tell stories about our past experiences in order to articulate significant meanings and obtain confirmation of what we already know to increase the conceptual power of those meanings. "Moreover, the consciously articulated nature of the story allows the most significant aspects of the experience to be highlighted, creating a more vivid portrayal of the meaning of the experience" (p. 214). This idea reinforces one of the main assumptions of this study: the dynamic interaction between emotion and culture, through which the expression of emotion and culture is mutually shaped.

What Demerath's epistemological culture theory does not explicitly include is a discussion of the bodily aspect of perception, which allows the cultural environment to be dynamically enacted, giving the impression that the creation of culture is a predominantly intellectual and psychological experience that may result in positive or negative affect, keeping meaning-making and affect artificially separate. To make the theory more consistent with current knowledge of emotion and cognition, another step might be included to acknowledge the affective component of meaning-making and the integration of emotion and cognition. The implication of this would be that affect is part of the assessment of the meaningfulness of experience, as opposed to only a result of it.

An Enactive Viewpoint of Emotion and Culture

Thompson (2007) defined culture as "that which is learned or socially constructed" (p. 193) and provided the theoretical approach to emotion and culture that frames this study, attempting to make a connection between Husserl's genetic and generative phenomenology of intersubjectivity and the sciences of mind. In order to do this, he started from two fundamental ideas:

1) "Self and other enact each other reciprocally through empathy. One's consciousness of oneself as a bodily subject in the world presupposes a certain empathetic understanding of self and other" (p. 382).

2) "Human subjectivity emerges from developmental processes of enculturation and is configured by the distributed cognitive web of symbolic culture. For these reasons, human subjectivity is from the outset intersubjectivity, and no mind is an island" (p. 383).

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The ideas above have important implications for this study. If empathy is the means through which self and other enact each other, it is also possibly one of the means, or conduits, through which the affective dimensions of a particular culture (the other) enacts and is enacted by the self. Additionally, if the human mind, which includes what we here call affect or emotion, is intrinsically intersubjective, it becomes crucial to acknowledge that in the way we attempt to understand the mind and study it in a way that integrates intersubjectivity. Rather than culturally reinforced norms of verbal expression of emotion, we need to talk about the intersubjective conditions through/in which the verbal expression of emotion emerges, and consider the possibility that there may be no predictable correlation, as Mesquita (2003) would claim, but an interaction in which cultural and personal (which is also cultural) converse in unique ways. Whether we may be able to identify relatively constant cultural artifacts, the meaning and the affective charge of these artifacts are possibly not a given, even though the basic activities performed by someone may be "part of the cultural, consensually validated forms of the life of the community in which the human and the object are situated" (Varela et al., 1991, p. 177).

Organizational Culture and Emotion

For Schein (1990, 1993), an organizational culture comprises a set of shared assumptions about the world, values about what is good or bad, right or wrong, beliefs about the consequences of actions, and norms about expected behavior. This often unconscious combination of assumptions, values, beliefs, and norms impacts the actions of people in social systems. Schein identified several categories of assumptions present in organizational culture—for instance, assumptions about the nature of the relationship

between the organization and its environment or about human nature and the nature of human action and relationships—and pointed out that the culture can impact the meaning we attach to things and how we react to them emotionally. Within Schein's concept, it appears reasonable to say that organizations share assumptions about emotion, which in turn play a role in how employees express it, interpret it, and react or respond to it.

Advancing the work of Schein, the cultural dynamics model, based on Schein's theory of culture, "focuses not on the elements of assumptions, values, and artifacts, but on the processes linking these elements" (Hatch, 1997, p. 362). This model defines culture as "the processes through which artifacts and symbols are created in the context of organizational values and assumptions. It also explains how values and assumptions are maintained and altered by using and interpreting artifacts and symbols" (Hatch, 1997, p. 362). Hatch's model depicts organizational culture as a dynamic process, and it pays particular attention to the symbolic dimension of organizational culture and the role of language in its creation, maintenance, and change. Applying Hatch's model to the concept of OAC, we could say that the systems of norms that define what is appropriate or not in terms of emotional expression in organizations are part of a dynamic process in which language has a central role.

Fineman (2003) emphasized the importance of "recognizing the emotional fabric of organizational culture" (p. 196) and stated that "emotions are not an optional extra, or incidental to 'real' work. They are part of the warp and weft of work experiences and practices" (p. 2). In the conclusion to his 2003 book on *Understanding Emotion at Work,* Fineman stated:

> The customs, norms, tacit understandings, ritualized practices (regular meetings, coffee groups, celebrations), status symbols (size of offices, company car, type of

personal computer, salary band), all constitute what the workplace signifies, stands for, in the eyes of the worker. Formally, and blandly, they may be described as 'the work environment' or 'Human Resources Management practices', but as cultural features they are much more than this. They constitute a framework of *affective meaning* for people. Routines, relationships and objects are infused with feeling—excitement, easy, anxiety, boredom, pride, belonging, embarrassment, fear, love, and so forth. When executives, managers, or others, seek to re-form a business, they are also disturbing the emotional culture, the flow of tacit negotiations that give people a 'place' and identity. And when individuals leave or join an organization, emotional understandings are ruffled, sometimes fractured, as the organization attempts to fill structural holes or incorporate newcomers. Performance in the job (and the 'bottom line') depends on all these processes, as does the nature of experience of one's work. (p. 196)

Drawing from the literature of affect in psychology by way of the study of discrete emotions, emotional labor, emotional contagion, and emotional intelligence, Barsade and Gibson (2007), in their work on OAC, reinforced the idea that affective processes, which they considered the same as "emotions," are present in work relationships, projects, processes, decision-making, and leadership. Nevertheless, only in the last 30 years has affect in organizations received attention from research. Albrow (1992) raised the issue that the neglect of the topic of feelings in organizational theory is an aberration of the 20th century. Basing his discussion on Max Weber's interpretative sociology to sustain the idea that affectivity in organizations had been a topic of academic study earlier, Albrow claimed that the sociology of emotions has hardly ever made its way to organizational studies. Barsade et al. (2003) reported, however, that the last 30 years have seen a real revolution in which academics and managers have recognized the importance of integrating affect in our understanding of organizations, and clear progress has been made in research on individuals' affective lives in organizations. On the other hand, a collective perspective of affect in organizations is still in development. While organizational emotion norms have been researched through an emotional labor

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perspective, much less information is available on the emotional aspects of organizational

culture or *affective culture,* the system of organizational norms that defines how emotions

are to be displayed and expressed (Barsade et al., 2003).

Indeed, this dissertation study assumed, as Albrow emphasized, that affectivity

(feelings or emotions) can be seen as a property of organizations: "We can identify

dominant emotions that characterize an organization as a whole, emotions which are

appropriate in specific occasions within it, or which belong to the performance of

particular roles" (p. 13). Additionally, work organizations regulate feelings, that is, what

organization members are able to express or display, and powerful social scripts fashion

our emotions in the workplace since authentic demonstrations of feelings can be risky

(Fineman, 2003; Pizer & Hartel, 2005). For Fineman, groups may protect themselves

through social defenses comprising "shared organizational regimes or states that protect

people from primitive anxieties, such as about sexuality, death or disaster. An example is

the impersonal way of working by nurses in some hospitals, where patients are known by

their bed number or disease type" (p. 13). In this example, what appears bureaucratic and

impersonal performs the function of protecting nurses from the anxiety of death and from

physical intimacy with patients.

Emotion conventions or rules are, according to Fineman, transmitted principles

that influence what is considered appropriate emotional display:

> They help sustain relationships and organizational order. They reinforce status
> divisions, deference patterns, belonging and collaboration. They keep us in our
> place. Knowing when it is acceptable to express anger, affection, love, fear,
> derision, sexual attraction or pleasure—regardless of what is privately felt—is
> fundamental to making and maintenance of relationships and organizations.
> (p. 18)

However, that is not the reason why we conform to rules of emotional behavior. Rather, we do it to avoid shame and embarrassment (Fineman, 2003). Shame, for Fineman, is "felt when we contravene a moral code":

> Embarrassment occurs when we break a local norm, such as the expectations of a work relationship or workgroup. It would be shameful deliberately to exploit someone else's personal weakness or vulnerability in a work team-meeting but it would be embarrassing to forget to prepare the agenda for that meeting. (p. 18)

Our expectations of what we will feel, therefore, often influence our choice of what emotion to display and how. Fineman went on to say that, besides what we can externalize, we also go by socially constructed, culturally specific rules—feeling rules—of what we ought to feel in particular situations. Nevertheless, we do not always conform to emotion conventions and feeling rules, because, Fineman pointed out, our personal interpretation of events also comes into play.

Fineman's (2003) is an important consideration, which emphasizes the interconnection of individual and social aspects and the dynamic nature of this interconnection. The same can be seen in Fok, Hui, Bond, Matsumoto, and Yoo (2008), who examined individual variations in perceptions of emotion display rules and proposed that extraversion and neuroticism could explain within-cultural individual differences as well as within-individual differences in the endorsement of display rules. A multilevel analysis of data obtained through participants' responses to a display rule assessment inventory led the authors to conclude that "compared to those of introverts, the display rules of extraverts tended to be more suppressive when the relationship was distant rather than close. Extraversion also enhanced a neurotic's degree of suppression in public compared to private situations" (p. 133). Fok et al. went on to offer processes describing how personality interacts with situations in personalizing display rules as a way to

explain interactions between personality and situation in the operation of display rules for emotional expression.

Another useful concept in the study of the relationship between organizational culture and emotion is that of emotion scripts, or ways "of expressing our feelings that are already inscribed into the language and stories that make up a culture" (Fineman, 2003, p. 20). Emotion scripts are designed to reinforce the emotion rule and are rarely original. An example Fineman provided:

> An emotion rule for a man may be, *You never reveal how vulnerable you feel.* To the observation "you're looking upset", the scripted response could be a curt denial, "*Oh, I'm fine,*" or a reversal, "*Am I? That's funny, I'm really enjoying this job*" or a deflection, "*Not as miserable as you look.*" (p. 20)

Scripts reflect gender, status, power, and occupation.

Fineman's and Albrow's observations can be connected to the work of Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) and Hartel et al. (2002). Rafaeli and Sutton's conceptual framework laid out what they believed were the two sources of role expectations "that create, influence, and maintain the emotions expressed in organizational life: the organizational context and emotional transactions" (p. 24). The aspects of recruitment and selection, socialization, and rewards and punishments influence, according to Rafaeli and Sutton, which feelings should be expressed or not and to whom. The authors also discussed the outcomes of expressed emotions, acknowledging that "the expression of emotions by organizational members may, in the aggregate, have a positive or a negative influence on organizational performance" (p. 29) and may lead to feelings of congruence or incongruence, depending on the degree to which expressed emotions match demanded emotions. Therefore, Rafaeli and Sutton made a good contribution to the idea that contextual and individual aspects interact in the expression of emotion.

Hartel et al. (2002), on the other hand, tended to focus on the context. They developed a conceptual model of the role of contextual and provider characteristics in emotional labor, emotional dissonance, and emotional exhaustion. Two contextual factors were identified in their model—emotional workgroup climate and organizational cultural orientation to emotions—which were believed to "shape the emotional experience of service providers on the job" (p. 253). This model depicts the interconnectedness of the individual-group-organizational levels, which Ashkanasy (2003) also recognized. Ashkanasy went further to explain a multilevel theory of emotions in organizations, creating a model that ranges from within-person to organization-wide levels, with emotional climate and culture included in the latter.

Waldron and Krone (1991) provided an important empirical study relating emotional expression and organizational culture. The authors evaluated Rafaeli and Sutton's (1989) model of emotional expression in the workplace through the examination of descriptions of emotional interactions among members of a corrections organization. They concluded that the qualities of felt emotions influenced emotional expression, and emotional expression changed relational perceptions and communication behavior subsequent to the emotional event. They also interpreted results as indications of the importance of emotional communication in the reformulation of relationships and as being consistent with Van Maanen and Kunda's (1989) description of emotional control as part of organizational culture.

In a nutshell, there is clear support in the literature for the idea that affective processes occur in a sociocultural context and that culture plays a crucial role in affective processes. It is relevant, therefore, to explore what this role is. A relatively well-studied

phenomenon within this topic is emotional labor, defined as the regulation of feelings and emotions for organizational purposes, in particular during service transactions (Morris & Feldman, 1996; Simpson & Stroh, 2004). Research on emotional labor has focused on various aspects, for instance the consequences of having to express emotions not genuinely felt and to suppress emotions (Morris & Feldman, 1996), the impact of gender on emotional expression and feelings of personal inauthenticity, and how followers respond to the emotional expression of leaders (Lewis, 2000). In these studies, display rules, that is, the norms about what emotions ought to be publicly expressed (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993), are seen as role or gender based and overt.

There also seems to be some agreement that the communication of emotion incorporates both universals and cultural differences (Pinker, 1997; Wierzbicka, 1999; Elfenbein & Ambadi, 2003). Only very few studies, however, have explored the influence of organizational culture on emotional labor or display rules or, even more broadly, simply the individual's expression of emotions and feelings in the workplace. Karabanow (2000) reported on a qualitative study of how an organization attempted "to direct the way in which employees feel" and "the ways in which workers fight back in order to hold onto their genuine emotions" (p. 166). The author found that while workers agreed with the organizational culture of offering care and love to the kids, they felt there wasn't enough support from management to their own feelings. Support was obtained from peers and non–work-related friends, and workers felt alone and uncared for while at the same time they were expected to care deeply for the kids. Two factors seemed to minimize the negative consequences of the emotional labor required of these workers,

however, group support and solidarity and employees' beliefs about their work being "honest" and "good enough."

Bryant and Cox's (2006) empirical study of emotionality and emotional labor during rapid organizational change extended studies of emotional labor beyond the service encounter and into organizational change. Their research question, "How do people talk about the need to 'dull down' their emotions during situations of organizational change?" (p. 117), assumed there were "organizational standards and rules about how and when particular emotions should be expressed" (p. 118). The authors derived themes of emotionality and emotional labor from spontaneous employee narratives. From their examination of participants' reports, they found evidence that organizational change is attributed to loss of opportunities for promotion and advancement in the organization as a result of lessened decision-making power through demotion and displacement. Participants indicated feelings of grief, anger, sadness, and loss as well as how the expression of these emotions was considered 'inappropriate' within organizations. Indeed, in what Bryant and Cox have named "the expression of suppression" (p. 117), they attempted to draw attention to the dynamics of narrating organizational change in interview situations and to how these dynamics must be considered in connection with the potential contributions of retrospective analysis of organizational change. The authors argued that experiences of organizational change have been "dulled down" (p. 117) as a consequence of the management of emotions.

Bryant and Cox's study is particularly relevant to this literature review since it combined both a similar topic and a similar narrative research method. However, their account did not acknowledge the individual participation in the culture-making process

(Demerath, 2002; Summers-Effler, 2004; Fok et al., 2008) and seemed to presuppose an

organizational culture that existed independently from organization members and that

ruled their lives as if they had no other choice other than to obey it. This is an assumption

that is potentially disempowering of organization members and does not recognize how

employees, by abiding by perceived organizational expectations on what is appropriate,

may be validating their own beliefs about the expression of emotions as well,

contributing to the creation of the organization's culture itself. Bryant and Cox (2006)

were not surprised "that employees feel pressured to manage emotional displays during

times of transition" (p. 119). It would be interesting to explore how employees were

participating in the dynamics they felt were oppressing them.

Literature Review Summary and Conclusions

Emotions are commonly distinguished in the literature from feelings, moods, and

other forms of affect (Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Davidson et al., 2003; Fineman, 2003;

Varela, 1999a). For the purposes of this study, however, the term *emotion* is used

interchangeably with *feelings* and *affect*, since a broader definition was found to be better

able to capture the variety of ways in which participants might talk about emotion. The

literature also illustrated the wide variety of approaches to the phenomenon, as outlined

by Fineman (2003), ranging from narrow, body-encapsulated viewpoints (LeDoux,

1996), to systemic, integrated perspectives that bring together social, cultural,

psychological, and bodily components (Colombetti & Thompson, 2007). The latter is the

perspective adopted for this study. In an attempt to overcome the mind-body dichotomy,

this research was clearly positioned within an interpretive paradigm whereby emotion

was conceptualized as a biological, psychological, social, cultural, and linguistic phenomenon (Varela, 1999a).

The relationship between emotion, culture, and language is well explored in the literature, and support for the concept of OAC abounds (Fineman, 2003; Hartel et al., 2002; Pizer & Hartel, 2005; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Culture and organizational culture, however, tend to be described as a preexisting and fairly constant symbolic system or a system of norms or shared assumptions that shape individual experience and expression of affect in an unidirectional way. This picture seems incomplete. In this study, I assumed that organizational culture is a dynamic process (Hatch, 1997), and I assumed that the individual both suffers its influence and influences it, playing a role in its constant creation. This principle makes it possible to fully integrate the role of language in the culture and affect dynamics. Narratives, for instance, can be seen as a medium for the expression of culture and emotion as well as for the creation of culture (Demerath, 2002).

CHAPTER 3:

METHOD

As emotions are described in novels, they interest us, for we are made to share them. —William James (1967, p. 99)

William James (1967) was adamant in saying that "the merely descriptive literature of the emotions is one of the most tedious parts of psychology. And not only is it tedious, but you feel that its subdivisions are to a great extent either fictitious or unimportant, and that its pretences to accuracy are a sham" (p. 99). James wanted a psychology that would reach deeper levels and go beyond the cataloguing of "separate characters, points, and effects" (p. 99). His dissatisfaction with how emotions were studied and portrayed is similar to Fineman's (2003) criticism of the description of organizations:

> There are some bland portraits of organizations. They show organizational charts (boxes linked in hierarchical or mosaic form), formal job descriptions, lists of competencies and objectives, mission statements, inputs and outputs, production flow diagrams and measurement procedures applied to just about anything that is measurable. Over the years, organizational and management theorists have gone some way towards bringing people and life into such stiff images. But the kind of individuals they portray are also, typically, boxed and measured. They are human "resources," or human "capital," or "variables," there to serve the bigger, "more important" entities—the firm, the industry, production, profit. (p. 1)

For Fineman, the concept of "emotional organization" places people at the center of the organization. It also considers emotion the prime medium through which people relate to each other and which motivates the active or passive negotiation, rejection, reform, fight over, or celebration of processes and procedures.

Both James and Fineman were disappointed with how the study of emotion could render it an unexciting topic, quite the opposite of how we often experience it. It is

possible that one of the reasons for this paradox is that studies of emotion have, for the most part, excluded experience as an epistemology, as Maturana and Varela (1980) argued. Without experience, the context and meaning of emotion are lost, and they become inert objects to which we find it difficult to relate.

Philosophical Foundation

The design of this study is consistent with philosophical assumptions made explicit below using Creswell (2007) and Ritchie and Lewis (2003) for a framework:

- Ontology (the nature of reality): Reality is coconstructed and therefore multiple, as seen by the study participants, including the researcher (Creswell, 2007; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). I ascribe to what Maturana (1988) would call a constitutive ontology, where reality includes the observer and is something we bring forth in knowing. Additionally, as Strasser (1969) pointed out, it is through a dialogical process that we come to an ever clearer meaning.

- Epistemology (how the researcher knows what he or she knows): To explore experience I utilize what Lincoln and Guba (1985) named tacit, intuitive, or felt knowledge, in addition to knowledge that is expressible through verbal language. This is particularly relevant to the topic of this study.

- Axiology (the role of values in the research): Research is value-laden and biased (Creswell, 2007; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). While it is not possible to produce completely bias-free knowledge, we can make bias as explicit as possible. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that from a naturalistic (postpositivist) perspective, inquiry is influenced by the inquirer's values as expressed in what problem is chosen and the framing and bounding of that problem. In the case of this study,

the underlying value is the importance of integrating emotion into the

organizational research conversation in a manner that keeps it alive and

contextualized and is able to capture its human intricacies, as opposed to

attempting to simplify it, reduce it, or break it into multiple small parts. The

researcher's choice of using the enactive approach (Thompson, 2007) as a key

piece of the conceptual framework for this study reflects the same value.

- Rhetorical (the language of research): Since reality is subjective and knowledge is

  coconstructed, it is not necessary to try to prove otherwise through an attempt to

  use impersonal, objective language. I use a relatively informal and engaging style

  and use the first-person pronoun on several occasions.

- Methodological (methods used in the research process): For this study, details are

  more important than generalizations, and this is not considered a limitation.

  Rather, it is part of the purpose of qualitative research and part of the value it

  brings to social sciences, as it highlights complexities and nonlinearities.

Research Method: The Heuristic Approach

Through research participants' story narratives, defined by Fineman (2003) as

"tales of what happened when" (p. 17), this study sought to understand the role of

organizational affective culture (OAC) in the way leaders talk about emotions in the

workplace. Without an account from those who experience and express emotion while

they embody and enact their selves and the OAC, an attempt to understand and interpret

this relationship can become dry and disconnected from context. Significant intricacies,

meaning, and intention can be missed. This is what happens, for example, with scientific

methods that analyze and create taxonomies of discrete emotions, which make it difficult

to capture the ambivalence (Piderit, 2000) we may feel when we experience several emotions at the same time that overlap and influence each other and change as we converse with the environment.

In order to further our understanding of the role of OAC in the way leaders talk about emotion while honoring complexity, a heuristic approach was chosen for this study. A qualitative, heuristic method, drawing from Moustakas (1990), was found to be compatible with the assumptions of the enactive approach regarding the importance of the subjective experience of participants (Varela et al., 1991). Further, Douglass and Moustakas (1985) reminded researchers using a heuristic method to "openly and energetically accept the way in which knowledge can be most authentically revealed, be it through metaphor, description, poetry, song, dance, art or dialogue" (p. 59). The researcher used poetry to design her creative synthesis of the research experience.

There are significant similarities in terms of theoretical assumptions and analytical procedures between heuristic inquiry and phenomenology (Moustakas, 1990, 1994). Both approaches attempt to depict the lived experience of participants. However, as Douglass and Moustakas (1985) noted, phenomenology features a bracketed detachment from the phenomenon under study, according to which the researcher is expected to set aside her own preconceived notions and experience of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1990, 1994). Heuristic inquiry, on the other hand, includes the researcher's subjective experience, exploring prior familiarity with the topic, personal experience of the phenomenon, and experience of the research process together with participants. Additionally, whereas phenomenological research aims to explain the essential structures of experience, the focus of heuristic inquiry is on the meanings, intentions, and personal

significance of the phenomenon to the researcher and to the participants. Heuristic inquiry is based on the idea that understanding a situation well requires having experienced it. So, the researcher needs to experience the same phenomenon as the participants or a similar one (Moustakas, 1990; Patton, 2002).

The Choice of Stories

Capturing the experience, and in particular the intersubjective aspects that this study aimed to include, requires exploring the dynamics of the individual-organizational space in which emotion is verbally expressed (or not). Varela et al. (1991) proposed using principles of phenomenology and the Buddhist meditative traditions. However, my background in literature and linguistics made me more comfortable with an approach that captured narratives, which can also be very effective for the purposes of this study. As Fineman (2003) explained, sometimes "the words we use to convey our feelings are wrapped in a *story narrative,* a tale about 'what happened when'" (p. 17). While stories cannot be considered a measure of objective truth (and this study was not concerned with the objective truth), stories can be fine indicators, according to Fineman, "of our feelings and how we wish to present them—and influence different people" (p. 17).

Bryant and Cox (2003, 2004, 2006) have conducted several organizational studies through narratives. In their study of loss and emotional labor connected with organizational change, they concluded, among other things, that it is "likely that the way in which change is narrated retrospectively is shaped by the organizational context in which individuals worked" (Bryant & Cox, 2006, p. 126). Bruner (2004) might have agreed and added that the way in which change is narrated also shapes the organizational context, thus including the individual-social dynamics assumed in this dissertation.

Similarly, Buskirk and McGrath (1992) saw stories as a window on affect in organizations and a good way to explore the emotional side of organizational cultures since they "are easily accessible and easily collected as opposed to internalized constructs such as values and beliefs" and they "reduce complexity, embody values, orient an organization in time, and carry images of distant leaders" (p. 9). According to the authors, stories not only capture the appraisal process of an organization but also shape it "in fundamental ways by providing taken for granted images of the environment and the self" (p. 11). The authors acknowledged that the emotional significance of storytelling is mostly outside the explicit awareness of organizational members, but organizational context is constructed "by the story lines which circulate in the company at any given time" (p. 11) as affective stories become the organization's reality, shaping the organization's emotional climate.

They reported on a case that was part of a larger field study of emotionality in organizations, in which stories were collected through open-ended interviews over a 2½-year period. Grouped around three periods of time related to the introduction of a new strategic plan, the stories were approached with the following questions: Where is this story told? Where is it not told? To whom is it told? When is it told? Questions regarding the effect of the story on speakers and hearers and its impact on the organization were also asked. Data analysis included finding common themes in the stories and relating them in reference to the organization's time and space, attempting to describe the organization's emotional climate at different periods. At the same time, Buskirk and McGrath explained, narratives also shape the self: "The felt adequacy, credibility, reality, and worthiness of one's self, as well as the capacity to cope with what the environment

presents, are constituted in narrative" (p. 12). This idea is congruent with the conceptual

framework of this study, in which emotion and culture are seen as embodied and

emergent, and individuals are seen as intersubjective agents that enact the environment,

thus shaping and being shaped by it. Culture, within this framework, is constantly being

cocreated, in a dynamic and complex process.

In this dissertation study I captured stories as a way to describe the intricate

relationships of subjective and cultural aspects, whose interaction is linked to how leaders

talk about emotion.

Levels of Analysis

The organizational research literature contains useful discussions on the

challenges within this domain of research and on how the individual level is sometimes

overemphasized, and the social and organizational context is neglected (Ashkanazy,

2003; Hitt, Beamish, Jackson, & Mathieu, 2007; Schneider & Angelmar, 1993). The

opposite also happens, and the influence of individuals at the organizational level is not

accounted for, or the measurement aimed at exploring collective-level constructs often

relies on aggregates of individual data, in what appears to be a—mistaken—assumption

that the collective level is the sum of the parts (Schneider & Angelmar, 1993). The

alternative proposed is to try to understand phenomena at different levels of analysis and

to demonstrate the relationships of phenomena across levels (Ashkanazy, 2003; Hitt et

al., 2007; Schneider & Angelmar, 1993). While it represents a legitimate attempt to

incorporate the complexity of organizational phenomena, this proposition assumes that

levels can be defined and exist separately, the purpose of research design and analysis

being incorporated on more than one level. However, this basic assumption does not align with the paradigm adopted for this dissertation study.

Although the data collected for this study were derived from individuals, the research question and the theoretical lenses required a specific approach to the issue of levels of analysis. I proposed a metalevel (Finkelstein, 2004, p. 75) or, in other words, a transcending level of analysis that includes both the knower—the individual—and the known—the OAC. I call this the level of inter-being, a term introduced by Thich Nhat Hahn and used by Varela (1999b). I discuss the justification for the use of this term below.

Because this study is supported by the enactive approach (Varela, 1970; Varela et al., 1991; Thompson, 2007), which essentially rests on a postmodern, holistic paradigm that proposes a collapse of dichotomies, I frame this discussion with one of Varela's (1999b) key propositions for cognitive science: "The mind is not in the head" (p. 72). Varela explained that "in order to have a mind you have to have an active handling and coping with the world" (p. 72). By this he means that whatever you recognize as a thing in the world—objects, people, etc.—depends on your constant sensory motor activity. Objects cannot be seen as "independently being 'out-there'. The object arises because of your activity, so, in fact, you and the object are co-emerging, co-arising" (p. 73). The mind is not in the head, but in "this non-place of the co-determination of inner and outer, so one cannot say that is outside or inside" (p. 73).

The implication of Varela's principle for the understanding of the role of OAC in leaders' emotion talk is that the OAC cannot be seen as something independent and separate from the living subject that experiences it. The OAC can only be perceived

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through the constant sensory motor activity of this subject. It arises because of the subject's activity, so subject and object (OAC) not only are not independent but they dynamically coemerge. It follows that, to be congruent with this paradigm, it is necessary to shift from the idea of an individual level of analysis that contrasts with a collective or cultural level and even the idea of multilevel analysis, which continues to assume a separation of levels. It is necessary to adopt a metalevel (Finkelstein, 2004) of analysis, able to contain knower and known, individual and collective at one time. Varela (1999b) referred to this as the level of inter-being, a level focused on gaining a deep understanding of intersubjectivity.

Intersubjectivity is the relational space in which the individual subject is constituted, which leads to the proposition that subjectivity is intersubjective from the start (Thompson, 2007). This study explored the role of organizational culture in leaders' emotion talk, viewing emotion as an aspect of an integrated body and mind, assuming the expression of emotion is an intersubjective process and that subjectivity and culture dynamically coemerge (Thompson, 2007; Colombetti & Thompson, 2007). Within this framework, the verbal expression of emotion is an intersubjective process, meaning that it emerges through the individual's conversation with the culture that he or she *also* embodies and that is therefore also part of his or her subjectivity. Recent research in cognitive science is showing that "individuality and intersubjectivity are not in opposition, but necessarily complementary" (Varela, 1999b, p. 79). Adopting an inter-being level of analysis allows us to explore this complementarity (Finkelstein, 2004).

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Sample Selection and Size

Participants in this study were leaders in the national and international security industry. The term *leader* was defined for the purposes of this study as an employee at the director level and above who had formal supervisory roles. The word *leader* was used instead of manager based on the idea that a formal authority position facilitates the exercise of leadership through an employee's ability to influence others (French & Raven, 1959). This definition was also an attempt to bring the sample to a manageable size and to try to better understand a population that has a strong potential impact on other organizational members.

Furthermore, in order to narrow down the sample, participants were drawn from a specific industry: national and international security. The choice of this industry was triggered by my interest in the paradox that seems to be experienced in this industry, where strong emotions would be naturally expected to occur but initially appear to be submitted to a strong OAC that suppresses their expression. Callahan's (2000) case study of a not-for-profit organization in the field of aerospace and national defense, for instance, found that the expression of emotion was considered a weakness or an obstacle for the achievement of the mission. Comparing Callahan's findings with the emphasis on the intrinsic presence of emotion in organizational life expressed in the organizational behavior literature (Fineman, 2000, 2003), it appears worth trying to understand how the OAC in companies within this industry is brought to bear on the way leaders talk about emotion.

The first attempt to recruit participants was done through an announcement in the newsletter of WIIS, the Association of Women in International Security, of which the

researcher is a member, making it easier to access and communicate with leaders in the industry. The same announcement was also posted in the e-mail list for the Elliot School for International Affairs and the Executive Leadership Program of the George Washington University, in order to reach out to current and former students who are leaders in the national and international security industry.

The posting (Appendix E) specified the purpose of the study and very clear criteria for participation, allowing potential participants to immediately tell whether they would qualify or not. Possibly for this reason, there was no need to deny participation to anyone who volunteered through the announcements. I did, however, encounter several situations in which I was referred to potential participants by my personal contacts, and when I reached out to them through e-mail, attaching the announcement, I obtained the response that they did not qualify per my criteria.

In spite of the fact that the newsletters used to post the announcement together reach several hundreds of people in the industry, only half of participants came through the announcement. The WIIS newsletter yielded one participant. The Elliot School for International Affairs announcement yielded no participants. George Washington University's Executive Leadership Program announcement yielded one participant and two referrals from two students who saw the posting and gave me the names of other people I should contact. I followed up on their referrals, and both became participants. As provisioned in my original study design, I also asked each research participant for suggestions on who else I could interview. Two interviewees made a specific recommendation to help in selecting other qualified participants, each providing a name, e-mail address, and phone number for another person. My several attempts to follow up

with those two people were fruitless. I then reached out to another association, Women's

Foreign Policy Group, and to my contacts in the security industry, which proved effective

in identifying four more research participants. By the time I completed the eighth

interview with people who had come forward through the e-mail announcements or were

referred to me by contacts in the security industry or people who had read the

announcements, I suspected saturation had been reached. Therefore, it was not necessary

to follow up with interviewees once again for snowball sampling (Merriam, 1998) to

request more referrals. Interviewing was suspended, and I proceeded to data analysis with

the understanding that if data analysis did not confirm saturation, I could seek more

interviews. This, however, was not felt to be needed once data analysis was completed.

Consistent with the principles of heuristic inquiry, the researcher's experience of the

phenomenon under study was also included.

The sampling strategy most commonly used in qualitative research is purposive or

purposeful sampling (Merriam, 1998). This means sample selection is based on specific

criteria aimed at ensuring that the people included have experienced the phenomenon

under consideration and represent those from whom the most can be learned. The

sampling criteria for this study were as follows:

- A minimum of 5 years of employment with the organization to ensure familiarity
  with the OAC

- A minimum of 2 years (of the 5) in a director or above position, to ensure
  familiarity with the organizational culture aspects that regard possible emotion
  expression norms for people in formal leadership roles

- Experience of the phenomenon under study (Moustakas, 1990, 1994) or, in other words, involvement or participation in an event, project, or initiative that was potentially emotionally loaded, to ensure at least one recent emotional experience (within the last 6 months) that the employee could narrate.

To ensure that each person who volunteered to participate in the study or was referred by another person as a potential participant matched the criteria for participation, a very brief screening interview was designed (Appendix A). This took the form of either phone or e-mail communication with potential participants prior to the actual in-person data gathering interview. The first few minutes of the actual interview were then dedicated to establishing rapport and reconfirming, now in person, the information previously gathered on the phone or through e-mail.

Regarding sample size, Seidman (2006) said that a sample of 6 to 10 participants may be adequate in some qualitative studies. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested sampling until saturation or redundancy was achieved, i.e., until no new information was obtained from new sampled units. Lincoln and Guba's suggestion was followed in this study.

Data Collection Strategies and Phases

Data collection for this study comprised six components:

- A screening interview (Appendix A), which took the form of e-mail or phone communication with potential participants in order to determine whether they matched the criteria for participation

- An interview aimed at capturing participants' stories of emotional events in which they had participated (Appendix B)

- Instructions for creating an optional expressional piece describing an event in the last 6 months in which the participants had felt emotional (Appendix C). To allow for individual preferences, participants were given the opportunity to choose among collage, sculpture, painting, drawing, song, poem, cartoon, short story, essay, play, or photography

- A set of open-ended guided journal questions to allow optional record keeping and reflection on emotional events as well as reflection on participating on this research study (Appendix C)

- Instructions for writing an optional letter to the organization's leadership team suggesting ways to create an organizational culture that is appropriate in terms of the verbal expression of emotion (Appendix C)

- General background information about the organization available from its Internet site

Only one participant chose to provide data in addition to the interview, opting for the letter, which was integrated into his individual depiction.

Data collection thus included the following steps, some of which occurred simultaneously:

- Identification of the initial sample and researcher's completion of the self-interview as a study participant

- Screening interviews, which took the form of e-mail or phone communication with potential participants to determine whether they matched the criteria for participation

- Interviews until saturation was achieved

- Gathering of complementary information about the organizations to which participants belonged from the organizations' Internet website

- Collection of additional expressive pieces (letter)

Each participant was interviewed once, individually and in person, in a place and time of their choosing. Semistructured interviews were conducted and lasted between 40 and 90 minutes. All interviews were recorded, with participants' permission and according to the instructions of the institutional review board, from whom approval for this study was obtained before data collection started. I then personally transcribed all interviews verbatim.

My self-interview was conducted before interviews with participants started. For about 1 hour, and using the same interview protocol designed for all participants, I wrote down the answers to each question using stories of experiences within the previous 6 months. However, to protect the confidentiality of my current employer, I also provided stories related to my experience in previous jobs. Those were the stories I used to create my own individual depiction.

In order to enhance my exposure to and understanding of the national and international security industry, throughout the duration of this research study I attended events in the industry organized by WIIS, the Women's Foreign Policy Group, the United States Institute of Peace, and the Elliott School of International Affairs.

The Interview Protocol

The interview protocol (Appendix B) included questions intended to elicit each respondent's experience within the organization through story narratives. Bruner (2004) discussed how stories capture not an accurate account of what happened, but the teller's

interpretation of experience. This is in fact why stories are appropriate to the purpose of this study. Writing about autobiographies, Bruner explained that self-reports are susceptible to cultural, interpersonal, and linguistic influences, and these are the materials with which this study is concerned. Bruner stated,

> Given their constructed nature and their dependence upon the cultural conventions and language use, life narratives obviously reflect the prevailing theories about "possible lives" that are part of one's culture. Indeed, one important way of characterizing a culture is by the narrative models it makes available for describing the course of a life. (p. 694)

Bruner went on to say that our way of telling about ourselves structures perceptual experience and organizes memory, segmenting and sequencing life events. In Bruner's words, "We *become* the autobiographical narratives by which we 'tell about' our lives" (p. 694).

The purpose of the interview protocol was to provide a general guide as well as a way to ensure comparability within the responses of different participants. The interview protocol also took into account the recommendations of Legard, Keegan, and Ward (2003), combining structure with flexibility. A number of questions were used from which the researcher probed with more questions, allowing the data to flow from the interviewee but also to be relevant to the research question and have sufficient depth.

Interviews were conducted during the summer and fall of 2008 and were sequenced with no criteria other than each participant's availability. Informed consent (Appendix D) was obtained at the beginning of each interview, and interviews ranged in length from 45 to 90 minutes. All interviews were fully transcribed by the researcher prior to analysis, which only started after eight interviews had been completed and the

researcher suspected saturation had been reached. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant in order to protect confidentiality.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study was based on the heuristic model described by Moustakas (1990) and followed Keeling and Bermudez's (2006) data analysis method as a framework. The following were the stages in which data were analyzed:

1) *Data gathering and organization.* Individual participants were assigned a pseudonym. Each participant's materials were compiled into separate electronic folders.

2) *Immersion in the data.* Written material was read and read. Each interview was then coded. To identify themes, an adaptation of the constant comparative method as summarized by Merriam (1998) was used. Specific stories were compared with other stories within the same data set, leading to tentative categories that could then be compared with each other and with other instances. This method allowed for codes, categories, patterns, and themes to emerge from the data inductively, as opposed to from the literature. In other words, it prevented fitting the data to preexisting categories, allowing the participant's own categories to be expressed and for the emergence of experiential knowledge beyond the conceptualized limitations of models and theories of normal science (Kuhn, 1962).

3) *Peer review.* The full transcription and analysis of one of the interviews was sent as a sample to two peer reviewers to be checked for validity. I provide more detail about this process under the Credibility section below.

4) *Individual depictions.* Using the data available, each individual participant's experience was organized in the form of a single descriptive narrative, giving the researcher and the readers a sense of "what it was like" for the participant to experience the phenomenon under study.

5) *Checking of the individual depictions.* Each individual narrative was checked against the individual participant's raw data to see if the narrative seemed to portray her or his experience as completely as it was described, including all themes previously identified. Each research participant also had the opportunity to review his or her individual depiction through a member check procedure (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) which I describe in more detail within the Trustworthiness section below.

6) *Exemplary portraits.* Individual depictions that typified the experience of the phenomenon were further developed into "portraits" (Moustakas, 1990), with the addition of demographic and biographical material so as to bring out a rich profile of the individual. Moustakas (1990) suggested creating three or four exemplary portraits. Since three types of experiences seemed to emerge from the data, I created one exemplary portrait for each. The purpose of portraits is to add richness and depth, or thick rich descriptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) that humanize results and promote an empathic connection with researchers and readers.

7) *Composite depiction.* Based on similarities and differences identified across individual depictions, a composite depiction was created including the most prominent qualities of the phenomenon as experienced by the participants. Four

large themes were identified that occurred in all interviews, and for each theme the similarities and differences across data sets were described.

8) *Creative synthesis.* The final stage of the heuristic analysis was a poetic reflection on the researcher's experience of the inquiry process (Moustakas, 1990).

In all phases of data analysis, the focus was on the stories that were told. Important data were contained in the language and structure of stories or how they were told in terms of narration and plot, here defined as "the basic means by which specific events, otherwise represented as lists or chronicles, are brought into one meaningful whole" (Czarniawska, 1997, p. 18) through a particular temporal sequence and structure that implies motivations and relationships between actors and events. Data analysis was also inspired by Strauss and Corbin's (1998) description of questioning as an analytic tool and as part of the coding procedure. Questions such as Who? When? Why? Where? What? How? How much? and With what results? informed the identification of themes.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) used the term *trustworthiness* to define the characteristics of a good qualitative study, one that will yield findings "worth paying attention to" (p. 290). Trustworthiness, according to Lincoln and Guba, is achieved through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility is a result of a credible interpretation of the data gathered. To ensure credibility in this study, I counted on two peer reviewers with whom I periodically discussed data analysis and method-related issues as well as my interpretation of the data.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested this process, believing that it can help the researcher become aware of biases, perspectives, and assumptions. One fully transcribed and coded interview was sent to the two peer reviewers. The coding was laid out in the form of a spreadsheet, with codes listed in one column and quotes from the interview in another. Rows representing each code were also tentatively grouped in what later might lead to themes. The interview chosen as a sample was Sarah's, chosen for the representative range of potential themes it contained while not being overlong and thus not too burdensome on peer reviewers. Peer reviewers returned their feedback by annotating the print out of the coded interview. Their comments confirmed the original coding, and no significant discrepancies were identified, that is, both reviewers felt that the way in which the interview had been coded made sense. Peer reviewers and the researcher also met in person once to discuss the sample and its coding.

In addition to peer review, a member check was conducted. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that this procedure is critical to establish credibility, requiring that those from whom the data originated have the opportunity to see the data analysis and confirm its accuracy. To this end, each research participant was mailed his or her individual depiction and had the opportunity to verify that it had adequately captured the narratives and intended meanings provided during the interview. Six participants out of eight responded to my request. One person approved his individual depiction as it was submitted. Three people suggested three or less minor edits. One participant made several suggestions for edits that did not alter the content of his stories but were meant to improve the clarity of the written text, from his perspective. One participant had several edits and strongly challenged two quotes in her portrait, which she did not verify,

declaring that she had never said it that way. I double checked the accuracy of the quotes against the transcription of the interview, and both matched the transcription precisely. I examined each quote carefully, shortening the first one to gain clarity and removing part of the second quote, per the participant's request. This contained especially strong language that in hindsight the participant may have felt uncomfortable seeing published, and I decided to respect that. To honor each participant's feedback to their individual depiction as well as the purpose of this study, I did not find one single rule of thumb that could be applied sensibly to all of these different situations regarding participant feedback. Therefore, I used my best judgment in each case, in the attempt to both maintain the integrity of the data as collected, particularly the quality and strength of emotions expressed, while at the same time respecting participants' feedback.

Transferability

Transferability, for Lincoln and Guba, is the ability to apply the research findings in other contexts. Utilizing the term *thick description,* first used by Ryle (1949) and Geertz (1973), Lincoln and Guba (1985) encouraged describing a phenomenon in as much detail as possible so that readers can assess the extent to which findings are transferable to other situations and people. The data analysis results, comprising individual depictions, exemplary portraits, a composite depiction, and a creative synthesis, were expected to provide the rich description recommended by Lincoln and Guba.

Dependability

The key requirement for establishing dependability is the clear connection between the findings and the data. All results and interpretations should find support in the data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended external auditing of processes and results of the study as a way to ensure dependability. A peer review of results and conclusions and the feedback from dissertation committee members were used to ensure dependability. Once a sound draft of chapter 5 had been completed, it was submitted to my peer reviewers with a specific request for comments on the connection between the findings and the data. Peer reviewers' responses did not raise any concerns with the findings.

Confirmability

Confirmability, for Lincoln and Guba (1985), is achieved by a rigorous attempt to allow the findings to be shaped by study participants and not by the researcher's biases. Personally, I do not believe it is possible to completely avoid biases. I have, however, attempted to declare mine—to the extent I am aware of them—so as to practice the reflexivity that Lincoln and Guba recommended as a way to deal with the effects of bias. My subjectivity statement and my individual depiction provide some information on my perspective on emotion and OAC.

Ethical Considerations

Clearly, there is a need to continue to further our knowledge about affect and all the ways in which it is experienced by individuals in organizations. An important ethical consideration in a study like this, however, is the fact that interviews or other data

collection strategies that ask a participant to report on affective states can potentially

enhance the awareness of emotions and feelings that would have otherwise escaped that

person's attention or awareness or that have been forgotten for a while. To address this

possibility, I attempted to ensure comfort, ease, and safety during the interview and to

schedule interviews with plenty of time to have a closing phase. In three of the eight

interviews, I noticed that participants were experiencing a relatively intense emotion:

Nancy and Peter had tears in their eyes for a brief moment; Jim commented on how, after

talking with me, he realized how much emotion there had been in his work in the last few

days. No participants appeared to be in distress at any time.

Regarding confidentiality, it is of utmost importance to conceal names, locations,

and other identifying information as well as to be clear as to how data were collected. In

this study, data were gathered only through the data collection strategies approved for the

study and for which informed consent was obtained, and no covert observation or covert

data gathering was undertaken. The researcher's experience of the phenomenon under

study was captured through the same data collection strategies employed with study

participants. All data gathered were taken to the researcher's residence, on the same day

they were obtained, and stored safely. Additionally, all interview recordings were

destroyed once the transcription had been completed. To lower the possibility of aspects

of power and status creating pressure over organizational members to participate, no one

was able to appoint direct reports as study participants as part of snowball sampling.

Limitations of This Study

As discussed in the conceptual framework, this study took emotion as part of each

person's intersubjective subjectivity, or, in other words, integrated by a dynamics where

individual, social, and cultural aspects are one whole system. It was expected that a person's beliefs about what emotions may be discussed openly and under what circumstances would play a role in how much they were willing to disclose during interviews. As Schneider and Angelmar (1993) noted, "Subjects may not be willing to disclose their 'true' thoughts for reasons related to self justification and impression management" (p. 361). To address this issue, the researcher worked to establish a positive rapport with participants from the beginning of the interview, so that participants had a reasonable degree of trust in the researcher and felt they could express themselves relatively openly. However, there may still be blind spots as well as some self-censoring of information participants may have not been comfortable sharing based on what they believe was appropriate to express. This could limit the quality of the data collected (Bryant & Cox, 2006). The authors cautioned that there may also be "a further distinction between the emotions of that time and the emotions in what is later *told or recounted*" (p. 125). This was accounted for during analysis of data and review of findings and conclusions.

Fineman (2003) discussed how stories are "shaped for a particular audience, place and time" (p. 17) and are adjusted or embellished according to who comprises the audience. Whereas this reduces the validity of stories as accurate descriptions of events, it also opens up the possibility of exploring how narrators want to present themselves. The way in which emotions are depicted and the underlying intentions of those depictions can point to cultural conventions of the organization. Thus, as data were analyzed and findings interpreted, it was relevant to attempt to identify those intentions.

Lee and Roth (2003) cautioned: "Neglecting interviews as special types of situations—that the interviewer and interviewee co-construct and from which the interview content emerges as a contingent product—would in fact create a naïve and unproblematic acceptance of interview data at face value" (paragraph 37). Based on quantum physics and on their empirical study of discursive "doing" of identity and self-presentation during research interviews, Lee and Roth (2003) emphasized the interactional effects between observer and the observed and research participants as active agents embedded in unique cultural-historical environments, who co-opt researchers into their meaning-making processes. Thus, what can be reasonably expected as a result of this study was not an accurate description of the phenomenon but a description of the phenomenon as it was verbalized and expressed by research participants, including the researcher. This is congruent with the heuristic method used. Moustakas's model seeks to capture and preserve participants' experiences but also acknowledges that the final product is a cocreated story, since participants' experiences are organized and narrated by the researcher and the researcher's values and perspectives influence the way the synthesis is reached.

CHAPTER 4:

RESULTS

This chapter presents the research results in connection with the question and subquestions:

What is the role of organizational affective culture (OAC) in the way leaders talk about their emotions in the workplace?

a) What are leaders' perceptions of their organizations' OAC?

b) How does the perceived OAC influence the way leaders talk about their emotions in the workplace?

A brief summary of the results is followed by an analysis of the narratives obtained from research participants in the form of individual depictions developed for each participant, three exemplary portraits, a composite depiction, and a creative synthesis (Moustakas, 1990, 1994). Individual depictions serve the purpose of giving the reader a sense of how each participant lived the phenomenon under study. In the individual depictions, the data from each interview were organized so as to illustrate participants' experience of their OAC and of emotion in their organization.

Individual depictions are followed by three exemplary portraits, representing the three types of experience identified in the data. The exemplary portraits provide more detail, and a richer and deeper profile of the individuals chosen, incorporating more material and deepening the analysis.

The composite depiction lays out similarities and differences for themes identified across the interviews, thus summarizing the main qualities of the phenomenon as

experienced by the participants as a group. Chapter 4 concludes with a creative synthesis

of my reflections on the experience of the inquiry process in a poetic format.

Table 4-1
Overview of Characteristics of Participants

Pseudonym	Age, gender	Years of service in national/ international security industry	Type(s) of organization	Years in current role	Direct reports (n)
Clare	Early 60s, F	25+	Government and nonprofit	2+	50+
Nancy	Early 50s, F	25+	Government/military	10+	5+
Peter	Early 50s, M	25+	Government/ medical/emergency response	2+	5+
Jasmine	Mid 50s, F	25+	Engineering nonprofit	2+	100+
Paul	Mid 50s, M	25+	Government/military	6+	50+
Sarah	Early 40s, F	20+	Government and nonprofit	2+	10+
Diana	Mid 30s, F	5+	Government and nonprofit	2+	4+
Jim	Early 40s, M	20+	Engineering private and government/military	4+	100+

Summary of Results

Through the data analysis, I identified three broad types of experiences of the

OAC, based on the key characteristics of the OAC described or implied (narrated) in

research participants' stories and the ways or modes (Maturana & Varela, 1987) in which

leaders in this study related to the narrated OAC. I have named these types of experiences

"other as problem," "other as inter-action," and "other as inter-being" in parallel with

Varela's (1999b) steps to a science of inter-being.

Table 4-2

Overview of Narrated Organizational Affective Cultures and Related Modes of Coupling

Type of experience	Key characteristics of the perceived OAC	Mode of coupling	Participants in this group
Other as problem	Prohibitive OAC is rigid and punitive. Emotions are narrated as predominantly dangerous or a nuisance. The expression of emotion puts the leader at risk. The OAC plays the role of a strict normative system according to which the leader manages his or her own emotions and interprets, judges, and responds to the expression of others.	Imperative Leader tends to accept and enforce OAC without question. Reduced agency.	Peter Clare Nancy Exemplar: Peter
Other as inter-action	Manageable OAC tolerates a wide range of behaviors. With awareness and skill, the leader can express and deal with a wide range of emotions in acceptable ways. The OAC plays the role of a reference system that the leader navigates, recognizing that it may have limitations and choosing to abide by or divert from it depending on specific context.	Relative Leader respects OAC but may cautiously divert in specific circumstances based on his or her own perspective on what is needed and appropriate. Moderate agency.	Paul Jasmine Researcher Exemplar: Jasmine
Other as inter-being	Integrative OAC is flexible and integrative of emotion and plays the role of an ideal the leader strives to achieve. Emotions are a natural part of human experience in the workplace. Leader seeks to openly integrate emotion and promote emotional well-being and makes specific attempts to shape the OAC so that it is accepting and respectful of verbal expression of emotion.	Generative Leader sees the OAC as affected by his or her own influence and makes conscious attempts to enact it and shape it according to his or her perspective on emotion. High degree of agency.	Jim Diana Sarah Exemplar: Diana

1) *Other as problem:* In this type of experience, the OAC plays the role of a strict normative system according to which the leader manages his or her expression of emotion and interprets, judges, and responds to the expression of others. The group that illustrates this type of experience told stories about an OAC that they bought into, which was permeated by organizational hierarchy, and generally viewed the verbal expression of emotion as a potential problem. This group told stories about people who expressed their strong emotions and got punished, lost effectiveness, or damaged reputation and relationships. Within this group, leaders expressed no or very little questioning of the OAC, and there were no or very few indications from leaders that they recognized their own capacity for agency, that is, their ability or desire to enact and affect the OAC from their own point of view in any way (De Jaegher & Froese, 2009). Participants Clare, Nancy, and Peter illustrated this type of experience and, due to the amount of detail and intensity of emotions narrated, I chose Peter to be the exemplar of this group.

2) *Other as inter-action:* In this type of experience, the OAC plays the role of a reference system, independent from the leader, from which he or she chooses guidelines for behavior. The group that illustrates this type of experience narrated an OAC that included a wider range of degrees of deviations from the cultural norms and in which a relative amount of deviation was tolerated. This group presented the OAC as a complex system to be navigated and told stories in which the leader maintained a moderate degree of agency. They abided by the perceived OAC for the most part and were able to describe it but did not always agree with it. They considered how their expression affected others and themselves and chose behavior based on attempts to balance the anticipated impact and their desired outcomes. The leaders of this group seemed to have a deep

understanding of the nuances of the OAC and expressed more tolerance or acceptance of emotion and emotional expression, whether it was verbal or not. Paul and Jasmine belonged in this group, and both provided very compelling and rich narratives. I chose Jasmine for the exemplary portrait so as to further explore the female perspective, since women comprised the majority of the research participants.

3) *Other as inter-being:* In this type of experience, the OAC played the role of the ideal to be attained, which the leader was attempting to enact and shape. In the stories told by the group that illustrated this kind of experience, the leader was positioned as having the ability to influence the OAC and purposefully doing so. Leaders appeared to have an idea of what they thought the OAC should be and attempted to create the conditions for its existence. They may or may not have been personally comfortable with verbally expressing emotion, but they accepted it as a relatively normal part of organizational life and being a person. Similarly to the second group, main characters carefully considered the potential impact of expression of emotion, and what was expressed to whom was often narrated as a result of conscious choice. This group told stories that made specific references to attempts to shape the OAC according to a subjective point of view. Sarah, Jim, and Diana belonged to this group. I chose Diana as the exemplar of this group due to the level of detail and the intensity of emotions in her interview.

The analysis of the narratives also yielded four broad themes:

1) *Attitude towards emotion in the workplace:* Two basic patterns can be identified. The one illustrated by Clare, Nancy, and Peter emphasized the risks associated with verbally expressing emotion in the workplace. While an exception was made

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for emotions seen as positive like gratitude and appreciation, emotions were seen as personal and not belonging to the professional realm. In the event that it couldn't be avoided, the rule of thumb was that emotions in the workplace should be verbally expressed behind closed doors. The attitude illustrated by Jim, Diana, Jasmine, Paul, and Sarah held emotions in the human realm and therefore part of what people bring into the workplace. Talking about emotions in the workplace was accepted and even encouraged, within certain boundaries, usually connected with being respectful of others and mindful of the OAC but not totally submissive, and considerate of the impact of the verbal expression of emotion on self and others.

2) *Context sensitivity:* Leaders interviewed for this study told stories in which they took into account what emotions should be verbalized to whom, by whom, where, when, how, and why and the anticipated consequences of verbally expressing emotion in ways that violated the perceived OAC. Context sensitivity strongly expresses the intersubjective dimension of the experience and expression of emotion as leaders provided accounts of how others were either a trigger or a target of emotion, participant or audience to be considered.

3) *Subjectivity and the leaders' emotion talk:* Participants' stories embedded several examples of how affective style; temperament; beliefs about emotion, leadership, and what it means to be professional; and previous experiences of verbal expression of emotion were an important part of the dynamic through which a leader's verbal expression of emotion emerged. All participants recognized an

OAC, but not all of them narrated it as a prescriptive or determining element in the expression of emotion.

4) *Shaping the ever-emergent OAC:* Several stories demonstrated how leaders participated in shaping the OAC directly by consciously coaching others or considering how to model the expression of emotion or indirectly through spontaneous reactions to the expression of emotion by other members of the organization.

Individual Depictions

In this section, the data from each interview are organized in the form of individual depictions, illustrating through narratives participants' overt or underlying attitude towards emotions in the workplace, perceptions of their organizational affective culture (OAC), and how it affects how they express their emotions verbally at work. Because this study is about how leaders talk about their emotions, and to achieve the purpose of giving the reader a rich sense of how each participant experienced the phenomenon under study, I chose to make minimal interventions in participants' texts and maintain the integrity of their narratives as much as possible. The depictions are sequenced according to the three types of experiences identified through the data analysis (see Table 4-3).

Table 4-3
Types of Experiences of the Participants

Type of experience	Key characteristics of the perceived OAC	Mode of coupling	Participants in this group
Other as problem	Prohibitive	Imperative	Clare, Nancy, Peter
Other as inter-action	Manageable	Relative	Jasmine, Paul
Other as inter-being	Integrative	Generative	Sarah, Diana, Jim

Clare

Clare was president of a nonprofit organization whose mission was to promote understanding and knowledge about a specific region of the world to the American people. Clare reported to a board of directors. Before taking the position of president in her current organization, she had worked for the U.S. government and for large international organizations, having served at high levels in several countries, being therefore very experienced at high-level positions in the organizational hierarchy.

About her own style of expression of emotion in the workplace, Clare said:

> Well, when I feel strongly about something I always express it. I don't hold back, but I try to do it in a way that is not hysterical. I'm not the kind that suppresses strong feelings when I think I'm right. . . . I'm very direct and spontaneous.

Clare said she connected the word *emotion* with "people": "Well, my shtick is the focus on people so that the human element is the focus, and that kind of connects people with the emotion." Clare also conveyed a deliberate use of emotion on occasion: "Passion is always a very good technique. Sometimes I use it. Often I use anger a little bit. I raise my voice to make a point. To make a strong point."

Clare talked about an OAC in which the expression of affect should be minimal:

> In any bureaucracy, you have to, there's a process for decision making, and it's understood that you can't just run around emoting because that puts pressure on the boss who has bosses, everyone has someone else on top of them, and a boss that gets squeezed and has all these hysterical people underneath doesn't appreciate that.

Clare explained that "excessive" emotions should be left for outside the organization:

> Well, I would say always put people first, the human element is important, and don't burden people under you and people over you with your own excessive

emotions. Go to your family, go to your friends outside to vent. Venting is not helpful, outrageous emotions are not helpful; keep them under control. . . . People just don't want to hear it. Negativity is contagious.

However, Clare did purposefully express emotion on certain occasions. Going back to a previous job, she described how she used emotion to try to influence a decision:

> I think my last day in the U.S. government might be an interesting story for you. I was working in [name of organization] on [name of country] reconstruction, and [name of organization] had the civilian component and we had got about [amount of money] for education and health, democracy, but in the second supplemental, that was taken away and centralized on the military-run operations. And they were going to take most of it and put it into infrastructure like roads, and I didn't believe that was right, so I asked to go to the [name of location] meeting to discuss this and went to it and toward the end of the meeting I said "Gentlemen, what you have here is a strategy that is going to have schools, vaccines, and unless you can use reconstruction money to meet the everyday needs of the [name of country] people, we're going to lose this war." So it was a very emotional appeal to them.

Clare's appeal was met with silence, and this is how she interpreted it:

> The hour was about up. These meetings are really scheduled for an hour. And, I mean, you lay an egg and then it takes time before it hatches. So I really didn't say, oh yes, OK. It's a big decision. That's not how groups make decisions. They need to chew on it, and they did.

Nobody came to speak with Clare immediately after the meeting about her appeal, and soon after that she left the U.S. government. The next week she went away to Europe and did not follow up with her peers from the meeting on what their decision had been.

> I went away to [name of country] the next week and worked for the [name of organization] for 3 years, and it wasn't until I came back that I heard from my colleagues and they told me that they did write the memo and that money was restored to the program.

In another story, Clare described how she interpreted the expression of emotion of another person. She again went back to a previous job:

I was coming back to [name of city] and I called into my boss. I'd just come back from Christmas vacation in [name of country], which she was in charge of—she was in charge of the whole bureau, in charge of everything—and she was sitting at her desk weeping. And I just tried to comfort her. She was very embarrassed. I don't think our relationship ever recovered from my catching her at the moment of her breakdown.

Clare indicated that her boss was embarrassed because being caught crying exposed her weakness: "She was totally, she was just disintegrated. She couldn't cope with all that was going on." Clare noted that people had nowhere to go for support in her organization in a moment like this: "You just have to shut the door and be private."

Clare herself experienced situations where she felt overcome by emotion. "When there were the church bombings and the mothers, . . . and I learned that children had been killed, I lost it." A colleague experienced that moment with Clare. "He was with me at the time, and I cried for a few minutes and then we got on."

Nancy

Nancy oversaw an office that was part of a military organization. According to Nancy, the office worked with foreign military officials for a particular military branch, acting as the initial point of contact and supporting the foreign officials in anything that they wanted to do with the larger military organization to which her office belonged. In terms of structure, Nancy said: "We're very small. There's my boss, a [military organization rank], I'm the deputy, I'm a retired [military organization] officer. And then I've got five other people who report to me."

Nancy had been in this role for 12 years, including her active-duty time and her civil service time. Besides her staff of about five people, Nancy worked closely with a high-rank military officer, to whom she reported.

Nancy's stories depicted an OAC that was influenced by the military culture:

You have to remember this is the military, and there's definite do's and don'ts, and there's a chain of command, and there's a point where you just say, "All right, I'll do what you say." You don't write e-mails to your boss sounding like a 15-year-old, whining and complaining: "I said this and I took offense when you said that." Would you tell your boss that you took offense when he said something? I don't think so. Especially not for something that is minor, as had happened. It's one thing to tell a boss that's really egregious, you know, sexual harassment things, or race things, you know; if I were ever to say something crude or rude or offensive, I would want them to tell me. But this was not one of those things. So, it was what I said earlier, the tone of the e-mail, you said that and you said that, it wasn't professional at all. . . . This is sort of big [name of military organization], this isn't just in my office. If you disagree with somebody, you know, they may have a tendency to dispute you.

Nancy said you're not supposed to express emotion or be overly emotional in the military, although she also indicated it may be useful sometimes to express emotion:

Last week we in my office, we were given a tasking that we don't have the personnel to do, but there was no way we could get out of it, and we tried. And both my boss and I were pretty angry about it. And we voiced that anger in the office, and the tasking went to one of my lieutenants and the lieutenant was going to bear the burns of the tasking. So if I were that lieutenant, I'd be very glad that my boss was angry about it, that they were on my side.

Nancy added some boundaries to the suppression of emotion and indicated how emotion can be bonding:

You don't want the people in your office to think you're a totally cold fish. The boss that I told you was crying, that was my female boss, and actually I was kind of amused that I caught her crying cause she was pretty much a cold fish. I found that she was a little human as well. If I had walked into a male's office doing that, I wouldn't have liked it. In our office last week, when we were really mad that we got this tasking, and showed it, we meant we're on your side. It's a bonding thing. When you go to boot camp, that's exactly what they teach you, to share pain. And that is a bonding experience. We've all survived this bad experience and come out a better person for it, and you do not know that in time, you don't know why they are doing this to you, but in the end there is a reason for it and the biggest part is the bonding, is the bonding part of it. You see movies of people at boot camp where the drill sergeant is yelling and screaming at you and you can't respond. You don't dare respond. And that is teaching you a lot, it's teaching you that control, absolutely.

The story above also surfaced Nancy's concerns regarding appropriate gender roles when it came to talking about emotion. This theme appears again below:

I know I probably have different insights than some of the men you are talking with, especially in the military, being a female. Early on I was always concerned about how women were perceived in the military. And later on I just didn't. Maybe it was more self-confidence that I had after being in the military for so long, after some years, after 22 years. . . . But early on I was always concerned about that, how you were being perceived and were you being perceived as being too emotional or just not taken seriously. I think women still have to be careful about not overly expressing their emotions, especially if you are disagreeing with somebody.

Regarding how Nancy responded to the verbal expression of emotion by others, she said:

I have a lieutenant who was in the office about 4 or 5 years ago and he became way too emotional in his professional dealings. He did something that was really not acceptable in the office, and I told him at the time, "This was not right, what you did is not right," and he did it again. And the senior people got involved and it was something that he should have told us in advance. He chose to hide something. And so I told him that was just very, very inappropriate. And he sent me a long rambling e-mail that was way too personal and emotional on this particular subject. Totally inappropriate. And especially with the relationship between him and me. . . . I didn't even tell him, I didn't tell him it was inappropriate. I just noticed. I mean, it wasn't so egregious. Had it been really egregious I might have, but it wasn't worth the effort. He was going to be leaving in 3 or 4 months, and he was just syrupy emotional time, and I just didn't think it was worth it. I also don't want to stop people coming to me and expressing emotion. We're an organization where you're supposed to not have emotion; it's the military. But still I think as a leader, people do need outlets, even men. Even men. So I don't want to stop that, but it's a fine line. He was almost talking to me like I was his mother—or you know, a colleague, not his boss.

Nancy also recalled her immediate reaction to her employee's e-mail: "Yeah, I thought that's way too emotional for a guy!"

When talking about her emotions could potentially lead to conflict, Nancy might choose to avoid it. Nancy's first story, for instance, narrated what she named a

confrontation with an employee who had not been performing up to expectations and introduced the theme of avoiding confrontations, which recurred several times:

> I've got to tell you I've one employee that I think is not up to par and I let her go way too long, and so I had to deal with that. . . . Because I let it go on too long, it was even, it wasn't harder for me. It was easier because I'd let her go on too long and I knew I had to finally do something. So it was easy to confront her but it's never easy to tell people that. . . . But she knew, so, she knew. People know when they're not really performing well. And so, she knew. And it was actually a risk for me because I'd been complaining to myself for years about her performance. . . . Each time she did something incorrectly, I'd tell her, but you know I finally had to talk to her and say this is a crossroads. For 4 years now I told you, this is wrong, this is wrong, and this is wrong, and now I've done it so many times that this is official. So there was a bit of a relief, actually.

As we talked about this story, Nancy emphasized: "I personally don't like confrontation. I just don't like it, of any kind. Yeah, even when you're the boss and you're in charge, and you know that you're right, I just don't like confrontation. It's a personal thing."

Peter

Peter worked for a large emergency response organization with several thousand employees. Besides regular and temporary employees, the organization also utilized the service of volunteers. Peter's group was responsible for supporting the cycle of preparedness through policy and procedures, training and exercises, after-action reports, corrective action programs, and lessons learned. At the time of our interview, he had been in his current role for 6 months but before that he worked in a very similar role in a different organization, which belonged to a group of 15 other organizations that supported his current one. Even though Peter had only been in his current role for 6

months, in the last 4 years he "interacted with this organization on a more than daily basis" so he believed he knew it fairly well.

Peter's stories pictured an OAC influenced by a strong hierarchy and the nature of emergency work. Orders were to be followed, and emotions could be a sign of weakness and lack of ability to perform one's duties. Peter's stories narrated experiences of "heart-wrenching moments," but the OAC that Peter articulated had no space for emotions: "The minute you become emotional in an emergency situation you're useless." Some of Peter's stories depicted experiences of emotions that led to very negative consequences. For example, in one event, a leader who allowed his emotions to take over seriously compromised his decisions and ended up creating chaos and putting people's lives in danger. The situation started when, in the middle of an emergency situation, the leader isolated himself from people beneath him and started to make decisions without consulting those in the organization who had the necessary knowledge and training. This leader's behavior was complicated by the hierarchical nature of the organization, which is an impediment for employees' expression of dissent, as Peter continued to explain:

> The captain of the ship is the captain of the ship, and it's mutinous to go against the decision of the captain, but even then there are ways and rules, etc., etc., that allow for a more rational approach when the captain has made a poor decision. But when you dissent, there are huge prices to pay in not only your career but in general disruption to the entire organization and the loss of the integrity of the organization, because while 95% of the people would elect to turn to the left, some will turn to the right just because they want to follow the leader and they are not interested in dealing with the ramifications that would come from dissent.

So, Peter described a context in which hierarchy can prevent the expression of dissent even when there is strong disagreement, such as in the case of a leader who was ignoring long-established procedures and making profoundly damaging decisions. Peter emphasized his belief in the importance of being "rational," focusing on facts and

not on feelings, but he also described experiences of strong emotion within this story: "I remember a colleague who is a physician and actually a board-certified psychiatrist hugging us and breaking into tears because we all knew the impact of what had occurred." Peter pointed to the power of these emotions by indicating that even a professional who was trained to deal with emotions cannot contain them:

> When you look and you see a trained psychiatrist break into tears because the emotion of what's occurred here, and you can understand that the decisions that are being made are that bad, you know that you are in a pretty tough emotional point.

In the face of intense affect, Peter described how the situation should be handled:

> And really it's collectively, speaking among the group, without being mutinous and being professional and trying to turn issues around. And the best way for everybody to look good is to make your boss look good, and the best way to make him look good is to educate him and explain to him what a better decision could look like and hope that he would hence be enticed.

In Peter's story, employees were not allowed to attempt to persuade their leader to change course since the leader, according to Peter, had lost his rationality:

> But when he refuses to communicate such as locking the door, and I'm not going to talk with anybody, and he's going to go and just make agreements that are not a part of a process, it doesn't allow for the organization to react appropriately. And in an emergency situation when leadership becomes emotional or they lose rationality and they are doing things for either political will or for some way in which to look good and not look bad, and it's at the capital of human life, it's a tragedy.

About other people's reactions to these events, Peter said:

> Well, the others began to cry as well; it just took one to bring the whole group down. But really just through hugging one another and reinforcing that we had all done our best and assuring ourselves that we had no other options, that we had exhausted all other options, was really the only element of comfort that one could have.

Peter's narratives pictured emotions as inadequate for the workplace and emphasized the importance of focusing on facts. He noted that he did not express his feelings to the leader-gone-awry:

> I didn't express feelings, I expressed facts. I mean, the minute you become emotional in an emergency situation you're useless. There's no place in any of this for emotion. You need to deal with everything with issues of fact, policy, procedure, standard operating procedure, best practices, known entities. This is never the time, it's a time to be resourceful, but it is not a time for experimentation.

For Peter, expressing feelings in the workplace was very dangerous, as he demonstrated in a story in which an employee reacted strongly to being relocated:

> Well, that person said, "You know, these kinds of decisions are the reasons why employees kill their employers." That led to a domino effect, in that it not only impacted me as the immediate supervisor, but for example the other administrative assistant that sat near the doorway felt that she may be the first person to be shot or bombed or whatever, and so it then created some element of hysteria among the organization.

Peter had clearly been significantly affected by this event. He expressed his concerns to the organization's security office but was disappointed with its response and "felt that they should have done more." When Peter was first threatened, he did not say anything directly to the offender: "I didn't. Because the person had called me late night at home, it was a telephone call, and it rather took me by surprise." He did talk with his peers and superiors, being cautious not to create panic:

> I thought there was a due diligence that was required to share that information. At the same time not to alarm folks. In other words, you don't want to come in yelling and screaming and making the situation worse, but I felt that there was an obligation to let folks know that we'd had an incident and that we should all increase our vigilance and be aware of this because it had that kind of potential impact to occur. We were basically at street level, with no security and just the door—let me see, two doors between us and the front street. So there was nothing to stop this from potentially happening.

Although Peter's rationale was that emotions should not be expressed in the

workplace, he narrated events in which strong emotion was experienced:

> Emergency work must be done completely devoid of emotion, has to be done with
> being smart, with being savvy, with understanding issues, organizational
> dynamics, people dynamics, but you cannot allow for emotion to come in.
> Emotion actually is so dangerous that if it were to be viewed by others in the
> organization, you'd probably be asked to be removed from your duty because it
> could adversely affect. You are asked to carry out a specific set of functions, and
> to become emotional about it, to become energetic about it, to become engaged
> about it, those are all good things, but to become emotional where you actually
> take a side where you become either threatened or take it personally that someone
> would criticize or reverse or challenge you on a decision, you're now in an
> unprofessional realm.

The association between being emotional and being unprofessional was very clear

in Peter's text:

> If that's the way you're going to deal with it, I mean, being professional is,
> someone comes to you and says, "So why did you order this? I don't understand,"
> and you say, "Well, we had six whatevers and seven of those and there wasn't
> enough and our par level is a dozen and we needed to get to that." You know,
> whatever the incident is, you have to be able to articulate rationally.

The way to prevent emotion from getting in the way of accomplishing work

appeared to be remaining consistent and loyal to established procedure:

> I once had a professor who knew I worked in the emergency department as a
> clinician, and I was the trauma nurse team leader, and he said, "Man, in a trauma
> case like that, you know, that's just crazy, you know all the things that you have
> to do and the people like it must be so hard to coordinate." And I said, "Well,
> you've obviously never done this as a professional, because it is the simplest
> things to coordinate. First we do this, second we do this, third we do this, fourth
> we do this, concurrently we do this. We have this down to a science so much so
> that we videotape ourselves and we go back and we critique ourselves on why we
> potentially deviated from our accepted set of practices" because again time is the
> most critical factor.

Even in extreme circumstances, a professional in Peter's industry should be able

to let go of emotion in order to accomplish his or her job:

One case comes to mind where a family had wolves and they raised wolves and the wolves got loose and attacked two of the siblings, and we were unable to resuscitate the one and the other one was resuscitated but obviously would have lifelong issues. It's hard not to become emotional but you don't become emotional at the time. You just say that's going to hang out for later. . . . It certainly hits you later, and it will hit me now recounting it 10 years later, but in that moment if you're a true professional, you step up and you do what you were trained to do.

This poignant story supported Peter's rationale that you should not openly express

emotion in organizations and that you are expected to suppress and deal with your

emotions on your own. Peter may have learned that the hard way, as he demonstrated in

the next story, in which he did express emotion that might have been considered

inappropriate for his OAC.

I had a colleague who I'd brought into the organization and considered him to be a colleague. And they [this person] did something that in my opinion, and in anyone else that I'd confronted or discussed the issue with opinion, was it was underhanded, it was dirty, it wasn't appropriate. And I raised my voice [to him], and it was unprofessional of me to raise my voice irrespective. And I think I had that, I did that because I considered this person to be a friend, colleague; I'd brought him into the organization, I'd hired him, I'd worked with him, we had the same set of goals and objectives. I personally wanted that person to be on the team because I felt we had so much in common and we had so much to share among one another that made for a greater whole rather than as individuals. And to this day, I would take back having raised my voice.

Peter's colleague was intimidated by his reaction:

He was intimidated by the fact that it had completely pushed me over the edge in terms of needing or wanting to personally raise my voice on this. And ever since then the relationship has been damaged. It will never go back to the way it was before. It was him essentially injuring me on a personal decision and taking undue risks. And in the end, it just changed the whole outcome of how we would work together probably for the rest of our careers.

Jasmine

Jasmine worked for a systems engineering nonprofit organization with about 6000 employees worldwide. The organization managed federally funded security-related research and development centers as well as its own center, which demanded sophisticated technical, operational, and domain knowledge. In Jasmine's group within the larger organization there were about 140 people. She had oversight over all of them, but not all reported to her directly. Jasmine had worked for the organization for a little over 25 years. She had been in her current role for about 2½ years and expected to retire in a few years.

Jasmine described an OAC influenced by the professional field:

> The engineering environment is more of a thinking environment than an emotion environment. If one shows emotion often, in a passionate way, whether they are positive or negative, sometimes is viewed in a negative way in the organization, because of the fact that thinking is so strong. . . . Valued, it's more valued than emotions.

Jasmine also said the engineering environment was typically a "more introverted environment." In this OAC, a verbal expression of emotion seen as too often and/or too intense could damage someone's credibility:

> I have seen people in our environment who speak up passionately on a regular basis, and a lot of times I feel that over time they are not listened to because of the fact that they are talking too much, they are talking too passionately, and everybody can't be passionate about everything all the time. So I have seen that.

Spontaneity may also not be encouraged, and someone's passionate expression may be met with silence, as was the case in a meeting Jasmine narrated. Jasmine explained:

Because we have an introverted group that probably doesn't handle conflict well and so basically other people afterwards did talk, and I actually took the opportunity to talk to the person who actually made that comment a couple months later, and they brought up that topic and how I thought it was unfair and I felt that the judgment about what the person was saying and what they were doing was erroneous. . . . They really value and appreciate thinking about something before they act, and so I think part of it is that they know right then and there something is wrong but they want to be fair and they want to assess the facts and they think about it and then they do talk about it later.

In the next story, Jasmine talked about an instance in which she expressed her emotions verbally and was happy with the results. It started with how this person first addressed her: "Someone came into my office angry and I was more direct with them because of their anger, but I don't necessarily typically raise my voice; it might be my choice of words that I use." Jasmine managed to remain calm, even though she was "more direct." This wasn't the first time this person had displayed anger with Jasmine, and she explained how she interpreted his behavior:

I felt they were going through a very difficult time at work themselves and I actually felt that they were taking it out on me and they were wrong in their statements to me. And that, to tell you the truth, I felt good about it at the end of the session because I specifically told them in a calm fashion that I didn't appreciate their behavior.

Jasmine also commented on the other person's reaction to her expression of emotion:

I think the word I used was heavy handed, and somehow, it was a male, and somehow that really, he was very taken aback, I think, by the fact that I was displeased myself. So I actually felt good about the situation; I kind of felt that I drew a boundary and I stood my ground.

Recounting this experience seemed to bring Jasmine to a reflective moment:

I do have a concern now. I actually might need to be more emotional and angry with people and be very clear that I am angry rather than sending mixed

messages. Sometimes I think that is a weakness of my own management/ leadership style.

The issue of control appeared in Jasmine's next comments:

I didn't scream or yell . . . mainly because, to tell you the truth, it takes too much out of me to do that. I do believe that you only have so much energy in a day and sort of how do you choose to do things. . . . If I let someone who I don't want to have any of my energy, have some of my energy, I don't feel good about that. Probably sounds very controlling, doesn't it? Well, it is controlling. I want to have control over how I use my personal energy in a day.

Jasmine had trusted colleagues she went to in the workplace when her own

emotions were running high:

I have an associate that I work with who is, actually I chose him because he was not what I would necessarily call an emotional person, but have a lot of respect and is very supportive, and this gets me another point of view, puts things in perspective. But I have another former manager that I was a mentor to, actually is the [name of function] of the company right now, and not very often but I went to him this week about a situation I needed help on. Maybe about every 6 months, somebody I trust, somebody who's fair. So, I do. I actually have somebody who works for me that I trust.

This story presented Jasmine as someone who was careful about expressing some

emotions. She would not express them openly to any person and preferred to go to people

she trusted, in confidence. Jasmine also commented on how with maturity she had

become more willing to express her feelings and take more chances:

After I turned 50, a lot of people say that a switch goes off and I thought that was silly, but I really thought I spent my whole life being too careful and therefore I should say, take more chances and say who I am and how I feel, and that feels good. What is it going to do to me? The worst thing that could happen is I'd have to go back home with my family on the beach; that doesn't sound too bad.

Paul

Paul was a high official in a government agency that operated "both as state

agency and a federal agency" and so employees had responsibility for their functions

within the entire state and to support the federal government. There were about 25,000

employees in the entire organization, and Paul worked at the headquarters. He had a

military background and had had this particular job since 2001.

In Paul's stories, the fact that his organization is part of the military influenced the

display and expression of emotion as well as the OAC, although different military

organizations and individuals retained some uniqueness:

> Part of it is tied to the industry that I'm in, in that when you talk about the overall culture of the military, you have a baseline that you draw from and then you start to look and say: OK, what's a deviation from the baseline? If the baseline says, hey, grown men don't cry, that's the expectation, and then when you see that there's a deviation from that, then you say, OK, is this an anomaly or is this something unique to this individual or is this something that is unique to this organization? . . . And even within the military context, I can go from one military organization to another and I see that there are different baselines of the norms from one to the other.

The OAC that transpired in Paul's stories had rules about appropriate expression

of emotion but tolerated a wider range of behaviors than the norm:

> [There are] some individuals in the organization who are more than ready to lash out at a moment's notice and there are others who never do so. I would say that in our organizational culture it's anticipated that people won't, that it's accepted that some people are allowed to.

Paul narrated an event illustrating the wide range of behaviors that might be

tolerated. After delivering difficult news to a group of peers during a meeting, most

people reacted calmly, with one exception:

> That individual leapt to their feet and immediately started just berating me about setting priorities. If I was a good director I would have known well in advance that this was coming. Well, you know, when the governor or the president sets down something you have to respond to right now, you don't know what's coming, but we all found ourselves in that situation. But this individual continued way beyond just venting displeasure for having a little extra work to do, and I ended up taking it rather personally, and a lot of the other directors took it rather personally, and it caused quite a bit of angst among my peers.

Paul did not say anything back at his opponent immediately. However, his emotions still showed: "I suspect that I got very, very red in the face and, you know, so there were nonverbal clues that I was unhappy, but I did not react there." After the meeting, Paul addressed the issue:

> I went to that individual's office and I closed the door and then proceeded to flame on that individual. If you ever, ever pull that on me again in a public forum, I will not wait till I'm behind closed doors, I will bite your head off and dump garbage down the hole, you got it? And then I left.

About the response from people in the room, Paul described discomfort:

> First of all, everybody averted their eyes, so it's like they weren't participating, and it was almost like by body language they were separating themselves from the exchange. And I don't think it was so much a fear that if I weigh in on this I'm next, I don't think that was it at all; I think that the concern was, that's way too personal, I don't want to be observing this, I want to distance myself and I want it just to go away. I don't want to exacerbate it, I don't want to extend this. They were feeling that they were observing a professional acting in a very unprofessional setting, and observing that, knowing that that's going to change how you view that person in the future.

A particular rule Paul articulated regarded the expression of dislike for a colleague:

> If I hate Sally Smith, you don't say it to anybody. There's always exceptions to that, but even this fellow director that flamed on me, it was almost against the rules for other people to come to me and say "That person really did you wrong by flaming on you, and I'm sorry that they did it." The culture says we don't talk about that: we don't mess with that, it's over, it's done with; deal with it between the parties that were involved. But if some other director comes to me and says, "Man, that person really did you dirty," it's almost like now I have to think about how I am going to deal with them . . . taking sides in the event or them speaking ill of another director.

While Paul recognized and respected his OAC, he also sometimes went against the usually expected behavior. In the next story, he confronted a superior, in spite of the strict hierarchy:

So the boss had assigned the task to me and so I was off working on it. And I had part of my folks working on it, and we were building a plan on how to effectively use the money. And somebody else came in and literally, just literally took it off and so when I said, "What are you doing? I thought I had a week to get this thing done," he said, "Oh, the boss assigned me to do this project." So, I used the opportunity to go up and flame on the boss to say "Do you not have any confidence in my ability? You assigned it to me, I got a handle on it, now I found out that less than 24 hours later you assigned somebody else to the task? What is it? You don't think I can handle it?" and I just put it in those words and so unfortunately we had to use e-mails back and forth because we were both gone. . . . So there was a great deal of disappointment on my part until I could tell the boss, and I could sort it out that he had intended one thing and I read it totally different. And in reading it totally different, I don't lose my temper very often but I was pretty straightforward with the boss and it's not really appropriate for, you don't get to do that very often in my business.

Paul appeared in his stories as someone who carefully considered not only the OAC but also how talking about his emotions could affect the emotions of others; he would adjust the content and tone of his expression accordingly. When a high-stakes meeting for which he had been preparing for a long time was rescheduled several times at the last minute, Paul experienced what he called "a roller coaster of emotions," from a "real sense of dread," "a great deal of concern," distress, fear, and apprehension to feeling "much better" and "more and more pleased" after resolving the situation and finally completing the meeting successfully. As he was going through these events, he talked with different people in his organization about them, taking a different approach with each person or group:

So the people that are my technical people, that are actually doing the grunt work, I talked with them, and my talk with them was focused on what I needed them to do to make sure we had everything in line. And in talking with them I had to be very, very positive and downplay the roller coaster because their long-term employment is tied to the success of this program. . . . With my deputy, it was "Here's what I need you to do to run the office to make sure that I don't have to worry about anything but getting this thing fixed." And then for the person who is, and I don't know what the right word is to use, not confidante, but you know what I mean, someone that you communicate with on a personal level, that's the person that I called and aaaaaaaaahhhhhhhh!!!!

A prominent character in this story was the deputy with whom Paul could talk at what he described a more personal level. This was a supportive figure who offered encouragement: "Well, we pulled it out of the fire from a lot worse situations than this, and if anybody can make tomato soup out of rotten tomatoes, it's you." With this person, Paul felt free to express the frustration he was experiencing as he tried to deal with the "roller coaster" preceding the meeting. None of that, however, seemed to have transpired during the meeting itself. A carefully prepared briefing was delivered.

The subtle rules about emotion display in Paul's stories did not apply only to emotions that might be regarded as negative. In another story, Paul took the backseat to witness an unexpected public expression of affect:

> Earlier this year we had a very significant emergency in [name of state], [type of emergency]. And we got assistance provided to us probably by 22, 23 other agencies that provided assistance to us so that we could do everything that we needed to do. And so this morning, not on the agenda, my boss had made arrangements for appreciation plaques for these other agencies. So when they were getting ready to start the meeting, they said, "We've got something that's not on the agenda." My boss got up and expressed his appreciation to these other agency heads and took the time to give each one a plaque of appreciation, shook his hand and specifically said, "Joe, thank you so much for what you did."

Paul noted how the other people present in the meeting reacted to his boss's gesture and words of appreciation:

> The other agency directors all of a sudden took note and they all looked at this and they teased him a little bit about "Gee, my goodness, your agency must have more money than ours. This is magnificent, this is beautiful." . . . The conversation around the table was about how unexpected it was to be recognized for having just done what they had agreed to do, tremendous comments about how thoughtful it was to do that, tremendous comments about how nice the plaque was. It was just an engraved piece of glass. This was peer to peer, and there was a great deal of interchange between the peer to peer.

About his own feelings in connection with the event, Paul said he felt "a great deal of pride" for his boss's foresight in appreciating other people and in his organization "for saying my organization cares enough to say thank you to these other organizations." Paul was also proud of the other agency directors, "knowing that their contributions were prominently acknowledged, not just something it was expected. I felt very, very good about it." In spite of the admiration and pride for his boss, Paul did not verbally express those feelings to him directly, but to a colleague:

> She and I talked about it afterwards. And the conversation that she and I had was first of all how unexpected it was and second how pleased we felt for all the interactions that took place, the meanings of what occurred peer to peer, and then also how good we felt that we were associated with the organization that had done that. And then from a selfish perspective we talked about how that action that he did this morning probably had changed the turning of the meeting so when we got up to brief immediately after that there was already considerable support from around the table about things that were coming out of my organization because so many of them had already gotten an award, so we felt real good about that.

In another of Paul's stories, he narrated the conflict between an employee and his superior and Paul's own role coaching the employee on how his expression of emotion could create problems for him:

> We had a guy in the organization who was a good, solid performer, not a shooting star, but not a dud either, but this same director that flamed on me decided that they were going to go after this person and fire him. He hadn't done anything that required it even remotely; it was just a personal issue, a personality clash between the two. . . . It rapidly spiraled to the point where this individual couldn't go 10 minutes with anybody without raising the issue of the unjust treatment they were getting. . . . I was able to observe that this individual's behaviors were starting to diminish how other people saw him in his role. It was going to cause him long-term damage because it was so outside the culture. And so I spent sometimes an hour every single day, for months, chatting with the individual and explaining why the way he was reacting to this issue was counterproductive—not to the organization, I wasn't concerned about the organization, I was concerned about his ability to continue within the organization.

Paul was the only participant in this study who took advantage of my offer to use other forms of expression to depict his experience of his OAC. With that purpose, Paul produced a hypothetical letter to the leadership of his agency, in which he expressed his assessment of the existing OAC and suggestions for improvement:

First, let me commend you on the culture that has been fostered over these past 5 years that allows the members and employees to express their feelings. Ours is a high-demand, high-pressure environment, and it is natural that at times situations cause members to emote the full spectrum from frustration to elation. The recognition that to express feelings is healthy for the individual is also healthy to the organization. The demonstrated acceptance of members' reasonable display of anger, disappointment, and frustration when things go unexpectedly off track is appreciated. I also appreciate the distinction that is made between demonstrating emotion against a situation as being acceptable but the tempering that is necessary when the emotion is aimed at an individual. That, to me, is healthy for the organization. It is acceptable to bemoan situations, even outputs and products, but not to belittle people.

I applaud the recognition of the "employee of the month" and the public celebration of the accomplishments and contributions of that employee in a public forum. The leadership always takes the time to identify and recognize the total person rather than just the specific act or service for which the individual was nominated. The added inclusion of the wall of pictures of current and past awardees is a reminder that extends for a full year after the individual is publicly recognized. I am always pleased to see the level of turn-out by other employees and members for the ceremony, and equally pleased to see how touched the awardees are by the recognition.

I would, however, offer a couple of suggestions. First, there are a few individuals in the organization that do not abide by the accepted norms of emotional display between members, and have often, in times of stress or pressure, resulted in almost vicious personal attacks against peers and subordinates alike. While the members tend to just shrug off these as being "just the way [the organization] operates" the tacit acceptance of this display both undermines the norms stated above, and undermines your status as a leader. The perception of many is that this is allowed for a limited few people signaling a special status or allowance for that individual which may be incorrect, but disruptive nonetheless. Additionally, this display of emotion outside the normal range has a tendency to cause avoidance of those individuals because one never knows when they will incur the wrath but know it is likely to happen and when it does, the recipient is unable to respond.

Additionally, the unwritten rule for employee of the month is that this award/ recognition is limited to lower graded employees. Members and middle and senior managers are not considered. I would offer that by exclusively considering, and only awarding to lower graded personnel may have the unexpected effect of

lowering the overall status of the recognition. In essence, the potential exists that the exclusion of middle graded personnel sends the message that "for all the little people, you are the best this month" when the intent is "your contributions to the entire organization warrant your being recognized over all other members and employees."

Finally, I would offer that an increased emphasis on self expression of self and positive emotion within the department would be invaluable. Such would provide both a sense of belonging for the individual and provide others an understanding of the contributions the individual brings to the organization in addition to their production capability and capacity. We have many members and employees who have unique talents and skills, but no forum for expression within the organization. Devoting a small area in the lunch room for individuals to display their creative talents would foster a greater sense of unity. We have painters, potters, poets, and musicians in our membership, yet that is seldom on display. We have people who dedicate self to a wide range of programs outside the agency to include animal rescue, membership in service clubs and volunteerism for community, faith, and family. Providing the opportunity for additional means to express their emotions, talents, and gifts would have a positive impact on the organization as a whole and the members as individuals, and such efforts would not require additional resources from the department other than to make the commitment and afford the opportunity to those who would advantage themselves.

Sarah

Sarah worked for a small nonprofit organization with offices in two cities of the United States. Sarah led one of the offices. The organization's mission was to advocate for broader peace processes, bringing in a variety of stakeholders. Sarah had been in her current role for about 2¼ years, although she had been with the organization for about 6½ years in different roles.

Sarah's stories pointed to an OAC that was somewhat influenced by the organization's founder:

Our organization is a very, is a pretty . . . communicative organization, I think. . . . The chair of our organization has a big impact on tone. She's a very emotional person, and so that's something that you see quite quickly from your interactions with her. Because it's a family foundation, the whole issue of the interactions of the family that endows the foundation has a role in the culture of the organization and permeates the organization.

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The influence of the founder was not unlimited, however: "I think the lead, the chair of the foundation feels quite open to do that [to express emotion freely]. I think the extent to which other people feel open, it varies." Not all emotions could be fully expressed in public, as Sarah noted:

> I don't know that there's much openness to express real displeasure in a public setting. I think people are happy and appreciate positive sharing in a group setting. They generally tend to save negative emotional sharing to a more, a smaller setting. With a peer, with me, their supervisor, someone else.

Sarah saw the organization as much more accepting of "the commingling" of personal and professional life, where "there's enough outlets for them to express whatever they are feeling on a regular basis and they feel generally comfortable." A story emphasized this point:

> The other day a colleague came into my office, she'd just broken up with a boyfriend of a long time, and she was crying. And she was so embarrassed for crying and I said, don't worry about it. But she was where I was 10 years ago, but she hated that. But I think she hated it less because of the environment we work in, you know, than she would have. . . . Had I been in the government I would have hated it more than being in this organization. It's a much more comfortable environment. There's an upside and a downside to having things spill over meetings, but because they spill over meetings people also know that that's not, . . . it doesn't change the world. It's not a problem if your personal life occasionally intrudes in the professional life.

In Sarah's narratives, a connection between emotion and personal became apparent. In spite of the open OAC that Sarah described, she saw herself as having a more reserved character, while at the same time being respectful of another's right to experience and verbally express emotions. Sarah valued the ability to verbally express emotion, but did not openly and freely express emotion herself. She told me about experiencing strong emotions and not verbalizing them. She did not blame the OAC for that, however. Throughout the interview she referred to her own personal style,

preferences, and beliefs as the source of her behavior. As a leader in the organization, she admired others' ability to express emotion and gave them permission to do so but recognized she did not do it very well. Sarah stated that she was trying to create an organizational environment that was accepting of the verbal expression of emotions. She did generally prefer to keep her own emotions to herself, as her stories indicated.

The OAC that transpired in Sarah's stories allowed for a range of behaviors that ranged from less to more expressive, and Sarah was more comfortable positioning herself at the "less" end of the continuum, even when the experienced emotion was positive, as the next story illustrates. Sarah and her colleagues "had been working with a group of women who had been advocating for their own involvement in a peace process." Sarah's team managed to participate in that discussion and enable the group of women to have a voice, which brought Sarah some positive feelings:

> I think I would say the emotion, I mean I had real pleasure in succeeding in my own advocacy, but I probably felt a real sense of sort of maternal pride in their success in watching them really set a goal, pursue that goal, and then achieve it. And that to me was great. Because a lot of what we do is trying to cultivate the ability of these folks to advocate for themselves, and to have a voice and to give themselves a voice. And so having them actually succeed in something was wonderful.

When I asked Sarah if she shared those good emotions with others, she seemed a little disconcerted:

> I think with colleagues I did. I mean, I think we were really pleased. I actually, when did I? I left there a little bit early to go somewhere else, I can't remember where, but somebody, one of my colleagues was with me there. She wrote a wonderful retelling of the story back, so I would say more of the emotion was communicated by her than by me.

Sarah's colleague wanted to share what was going on with people back in the office, and Sarah thought it was great, even though she didn't do it herself.

I mean, my sort of sharing emotion is not my forte, I mean, I think that I am probably less gender stereotyped than you might expect in that way. . . . I think it's a great thing for people to do it. I'm not the best at doing it, but I admire it in others. I think it really helps. I think it really helps generating enthusiasm for the work that people are doing.

Sarah's colleague wrote a long e-mail account of what had happened and Sarah thought it was "a good way of conveying the immediacy of the moment."

Sarah's second story was a response to my question about a situation in which she had decided not to express her emotions. She went back a couple of years, to their 360-degree reviews for performance. One of the people solicited to give feedback on Sarah's performance had been fired by Sarah 2 weeks earlier, and she thought that was "completely inappropriate." Sarah explained:

> Had she not known she was going to be fired, that would have been perfectly fine, to the extent to which I was responsible for that situation or not. But I, I really, I felt that it was not right in terms of process, and I felt like it was sort of in some cases it would have no consequences but in this case it was sort of hurtful, nasty things, not constructive, not even insightful, that were said. And I thought it was unnecessary, horrible.

In spite of experiencing what sounds like a strong emotional reaction, Sarah told me she "never confronted that head on." She was sure people knew that she was not happy, but she did not raise the issue of process "and whether that was a fair way to have been treated." Sarah explained:

> I didn't want to be perceived to be trying to raise process in dissent to my own behavior. And I felt like if there were kernels of truth I should just take those kernels of truth and try to learn based on that. Second of all, I think that frankly our organization has other issues related to process that I would perceive to be professionalism of process and so it was not worth it. And finally I tend to feel that it's better to advocate for these issues in general terms, in the abstract or on behalf of someone else. I don't really necessarily feel that, there's not much value when you're in a position of receiving criticism, to raise issues of process related to criticism of your own self.

Sarah described herself as tending to "approach things in a very pragmatic way." She told me she really didn't feel like she was going to get any useful recourse or that anything was going to change as a result of her verbalizing her dissent. She didn't anticipate any positive impact on the way that people perceived her. Here's how she summarized it:

> I don't think it was really worth it. I am not the kind of person who complains about things for the sake of it. I'm very oriented towards trying to look for something that has pragmatic value, and I didn't think that there was going to be any real pragmatic value. If today there was a discussion of who should be the reviewers, I would make a general point that we should not have reviewers that we know to have grudges against people at the outset, because you are not going to get anything constructive as a result of that. So I would make that general point because I think that the general point has validity. But the damage had been done, that is, the damage had been done to me personally, which is the most important thing. I think people generally respect me, and I don't think it was going to have any dramatic implications for me, and the damage had been done.

Diana

Diana headed a nonprofit organization in a large city in the United States. It was based in a university and was part of one of its schools. The staff comprised Diana herself, two full-time employees, and two employees shared with the university. Diana reported to an executive board in charge of the organization's governance, and there was also an advisory council. She had been in her current role for 3 years.

Diana described an OAC influenced by the predominance of women in staff and in leadership: "It's somewhat unique working with a board of women. I am working with women, so in some level they may feel like they need to guard their emotions, specially in this field in their normal jobs." Diana indicated there was a gender aspect of affect in the workplace: "There are particular dynamics when you are in an office full of women. . . . I think women do react differently to things and I think women interact differently,

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and so I think you have sort of a different scenario sometimes." Diana noted the

importance for women of being a role model and a mentor:

> There's a sort of expectation that women are . . . a little spooky and are going to go off and start sobbing or something. So it's sort of unfortunate, but we have to be really careful about that, that we're professional and we're not going to freak out and be overly, specially overly sensitive. That's the worst. It's tough. People won't agree with you and all that, and you have to be able to take it, and if you have to go to the bathroom and cry or feel terrible or whatever.

For the organization that she led, however, Diana tried to set a different OAC

through her own behavior:

> In my office I would never say like, it's terrible if you . . . or if you snap at someone. These things happen, I mean, the emotions, but we do try to maintain some levels. I think the most important thing is not whether you cry if you are upset or what, but treating people with respect.

Diana had had previous negative work experiences in different OACs:

> The one thing that I could absolutely not stand from the last two positions is the culture of fear from above. I saw it; we've all seen it in the [name of department]: people were so afraid of the people above them that they were just giving them the answers that they thought they wanted to hear. Then I left government thinking, well, the nonprofit sector is going to be totally different, and I saw the exact same thing.

When the organization was denied a grant on which they had been working for a

long time, Diana experienced many emotions:

> This was just a tremendous blow because we had been working so hard. I mean, I had been really crafting a proposal for so long, and it was, you know, it was a little about all that work, but it was also about, What is the future of this organization and can I keep it going? . . . And I think there was a combination of emotions. I think frustration first, second of all fear [laughing] about what was going to happen, and then thirdly, a little bit later, kind of almost a feeling of failure—you know, that I hadn't done enough. . . . It was a little bit of panic mixed in there, but I tried to really like contain the panic to try to think what do I need to do next and then . . . depending on the outcomes of that, then what do I need to do more long term.

The first person Diana contacted about the grant denial was her development officer:

> I obviously told her right away because she's been working on the proposal with me and it was right after it happened. I actually showed her the e-mail. She was walking by and I was like totally in shock. I said, "Come in here. You've got to see this e-mail." And so I showed her before I even forwarded it to her and we were like in shock at the same time. . . . She said, "We can get through this. I'm just going to double my efforts on the fundraising" and so forth. So even if she was feeling something different, you know, this is what she said.

Diana also reached out to her board members for support:

> So I called the three of them, and I didn't get a hold of my president. I did get a hold of my vice president, and you know we chatted a little bit and she suggested that I get in touch with the third person, which I was planning to. And then I talked to her and she immediately said "I'm going to find out what's going on so that we know where to go from here." And that really helped me. It was just like that moment of "OK, next step."

When talking with her vice president, Diana expressed some frustration, as she explained:

> I expressed a little frustration, I mean, because she knows how we've worked on this. So I said, "You know, at that point I couldn't even think of next steps. I don't even know what to do. I don't know what to say about this. I'm just so upset!" So, yeah, I did talk to her and then the other woman that I talked to afterwards, I did as well. We have that relationship. They know how much we struggle to get to this point, so it wasn't like talking to someone who doesn't understand.

With the rest of her staff, Diana was careful in how she verbally expressed her emotions:

> I don't like when rumors start spreading around an organization and it's nontransparent so people don't know what's going on. So I called the staff together and I told them where we were and not in a panic way. . . . I didn't want to scare them, but I wanted them to know exactly what was going on and that we all had a role to play on the next step.

The negative emotions experienced in connection with the grant denial were contrasted with positive feelings in the following days, as Diana narrated:

> I had a wonderful 2-hour lunch with someone, and we talked about all those things that we could do, and she's going to help on the fundraising but other things. Two days before, I was thinking "Can this organization continue?" and then 2 days later I was like "The sky is the limit."

Diana continued her story, narrating what happened after she talked with this friendly person:

> After we had talked over lunch, I just said, "I am just really excited about our conversation and all of the things we can do, and I'm really happy and I'm looking forward to following up on all of them." And I was so excited that I e-mailed my staff. I actually worked from home that afternoon so I went back home and told everyone I had this great conversation and I was really excited.

Another of Diana's stories depicted her applying her organizational affective rules to her own verbal expression and being the role model she thought women need to be. The situation started with a blow up during a summer conference organized by her team:

> We bring [number of students] from around the world to [name of city] for [number of days], and it's very, very intense. And this year we had two of the [number] who were really problematic. . . . There was a like a blow up where one of the women who—again, that negative sort of emotion—like screamed at one of my staff people about something she couldn't control . . . and my staff would try to explain what the policy was and that, you know, we're not in control of it, and she just screamed at her.

Diana considered how to deal with the situation:

> I'm a person who can't stand that kind of stuff happening, so I was really struggling with like how to address it and so forth. And it ended up being that I actually decided to address it at two levels. One, that these people were chosen because they are future leaders, so the next day I really hammered down that you've got to think about your actions in terms of the leadership model you are in and also in this field your reputation is all you have and that you also need to really care about the people behind you, because part of it was she thought that she was above my person, you know; it was kind of a condescending thing. So without naming her I made it about the concept of why they were there.

The emotions of work slipped into Diana's personal time: "The night before I couldn't sleep. I was so upset that someone would treat my person like that. I was so angry." The situation was resolved the next day: "I was also going to talk to her [the student] but the next day after the thing she came up to me and she apologized."

The whole event seemed to be a challenge for Diana, but she was determined to establish some boundaries in how her staff could be treated: "I don't like confrontation that way. I probably go to great lengths to avoid that kind of negative confrontation, but you know I needed her to know that that was totally unacceptable."

Jim

The company Jim worked for had approximately 12,000 employees altogether. Jim managed a program for the intelligence community, his team consisting of approximately 100 people, primarily undergraduate and master's degree–level software developers and project managers. Jim was an officer in the Army Reserves and had a civilian career as well, so his background combined military experience and software development.

Jim chose to define his organization as the group within the company for which he was responsible. Within the boundaries of this group, Jim wanted to influence the OAC:

> I am trying to achieve a certain comfort level, so I want to make sure that we have an environment in which they can feel comfortable expressing their emotions. I encourage people to express their emotions within their work teams as opposed to in external organizations.

There are boundaries, however, for how much emotion Jim thought was appropriate:

But if you see people going through these emotional ups and downs on a recurring basis, then I'd think there might be . . . maybe more personality driven than event driven. That may become an issue.

Jim seemed especially concerned with what he saw as the potential negative impact of the expression of emotion on the client:

In my work environment you've got all companies. . . . There's a competitive nature. My company is the lead but there's constant positioning, and you don't want this thing to be a distraction. It impacts attrition. It impacts our performance and our clients' perception that we're an effective team. . . . Things like this can be disruptive.

Going by the cultural norms he wanted to create, Jim's stories narrated events in which people experienced and expressed emotion but there were boundaries to be respected:

This week I've had to deal with a situation where one of my managers, I had five people report to me that they considered him to be difficult to work with. And, occasionally you'll get that in the work environment, from time to time, but what I had this week was five different people coming up to me, all talking about the same person, men and women, people who work for him and do not work for him, all from different companies, and also both contractors and noncontractors. So, when you have that number of people you realize there is something behind this. And how do you deal with that? Even a manager who otherwise is an effective employee and so, there's much emotion in how to deal with it. How do you not deflate the employee and yet steer them in the right direction? Then how amenable is the manager, who's a senior, to change?

The person Jim felt he needed to talk with did not report directly to him. However, he saw enough risk in the situation that it justified his intervention. He indicated how he approached the emotional content of the situation:

Things like this can be disruptive. So, I decided that I would be the spokesperson to try to deal with this employee, but the intention is to keep him in the program. So I was frustrated. I tried to remove the emotion and just deal with the facts and tried to make it as corrective and present both the good and the bad. How effective we were, I guess, remains to be seen; that all happened this week. And I guess we will figure over time. These times happen on a regular basis, and I find

myself having to step back from the emotional, initial emotional reaction and focus on the delivery of the content.

Additionally, the problem with this manager was brought to Jim's attention by several people who felt that this manager was not being corrective of his subordinates, but instead was demeaning in his words and actions. Jim continued explaining that they believed that he always exhibits this behavior when his supervisors are not around: "So they believe there's a manipulative aspect to it as well, so just a lot of frustration and hoping that I'd be able to resolve the situation."

Jim's employee responded defensively to the conversation: "Within a 48-hour window around the discussion, his subordinates feel like he's building up a blockade cause he doesn't feel like he can trust them, cause he doesn't know. . . . He feels like they're turning on him." Jim tried to balance this difficult situation by focusing on facts: "I think if it was just the one instance then it's more easy to defend if you're being accused, but when you have such a variety of people with the same general message, it's not; there's some truth in there."

If on one hand Jim wanted a comfortable work environment where people were relatively free to express their emotions, he was also careful about spontaneous expression:

> I have one other scenario this week I have had an emotional response to. I am always looking to bringing good people on to my program, and one of my partner companies gave me the resume of someone they stole, they hired away from us 2 years ago. And, so, he's a good engineer. But do I want to take that engineer and put him back with the people he was working with 2 years ago and left them in questionable terms? It's a tough dynamic to manage. . . . He left our program, got on another program in my company, and left them not under the best terms, with less than 2 weeks' notice, which is customary, and was not interested in the transition of his replacement. So, but he's a good engineer and the way I manage staff in the program, he would probably pass the competitions we have to get on the program. So I could be forced to have someone in my program who had left

us in less than desirable terms just 2 years ago. And then you say, how long is enough? Do you hold a grudge for a year? Do you hold a grudge for 2 years? People leave jobs all the time.

To handle the emotions of this difficult decision, Jim attempted to delay action:

"If you go over that gut reaction—often that's not the best reaction; step away for 24 hours and see if you feel the same way about it."

This is not to say that he always managed to remove himself from his emotions or gut reactions, and the consequences of that could be challenging:

I'd say there was an incident this week where I did not step away, and I was so frustrated that I just pulled the whole management chain and told them how frustrated I was with their performance. And some believe that I overreacted because of it. . . . I don't understand why they couldn't have done better than they did. It was just so simple. And I really thought that this team dropped the ball. . . . In this particular scenario, all that was required of my team was for their deputy project manager to give a description of the project that he has been working on for over a year. And in a friendly environment, he froze. And he couldn't say a thing. He had notes, he couldn't read his notes, he couldn't talk. He got extreme stage fright and he got extreme stage fright among friendly eyes. And my frustration was "This is a project you've been supporting for over a year. What is being asked of you is 30 seconds to 2 minutes of high level of what this program is. The government is paying you very well to do this service. And yet, you can't, you couldn't talk for 2 minutes? You couldn't deliver even without notes?" My expectation of these project managers is that they're doing the outreach and they are not just managing their current customers but they're looking out to new customers, and if you don't feel comfortable talking internally, there's no way you're comfortable talking externally. And I'm in a situation of, he's a very nice person, but there's a potential we could be doing better. I could have, I could swap him out, and does it make sense to swap him out at this point? And I was upset with his whole chain for did they know he was going to freeze? Did they go through enough dry runs? It was just, I was embarrassed for him, everybody felt bad for him, but I wanted to get the message across that this was not, this was just a basic task that I can't believe that they dropped the ball. . . . They stood there and took it. The claim that it wasn't as bad as I thought it was indicated that they were going to do some follow up to make sure that they would do any damage repair that they could do.

The story above hinted that as Jim tried to create a comfortable work environment from an emotion perspective, he also struggled with establishing boundaries for

performance. When an employee showed severe stage fright, the event triggered Jim's strong expression of discontent. The employee's emotion was met with Jim's expression of strong disapproval, and participants in the event felt Jim overreacted. In Jim's further comments about the stage fright event, he implied that an employee who cannot perform because of his emotional state is at risk of being laid off:

> We do value analysis on our personnel every quarter. What we're basically looking at is if the effort we're getting from them is commensurable with their costs. And so I have a fairly high involuntary attrition rate. If there are people who over time their rates have got to the point where, you know, that they're not a match with their responsibilities, we will have them removed from the program.

Researcher

My professional experience included a wide range of companies, and I have worked in education, retail, energy, and health care. Within these industries I have played different roles, from teacher to teacher trainer, to manager, business owner, and consultant. My education reveals a strong interest in arts and humanities, captured through studies of arts, linguistics, literature, and psychology. I see myself as a multicultural being, having been exposed to a variety of cultures and with predominantly Brazilian, British, and American influences.

I do not recall my family being particularly good at expressing emotion verbally or accepting each other's expression of emotion. I realized as a young adult that my vocabulary to describe different forms of affect was insufficient and that often I had trouble noticing and naming the emotions I was experiencing in a particular moment. This somehow made me feel crippled and less effective in certain situations where a clear expression of what I was feeling could have prevented or solved problems, brought me closer to people I loved, or established necessary distance from people with whom I

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wanted nothing to do. These feelings of inadequacy led me into a quest for a better understanding, integration, and expression of my own emotions, which I suspect is a life-long one. This dissertation study is very much a part of this quest.

As far as I can remember, all along I have felt that not being able to express emotion due to either not being allowed or not knowing exactly how was not a satisfactory situation. Whether I am with family, friends, teachers, school peers, or in professional environments, I know I experience emotions whether I want to or not. Denying emotions is like going around pretending an evident part of your body is not there—while everyone can see it and has one themselves! How crazy is that!

When it comes to emotions in the workplace, I know that I constantly experience them, and that is not necessarily good or bad. It can be either. It can be both. Emotions can help me and they can hinder me. They are part of my decision-making, whether I want them to be or not. They influence my reactions and choices every day. Training in psychoanalysis has convinced me that most of what we do and say is motivated by unconscious affect that we can control only to a very limited extent, if at all. So many times I have intended to say something and ended up saying something completely different. Who the heck was speaking? I also don't think discrete emotions are either negative or positive, even emotions that are generally considered destructive such as anger. I sometimes play with my friends and say "I like me when I'm angry." Anger can be a source of clarity, an indicator that an important boundary has been crossed. Having said that, I do not always speak my emotions in the workplace. Sometimes I would like to do it but anticipate risks that I do not want to run or negative consequences for me or other people.

I recall many situations when I did and when I did not express my emotions at work. To protect the confidentiality of my employer, I will focus on experiences previous to my current job.

I was once making a presentation in a university in Brazil as part of a seminar for teachers. The room was long and the set up fairly cold, with presenters sitting behind a table at the front of the room and having to use a microphone to be heard throughout. As I had often done before, during my presentation I emphasized the importance of practices such as careful lesson planning, use of visual aids, and varied activities to cater to different learning styles. When the question and answer part of the presentation came, one person asked me how someone who works for the state government and gets paid a miserable salary can be expected to spend the extra time required to prepare for classes in the way I suggested.

The question immediately annoyed me. I interpreted it as an excuse not to dedicate the effort needed. I had heard that "excuse" too many times before and I was tired of it. I do not remember exactly what I said but it was something like this: "The reason why the state government pays teachers poorly is because there are so many people willing to take teaching jobs in spite of the low salaries. If you don't think you are paid enough to do a good job, you should quit and find yourself another profession. If you stay, it means you have accepted the job and the payment, so you must honor your responsibilities and do what it takes." I was visibly irritated and although I did not say "This question really annoyed me," my body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions let my emotions show, although I'd rather display a more composed posture.

Some people in the audience became defensive and another question followed, inquiring on why someone who had prepared themselves to be teachers should give up their jobs. In my mind, I had images of teacher strikes that hardly ever led to any salary gains but had a tremendous negative impact on the quality of the education of children served by the public school system. I had experienced that myself, as a college student. The audience and I were now on different sides and I was the bad guy, indifferent to the realities of the state education system—another excuse, I thought. The controversy was interrupted by the moderator, who called our attention to the end of the session. I concluded, my voice trembling, with the suggestion that anyone who felt they were paid unfairly should go back to school, take night classes, do whatever was necessary to gain skills, and change careers. By staying in the system, I said, they were enabling it.

I didn't make many friends that evening, and in the moment it had seemed to me that I should be very honest. I had been a student and a teacher of the state school system and I was sick and tired of the "poor me" discourse so widely available to teachers. I thought it fed feelings of hopelessness. I was determined to challenge it.

In hindsight, I reflect on why I did not specifically qualify and verbalize my annoyance and profound irritation. I did not stop to think about what I was feeling. I did not even consider whether I should or shouldn't say it. I just didn't. It wasn't something I had ever seen presenters do in response to a question from the audience, but I am not sure that was the only reason why I didn't. There might have been a way in which I could have said it, which could have helped me hold the rest of the conversation from a less defensive and more collaborative position. Maybe I could have said something like: "You know, when someone raises the salary issue as a reason not to devote their time to what

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makes teaching work, I feel a strong annoyance. Having been a state teacher myself, I do recognize salaries are tremendously low. My irritation is probably because I care very deeply for our profession and for the children we are responsible for and I fear that, because our power to change salaries in education is so small, if we claim this situation as an explanation for poor teaching, we will make ourselves feel hopeless and we will make it OK for teachers not to do the best they can. I do believe strongly that we should not resign ourselves to a situation that is unfortunate to all involved, so I urge you to examine your career choices very carefully and honestly and decide whether you really want to be a teacher. If the answer is yes, you will need to continue to fight for better salaries and, at the same time, provide the children that come to your classes with nothing less but your best. This may be painful for you to hear and it may seem unfair. I am willing to hear alternatives but I will not support anything that sustains the current status quo, with our kids going through several years of English language classes and not being able to hold a basic one-minute dialogue at the end."

In the workplace, when other people verbalize their emotions, I tend to react calmly and respectfully even if I am the target of negative emotions. I once had the opportunity to work with a direct report who was very assertive and made a point to speak her mind. She would come to me on different occasions to express discomfort, disagreement, or what have you. I found it hard to deal with all the strong emotions she would bring me, especially because often they challenged a decision of mine and there were moments when I wished she would just go away. I also sometimes resented the time I had to spend talking things over with her when I was under pressure to complete other tasks. However, I respected the fact that she would communicate directly with me,

instead of going behind my back. This gave me the opportunity to clarify the rationale for a decision or a process that I might have instituted. And as painful as that might have been, there were occasions in which I had to agree with her and recognize that I had made a mistake. During team meetings, she would also sometimes speak her mind clearly and disagree with me openly. Again, I respected that and although it did not please me, I would much rather have that than a situation where people would not come to me with their thoughts and feelings. Interestingly, others in the team did not feel the same freedom. I was told on one occasion that some were intimidated and did not believe they could or should challenge me or verbalize strong disagreement or discontent of some kind. I was sorry to hear that.

To conclude my self-designed portrait, I'd like to narrate a situation in which I handled and expressed my own emotions very poorly. I had hired a couple of employees from overseas and in spite of all my attempts to be very clear about the working conditions, one of them was constantly dissatisfied. She would come to me often, forcing her peer to come along, and ask me to add something to our previously set agreement on what we would provide them as employees in terms of salary and housing. In the futile attempt to placate her dissatisfaction, I initially complied with some of her requests and made an extra effort to provide whatever she felt she needed and was entitled to—only to have her come back with more complaints. I was now beginning to feel I was being taken advantage of but did not communicate that to my employee. Instead, I started to lay out the limits to which I was prepared to go. One day, she and I had had a conversation in which I told her I was not going to do something she had asked me. She started to argue with me but I explained my reasons and stood my ground. She left my office in a rage

and a few minutes later, as I was walking down the hall, I overheard her complaining about me to her peer. I could not believe my ears. I had bent myself backwards to accommodate her needs, and she was being unfair and manipulative. I became so angry that I do not recall what I said to her or what she said to me. All I remember is how I screamed at her. After that I felt really bad and regretted my reaction. I felt that if I had been more clear with her about my feelings from the beginning I might have been able to avoid that blow up. In the way I handled it, the last few weeks of her employment with my company were bitter for her and for me.

The experiences that I narrated above have been good learning opportunities for me. If I could synthesize the current way in which I view and express emotions in the workplace, I would say that I am cautious, independently of the organization I am in. My tendency is to be reserved, but I make a conscious effort to be more expressive and to balance authentic and genuine expression with the risks that I can anticipate. Lately I have begun to label emotions more clearly, naming them whenever I feel there is a safe opportunity. Regarding the expression of others, I appreciate honesty and take emotion as a natural part of life in the work environment or elsewhere. Sometimes I feel people, including myself, could have expressed their emotions more skillfully. In general, though, I can tolerate, respect, appreciate, and even enjoy a more verbal expression of emotion than I have encountered along my professional life.

In my classes, I include activities that create an opportunity for people to share feelings in a way more open than what we normally do. I design these activities with that purpose and with the intention to break some barriers. I may model the behavior I want by sharing an emotion or feeling myself. I can't recall a specific example now but I have

done that a few times. This is not always well taken. One class participant once told me she thought there was more sharing in my classes than she felt comfortable with. This annoyed me a little because I actually see her as cold and detached and too logical, which she probably isn't. I continue to do it though because I believe it is important to express our humanity. We may not be able to do it very well; so what? We have to start learning.

Regarding an OAC, I have not experienced any clear difference among the several companies for which I worked. I would say that, across companies, people are in general reluctant to verbalize emotions even though they may show it through voice and body language, and many feel uncomfortable when others verbalize their emotions, not knowing exactly what to do. This applies to the range of emotions, independently of their potential or contextual valence.

Exemplary Portraits: Overview

Exemplary portraits are individual depictions that were chosen to express typicality in the data and then further developed (Moustakas, 1990), with the addition of more material and more detailed analysis. Each exemplary portrait is structured to illustrate the research participants' attitude to emotion in the workplace, their perceptions of the organization's OAC, and how they verbally expressed emotion at work. Portraits also include an overview of participants' stories to provide an overall sense of emotional tone and themes. The portraits were sequenced to illustrate the three types of experiences I have identified, with Peter representing other as problem; Jasmine, other as inter-action; and Diana, other as inter-being.

Other as Problem: Peter's Portrait

Peter worked for a large emergency response organization with several thousand employees. His group was responsible for supporting the cycle of preparedness through policy and procedures, training and exercises, after-action reports, corrective action programs, and lessons learned.

Peter's Attitude Towards Emotion in the Workplace

In Peter's stories, emotion was a danger and something that needed to stay out of the way of accomplishing work. People made bad decisions or damaged relationships when they allowed emotion to take over or expressed their strong emotions.

Peter did make exceptions for emotions that he regarded as positive: "You are asked to carry out a specific set of functions, and to become emotional about it, to become energetic about it, to become engaged about it, those are all good things." Indeed, there was a favorable place, in Peter's text, for certain emotions: "You will often have emotions of the budget passed, the report got approved, and I would think that they are probably some good ways of motivating the team." Or, "When you go into resuscitation and everybody was successful and the patient died, you still need to feel good about that. You did everything that you were supposed to do." But in accomplishing the work itself in the emergency context, emotion posed a threat: "I didn't express feelings, I expressed facts. I mean, the minute you become emotional in an emergency situation you're useless. There's no place in any of this for emotion."

For Peter, emotion and rationality seemed to be opposites that could not coexist. When emotion was present, rationality was lost. Underlying Peter's commentary was a

connection between being rational (nonemotional) and making good decisions. Thus, if

emotions were present, good decisions were at risk:

> Emotion doesn't allow for the organization to react appropriately, and in an
> emergency situation when leadership becomes emotional or they lose rationality
> and they are doing things for either political will or for some way in which to look
> good and not look bad, and it's at the capital of human life, it's a tragedy.

Peter's Perceptions of His Organization's Affective Culture

Peter's stories pictured an OAC that was influenced by the nature and

requirements of emergency work, which, according to Peter, cannot be performed when

emotions are present. Peter emphasized how emotions were viewed in his OAC:

> In almost all of the organizations that I've worked for, as of recent, they are all
> emergency-based services, and as earlier stated, emergency work must be done
> completely devoid of emotion, has to be done with being smart, with being savvy,
> with understanding issues, organizational dynamics, people dynamics—but you
> cannot allow for emotion to come in. Emotion actually is so dangerous that if it
> were to be viewed by others in the organization, you'd probably be asked to be
> removed from your duty because it could adversely affect.

However, the damaging potential of emotions existed not only in emergency

organizations, as Peter continued, but in the workplace in general. In government, this

rule applied even more intensively:

> You cannot openly express emotions in the workplace, period. And in
> government, people would, the tolerance is very low. In a coffee shop, a
> supermarket, wherever, the tolerance is different. In government it would be
> completely inappropriate to do that. You really must have a much higher level of
> a business etiquette, décor that has to be displayed. You would be shunned or
> viewed upon as disrupting the culture of the organization.

In spite of having experienced what he described as many "heart-wrenching

moments" in his workplace, the OAC that Peter articulated through his narratives had no

"tolerance" for emotions. In one of his narratives, a leader who allowed his emotions to

take over seriously compromised his decisions and ended up creating chaos and putting

people's lives in danger:

> We were facing very troubled times, and the leader—which in organizations in
> government is the only person that can speak on behalf of the organization; it is
> very hierarchical—effectively went into this conference room, locked the door,
> and began to communicate directly with leadership of other departments of
> government, and it cut out literally hundreds of other people beneath him that
> were in support, that did planning, did logistics, did operations, financing, so that
> as views were made or reached with the other departments and agencies of
> government, it was without our knowledge that those decisions were being made.
> And the processes that one would regularly undergo to get to that decision point
> were completely dispensed with, and it was the clear and unmistakable consensus
> of those beneath the leader that he had made terrific decisions that impacted on
> human life and property.

For Peter, the reason why this leader behaved in such reckless ways was that he

allowed "emotion to take over." This leader's behavior surfaced another aspect of the

OAC described by Peter, which was a strict hierarchy and rigid command-and-control

structure, which is an impediment for employees' expression of dissention, as Peter

continued to explain:

> The captain of the ship is the captain of the ship, and it's mutinous to go against
> the decision of the captain, but even then there are ways and rules, etc., etc., that
> allow for a more rational approach when the captain has made a poor decision.
> But when you dissent, there are huge prices to pay in not only your career but in
> general disruption to the entire organization and the loss of the integrity of the
> organization. Because while 95% of the people would elect to turn to the left,
> some will turn to the right just because they want to follow the leader and they are
> not interested in dealing with the ramifications that would come from dissention.

So, Peter described a context in which hierarchy prevented the expression of

dissention even when strong disagreement was really necessary, such as in the case of

this leader who was ignoring long-established procedures and was making profoundly

damaging decisions. Even though Peter expressed his belief in the importance of being

"rational," focusing on facts and not on feelings, he did describe experiences of strong

emotion within this story: "I remember a colleague who is a physician and actually a board-certified psychiatrist hugging us and breaking into tears because we all knew the impact of what had occurred." Peter pointed to the power of these emotions by indicating that even a professional who was trained to deal with emotions could not contain them: "When you look and you see a trained psychiatrist break into tears because the emotion of what's occurred here, and you can understand that the decisions that are being made are that bad, you know that you are in a pretty tough emotional point."

The other people who were involved in this moment began to cry as well:

> It just took one to bring the whole group down, but really just through hugging one another and reinforcing that we had all done our best and assuring ourselves that we had no other options, that we had exhausted all other options, was really the only element of comfort that one could have.

In the face of all of this affect, Peter described how he thought the situation should have been handled:

> And really it's collectively, speaking among the group, without being mutinous and being professional and trying to turn issues around, and the best way for everybody to look good is to make your boss look good, and the best way to make him look good is to educate him and explain to him what a better decision could look like and hope that he would hence be enticed.

But in Peter's story, employees were not allowed to attempt to persuade their leader to change course since the leader, according to Peter, had lost his rationality:

> But when he refuses to communicate such as locking the door, and I'm not going to talk with anybody, and he's going to go and just make agreements that are not a part of a process, it doesn't allow for the organization to react appropriately. And in an emergency situation when leadership becomes emotional or they lose rationality and they are doing things for either political will or for some way in which to look good and not look bad, and it's at the capital of human life, it's a tragedy.

As for what people do with their feelings of loss or grief when something goes

wrong and human life is lost, Peter said:

> Feelings? That's on them. Strictly talking on feelings, they probably need to go to
> the employee assistance program if it's truly a feeling issue. But in medicine it
> usually goes beyond that. We have what's called morbidity and mortality
> conferences where you come in and you close the door and your peers sit around,
> they evaluate the situation and they talk with you very candidly about why you
> killed someone or why you injured someone. And you're usually asked by that
> group to do more than say three Hail Marys; you usually are asked to go back to
> the operating room and to be supervised three times, to do something or whatever,
> be retrained in some way to demonstrate your continued proficiency, or you
> would be asked to not perform that procedure.

The OAC that Peter described was possibly reinforced by institutional practices:

> The other thing is that many people in government, for example, have a security
> clearance. And if it were to be noted that you had emotional problems, you could
> lose your security clearance and hence lose your job. So, it's actually very
> interesting that many of the people that probably need antipsychotic medications
> or antidepressives or antianxiety medication will not seek help from a doctor, will
> not go to get them because they don't want them to be known, because they
> would lose their jobs, because there's not tolerance for people. You know, if you
> go to the dentist, you won't even take the Tylenol with the codeine pill because
> you don't want to have to get a urine random sample, a urine test, and then have
> to explain to them why you took it, because you went to the dentist. And they're
> going to say, "Are you always in pain? Do you always take it? How many times
> do you take this?" and it could be completely appropriate, but you'd rather go
> without it than lose your job. So there's a really irrational fear, and it goes beyond
> fear; it's an irrational norm that's placed on people, particularly those that would
> have a security clearance.

Peter's Verbal Expression of Emotions in the Workplace

Peter's stories illustrated the inadequacy of emotions for the workplace and

emphasized the importance of focusing on "facts." He noted that he did not express his

feelings to the leader-gone-awry:

> There's no place in any of this for emotion. You need to deal with everything with
> issues of fact, policy, procedure, standard operating procedure, best practices,

known entities. This is never the time, it's a time to be resourceful, but it is not a time for experimentation.

The association between being emotional and being unprofessional was very clear in Peter's text:

> If that's the way you're going to deal with it, I mean, being professional is, someone comes to you and says "So why did you order this? I don't understand" and you say, "Well, we had six whatevers and seven of those and there wasn't enough and our par level is a dozen and we needed to get to that." You know, whatever the incident is, you have to be able to articulate rationally.

Even in extreme circumstances, a professional in Peter's industry should be able to let go of emotion:

> So you can't be emotional and in particular in clinical operations it's very difficult. . . . One case comes to mind where a family had wolves and they raised wolves and the wolves got loose and attacked two of the siblings, and we were unable to resuscitate the one and the other one was resuscitated but obviously would have lifelong issues. It's hard not to become emotional, but you don't become emotional at the time. You just say that's going to hang out for later. You know, right now, the only thing I can do is establish the airways, get circulation, put in my intravenous line, stabilize this, do that. . . . It's interesting because in the moment there was no emotion, and it was hard, but there was not emotion in that moment. It certainly hits you later, and it will hit me now recounting it 10 years later, but in that moment if you're a true professional, you step up and you do what you were trained to do.

This poignant story supported Peter's claims that you should not openly experience—let alone express—emotion in organizations "period" and that you are expected to suppress and deal with your emotions on your own. Peter may have learned that the hard way, as he demonstrated in the next story, in which he did express emotion that might have been considered inappropriate for his OAC.

> I had a colleague who I'd brought into the organization and considered him to be a colleague. And they [the new person] did something that in my opinion, and in anyone else that I'd confronted or discussed the issue with opinion, was it was underhanded, it was dirty, it wasn't appropriate. And I raised my voice [to him],

and it was unprofessional of me to raise my voice irrespective. And I think I had that, I did that because I considered this person to be a friend, colleague; I'd brought him into the organization, I'd hired him, I'd worked with him, we had the same set of goals and objectives. I personally wanted that person to be on the team because I felt we had so much in common and we had so much to share among one another that made for a greater whole rather than as individuals. And to this day, I would take back having raised my voice.

Peter's colleague was intimidated by his reaction and the relationship irreparably damaged:

He was intimidated by the fact that it had completely pushed me over the edge in terms of needing or wanting to personally raise my voice on this. And ever since then the relationship has been damaged. It will never go back to the way it was before. It was him essentially injuring me on a personal decision and taking undue risks. And in the end, it just changed the whole outcome of how we would work together probably for the rest of our careers.

For Peter, expressing feelings in the workplace was very dangerous, as he demonstrated in one more story:

We were restructuring an organization and one of the administrative support staff was asked at this point in time to report to another office and not the regular place of business that they had reported to probably for the last 2 years or so, and it would require a burden on that person because they lived in the [place] and this would require them to travel outside the [place] to go to the other office. But it was same pay, stature, etc., but it was a change in workplace, which is a prerogative of management. Well, that person said, "You know, these kinds of decisions are the reasons why employees kill their employers." That led to a domino effect, in that it not only impacted me as the immediate supervisor, but for example the other administrative assistant that sat near the doorway felt that she may be the first person to be shot or bombed or whatever, and so it then created some element of hysteria among the organization.

Peter had clearly been significantly affected by this event. I asked if he said something to someone about how he felt:

Yes, I expressed my concern very clearly to the security office and felt that they should have done more. And then I just did more myself, I mean, I just became more understanding of my own surroundings, my own personal security, in particular my family's security, and did what one would do, one would reasonably

do. I don't think I went overboard, but it was even doing that it was fairly uncomfortable.

When Peter first felt threatened, he did not say anything directly to the offender:

I didn't. Because the person had called me late night at home, it was a telephone call, and it rather took me by surprise. Number one, just because I was in my home surroundings and wasn't thinking like I was at work and the whole oddity to even take a call like that at home in the evening had me somewhat off guard.

He did talk with his peers and superiors, being cautious not to create panic:

I thought there was a due diligence that was required to share that information. At the same time not to alarm folks. In other words, you don't want to come in yelling and screaming and making the situation worse, but I felt that there was an obligation to let folks know that we'd had an incident and that we should all increase our vigilance and be aware of this because it had that kind of potential impact to occur. We were basically at street level, with no security and just the door—let me see, two doors between us and the front street. So there was nothing to stop this from potentially happening.

The way to prevent emotion from getting in the way of accomplishing work appeared to be remaining consistent and loyal to established procedure:

I once had a professor who knew I worked in the emergency department as a clinician, and I was the trauma nurse team leader, and he said, "Man, in a trauma case like that, you know, that's just crazy, you know all the things that you have to do and the people, like it must be so hard to coordinate." And I said, "Well, you've obviously never done this as a professional, because it is the simplest things to coordinate. First we do this, second we do this, third we do this, fourth we do this, concurrently we do this. We have this down to a science so much so that we videotape ourselves and we go back and we critique ourselves on why we potentially deviated from our accepted set of practices" because again time is the most critical factor. And he couldn't understand that we were so highly organized in events that were so random—you know, a motor vehicle accident, maybe a chest injury, maybe a leg injury, maybe a lung injury, it could be loss of blood, it could be so many things! But it doesn't really matter. We used the same standard approach, because that means that the lab knows what I am doing, the x-ray tech knows what I'm doing; they know when I say, as the leader, time for you to do this, time for you to do that, please provide me with this report. We're all very orchestrated, and it allows for an orchestrated movement.

Peter told me five stories that can be broadly summarized as follows:

1) Peter and colleagues were powerless as they dealt with the reckless behavior of a leader who allowed emotion to take over his decisions during an emergency situation. Peter and his colleagues handled the situation in a way that Peter considered very professional, staying loyal to the rules and respecting the organization's hierarchy.

2) Peter's decision to relocate an employee in his team infuriated the employee, who threatened Peter's life. Peter informed his colleagues of the threat "without yelling and screaming and making the situation worse."

3) Peter provided emergency care to two children attacked by wolves. One child died and the other was injured for life. The emotion "certainly hits you later and it will hit me now recounting it 10 years later." But in the moment, you "step up and do what you were trained to do."

4) Attempting to motivate performance, a leader in Peter's organization generated a competitive feeling between two different teams, and Peter thought that kind of feeling can "breed problems."

5) Even though Peter had good reason for doing so, he lost a friend/colleague for losing his temper over his colleague/friend's serious performance issues.

Other as Inter-Action: Jasmine's Portrait

Jasmine worked for a systems engineering nonprofit organization with about 6000 employees worldwide; there were 140 people in her group. The organization managed

federally funded security-related research and development centers as well as its own center, which demanded sophisticated technical, operational, and domain knowledge.

Jasmine's Attitude Towards Emotion in the Workplace

In Jasmine's stories, she appeared as a caring and considerate leader who saw emotion as a part of being human and at the same time tended to respect the organizational norms even though she sometimes chose to deviate from them. Referring to when a colleague told Jasmine how she shared more about herself than her colleague would, Jasmine said she was "real" with people and showed "a lot of human characteristics." She thought it gave people "permission to share."

Jasmine saw a role for emotion in getting things done at work and in creating clarity in communication:

> There are things that I get passionate about, that I see the need to get done and I want to get done. Usually anger is not one of the things that I show at work because I think it's important as a manager, as a leader, to have calm and reason, but if used judiciously and not very often . . .

> I have another instance about 3 weeks ago when someone came into my office angry and I was more direct with them because of their anger, but I don't necessarily typically raise my voice; it might be my choice of words that I use. I do have a concern now. I actually might need to be more emotional and angry with people and be very clear that I am angry rather than sending mixed messages.

Jasmine explained why she thought that was important:

> I think sometimes mixed messages are given. If you are smiling when you are angry with someone, and I think it's a mixed message, or if you soften the message when you are angry, I think you're giving a mixed message. I think it's important actually to get angry sometimes for people to know who you are and how you really feel. It can be done in a non-disrespectful manner, . . . whether you are congratulating someone and are very happy, in reverse, when you're angry with someone, I think it's probably best to use a more honest communication so you don't send mixed messages.

Jasmine described an OAC influenced by the environment of her professional

field:

> The engineering environment is more of a thinking environment than an emotion environment. If one shows emotion often, in a passionate way, whether they are positive or negative, sometimes is viewed in a negative way in the organization, because of the fact that thinking is so strong. . . . Valued, it's more valued than emotions.

Jasmine also said the engineering environment is typically a much more

introverted environment:

> If you are in a person's area of expertise from a technical standpoint, I wouldn't say they would be a follower, I think they're a leader. But if it's an area that has to do with management or another area, I mean, they just may be quiet about it rather than take the initiative to speak out and take a leadership role.

In this OAC, verbal expression of emotion that was seen as too often and/or too

intense could damage someone's credibility:

> I have seen people in our environment who speak up passionately on a regular basis, and a lot of times I feel that over time they are not listened to because of the fact that they are talking too much; they are talking too passionately, and everybody can't be passionate about everything all the time. So I have seen that. So pick your battles in terms of what you want to speak emotionally about is probably what I would say.

Spontaneity may also not be encouraged. In one of her stories, Jasmine described

how someone's passionate expression during a meeting was received with silence. She

explained why:

> Because we have an introverted group that probably doesn't handle conflict well, and so basically other people afterwards did talk, and I actually took the opportunity to talk to the person who actually made that comment a couple months later, and they brought up that topic and how I thought it was unfair and I felt that the judgment about what the person was saying and what they were doing

was erroneous. . . . They really value and appreciate thinking about something before they act, and so I think part of it is that they know right then and there something is wrong but they want to be fair and they want to assess the facts and they think about it and then they do talk about it later. Actually, if action needs to be taken, they will, but often it is delayed. Sometimes it happens that action is taken immediately, but that is more rare. The action taken immediately may be "Well, let's move on."

Jasmine's Verbal Expression of Emotions in the Workplace

Verbalizing her emotions, as long as it was done in an appropriate way, was presented as an important way to send out a clear message. Without "screaming or yelling," as Jasmine pointed out, she let a colleague know that she was not comfortable with his angered behavior towards her, surprising him with her openness. In another story, however, she did not respond in the moment when a colleague was silenced by a top-level executive for being too passionate about something during a meeting. Even though she did not approve of this top executive's behavior, Jasmine chose to abide by the norm and avoid open conflict with a superior in a public setting. She would only discuss the event with her colleague, in private, many days later.

Jasmine was able to provide examples of situations in which she expressed her emotions verbally and was happy with the results. On one occasion, it started with how a colleague first addressed her: "I have another instance about 3 weeks ago when someone came into my office angry, and I was more direct with them because of their anger, but I don't necessarily typically raise my voice; it might be my choice of words that I use." Jasmine managed to remain calm, even though she was "more direct." This wasn't the first time this person had displayed anger with Jasmine, and she explained how she interpreted his behavior:

I felt they were going through a very difficult time at work themselves, and I actually felt that they were taking it out on me and they were wrong in their statements to me. And that, to tell you the truth, I felt good about it at the end of the session because I specifically told them in a calm fashion that I didn't appreciate their behavior.

Jasmine also commented on the other person's reaction to her expression of

emotion:

I felt that, I think the word I used was heavy-handed, and somehow, it was a male, and somehow that really, he was very taken aback, I think, by the fact that I was displeased myself. So I actually felt good about the situation. I kind of felt that I drew a boundary and I stood my ground.

Recounting this experience seemed to bring Jasmine to a reflective moment: "I do

have a concern now. I actually might need to be more emotional and angry with people

and be very clear that I am angry rather than sending mixed messages. Sometimes I think

that is a weakness of my own management/leadership style."

The issue of control appeared in Jasmine's next comments:

I didn't scream or yell . . . mainly because, to tell you the truth, it takes too much out of me to do that. I do believe that you only have so much energy in a day and sort of how do you choose to do things. . . . If I let someone who I don't want to have any of my energy, have some of my energy, I don't feel good about that. Probably sounds very controlling, doesn't it? Well, it is controlling. I want to have control over how I use my personal energy in a day.

When her own emotions ran high, Jasmine had trusted colleagues with whom she

could talk:

In fact, I am in a very overwhelmed stage right now, to tell you the truth. I have an associate that I work with who is, actually I chose him because he was not what I would necessarily call an emotional person, but have a lot of respect and is very supportive and this gets me another point of view, puts things in perspective. But I have another former manager that I was a mentor to, actually is the [name of function] of the company right now, and not very often but I went to him this week about a situation I needed help on. Maybe about every 6 months, somebody

I trust, somebody who's fair. So, I do. I actually have somebody who works for me that I trust.

This story presented Jasmine as someone who was careful about expressing some emotions. She would not express them openly, but would go to people she trusted, in confidence. However, Jasmine commented on how with maturity she had become more willing to express her feelings and take more chances:

> I've actually had one of my people that I interact with who told me, "You share a lot more than I would." I also have had someone else in my group tell me not to change, that they think that one of the wonderful things about my management style is that I do connect with people and that I am real with people and I show a lot of human characteristics with people, and they think some of that is sharing things sometimes about myself and how I feel. I think it also gives other people permission to share. After I turned 50, a lot of people say that a switch goes off. And I thought that was silly, but I really thought I spent my whole life being too careful and therefore I should say, take more chances and say who I am and how I feel, and that feels good. What is it going to do to me? The worst thing that could happen is I'd have to go back home with my family on the beach; that doesn't sound too bad.

Overview of Jasmine's Stories

1) Jasmine was angered by an e-mail and let the sender know. Her response was received with humor.

2) Jasmine took a male colleague by surprise when she told him his angered behavior towards her was heavy handed. She didn't scream or yell, though.

3) During a leadership meeting, Jasmine watched a female friend/colleague be shot down by a company officer for speaking up about a topic she felt strongly about. Jasmine didn't think it was right for her colleague to be treated that way.

4) Jasmine dealt compassionately with both female and male employees crying in her office. She tried to explain why they may have been so emotional and what they needed from her.

5) Jasmine had an associate and a mentor she could go to (and trusted) when she was overwhelmed or needed help.

6) One of Jasmine's employees told her "You share a lot more than I would." Jasmine was "real" with people and showed "a lot of human characteristics." She thought it also gave people permission to share.

7) Jasmine's husband didn't understand the question "How do you *feel* about that?" and Jasmine felt good for having a conversation where she and her colleague openly expressed their emotions.

8) Jasmine was very positively surprised when someone she believed was very introverted showed her touching/beautiful photographs. She thought, "This person has a heart and a soul."

Other as Inter-Being: Diana's Portrait

Diana headed a nonprofit organization that was based in a university and was part of one of its schools. The staff comprised Diana, two full-time employees, and two employees shared with the university.

Diana's Attitude Towards Emotion in the Workplace

For Diana, emotions were natural; they "happen." About the verbal expression of emotion in her workplace, Diana said:

> In my office I would never say, like, it's terrible if you . . . or if you snap at someone. These things happen—I mean, the emotions—but we do try to maintain some levels. I think the most important thing is not whether you cry if you are upset or what, but treating people with respect.

Her tolerance was not unlimited, however:

Where the difficulty lies is if you have people who are usually negative. That I've worked for people like that, and it's not good for me. I just don't react well when people are doing that and no one does, but I sort of internalize it and it's not good. With the people I work with now, none of them is like that. If they are upset it's not directed to you, in a negative way; it's more upset about the situation. And I think that makes a big difference in terms of working with people. Is it targeted back at you in a negative way? Or is it sort of out there—OK, it's the situation that is upsetting.

Diana indicated that her family experience helped her deal with different "levels of emotions":

In terms of working with people who show different levels of emotions in different ways, I don't know, it's not problematic as long as it's not that negative, kind of personality trait. I come from a family where everyone is really different. My mom is one of those spontaneous people. So I'm sort of in the middle, and then my sister is like close hauled. So I've dealt with like all the spectrum and actually, you know, I've learned the skills. It doesn't bother me, you know. It's only when I've worked for people who you never know whether they are going to change into like a screaming person the next second, then that doesn't work well.

Diana's Perceptions of Her Organization's Affective Culture

Diana described an OAC influenced by the predominance of women in staff and in leadership: "It's somewhat unique working with a board of women. I am working with women, so in some level they may feel like they need to guard their emotions, specially in this field in their normal jobs." Diana insisted on the gender aspect of affect in the workplace:

We have arguments galore in our staff meetings because people do not see eye to eye on how to do things, and I encourage them: go for it, make your argument, whatever. I think some women have trouble leaving those arguments, and I have encountered trouble with women who are sort of holding grudges and things like that. But I do try to encourage that openness but absolutely have respect for your colleague. There are particular dynamics when you are in an office full of women. . . . I think women do react differently to things, and I think women interact differently, and so I think you have sort of a different scenario sometimes.

Diana noted the importance for women of being a role model and a mentor:

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When you've been out there representing the organization out in the world, so to speak, you've got to be careful. . . . It's really hard because I think there's a sort of expectation that women are . . . a little spooky and are going to go off and start sobbing or something. So it's sort of unfortunate, but we have to be really careful about that, that we're professional and we're not going to freak out and be overly, specially overly sensitive. That's the worst. It's tough. People won't agree with you and all that, and you have to be able to take it, and if you have to go to the bathroom and cry or feel terrible or whatever.

Another important aspect in Diana's stories was how she positioned her own will

and behavior to create an OAC that she found adequate. She said:

I am most informed by what I didn't like from previous organizations. The one thing that I could absolutely not stand from the last two positions is the culture of fear from above. I saw it; we've all seen it in the [name of department]: people were so afraid of the people above them that they were just giving them the answers that they thought they wanted to hear. Then I left government thinking, "Well, the nonprofit sector is going to be totally different," and I saw the exact same thing. Because where I was before we had a young leader who was in control of everything and everyone was, no one wanted to question that person and it was a very uncomfortable situation. So when I came into this job I knew I didn't want that kind of culture dominating at all. That was absolutely something that I decided going in, that I was going to protect them. Even if it was board or any senior people in the organization, I will protect my staff from being bullied or intimidated.

Diana's Verbal Expression of Emotions in the Workplace

Diana said more about her own verbal expression of emotion in the next story, in

which her organization was denied a grant that they had been working on for a long time:

And this was just a tremendous blow because we had been working so hard. I mean, I had been really crafting a proposal for so long, and it was, you know, it was a little about all that work, but it was also about, What is the future of this organization and can I keep it going?

Diana named several emotions she experienced in connection with the grant

denial:

And I think there was a combination of emotions. I think frustration first, second of all fear [laughing] about what was going to happen, and then thirdly, a little bit

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later, kind of almost a feeling of failure—you know, that I hadn't done enough. . . . It was a little bit of panic mixed in there, but I tried to really like contain the panic to try to think what do I need to do next and then . . . depending on the outcomes of that, then what do I need to do more long term. And in that kind of a way I was able to deal with that without becoming so unglued over the whole event.

The first person Diana talked with about the grant denial was her development officer:

I obviously told her right away because she's been working on the proposal with me and it was right after it happened. I actually showed her the e-mail. She was walking by and I was like totally in shock. I said, "Come in here. You've got to see this e-mail." And so I showed her before I even forwarded it to her and we were like in shock at the same time. So, she is in the stage I am in, working through it so and she was actually good because I think I kind of had this reaction, you know. She said, "We can get through this. I'm just going to double my efforts on the fundraising" and so forth. So even if she was feeling something different, you know, this is what she said.

Diana also reached out to her board members for support:

I picked up the phone and called three key people: the president, vice president, and a member of my board who know this woman at the grant making organization very well. So I called the three of them, and I didn't get a hold of my president. I did get a hold of my vice president, and you know we chatted a little bit and she suggested that I get in touch with the third person, which I was planning to. And then I talked to her and she immediately said "I'm going to find out what's going on so that we know where to go from here." And that really helped me. It was just like that moment of "OK, next step."

When talking with her vice president, Diana expressed some frustration, as she explained:

I expressed a little frustration, I mean, because she knows how we've worked on this. So I said, "You know, at that point I couldn't even think of next steps. I don't even know what to do. I don't know what to say about this. I'm just so upset!" So, yeah, I did talk to her and then the other woman that I talked to afterwards, I did as well. We have that relationship. They know how much we struggle to get to this point, so it wasn't like talking to someone who doesn't understand.

With the rest of her staff, Diana was careful in how she verbally expressed her

emotions:

> I don't like when rumors start spreading around an organization and it's
> nontransparent so people don't know what's going on. So I called the staff
> together and I told them where we were and not in a panic way. . . . I didn't want
> to scare them, but I wanted them to know exactly what was going on and that we
> all had a role to play on the next step.

The negative emotions experienced in connection with the grant denial were

contrasted with positive feelings in the following days, as Diana narrated:

> I'd been reaching out periodically to who I think can help us. But one of the
> times, and it's happened before, when I meet with someone about the possibilities
> and the big ideas and the things we could do as an organization and we're on the
> same page exactly, we're seeing a vision together of like the magnitude of what
> could happen, and it's really like, it's a rush. It's like a rush of ideas and so forth,
> and that I think it is an emotional reaction. . . . I had a wonderful 2-hour lunch
> with someone, and we talked about all those things that we could do, and she's
> going to help on the fundraising but other things. Two days before, I was thinking
> "Can this organization continue?" and then 2 days later I was like "The sky is the
> limit."

Diana continued her story, narrating what happened after she talked with this

friendly person:

> After we had talked over lunch, I just said, "I am just really excited about our
> conversation and all of the things we can do, and I'm really happy and I'm
> looking forward to following up on all of them." And I was so excited that I
> e-mailed my staff. I actually worked from home that afternoon so I went back
> home and told everyone I had this great conversation and I was really excited.

In the next story, Diana applied her organizational affective rules to her own

verbal expression and being the role model she thought women needed to be. The

situation started with a blow up:

> We do a summer conference. We bring [number of students] from around the
> world to [name of city] for [number of days], and it's very, very intense. And this
> year we had two of the [number] who were really problematic. . . . There was a,

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like a blow up where one of the women who—again, that negative sort of emotion—like screamed at one of my staff people about something she couldn't control about her luggage and getting into the luggage room, which was a university policy, and my staff would try to explain what the policy was and that, you know, we're not in control of it. And she just screamed at her; it was just horrible to her.

Diana considered how to deal with the situation:

I'm a person who can't stand that kind of stuff happening, so I was really struggling with like how to address it and so forth. And it ended up being that I actually decided to address it at two levels. One, that these people were chosen because they are future leaders, so the next day I really hammered down that you've got to think about your actions in terms of the leadership model you are in and also in this field your reputation is all you have and that you also need to really care about the people behind you, because part of it was she thought that she was above my person, you know; it was kind of a condescending thing. So without naming her I made it about the concept of why they were there.

The emotions of work slipped into Diana's time outside of work: "The night before, I couldn't sleep. I was so upset that someone would treat my person like that. I was so angry." The situation was resolved the next day:

I was also going to talk to her [the student] but the next day after the thing she came up to me and she apologized. So I said she didn't need to apologize to me; "you have to apologize to my person that you yelled at." And so anyway, that was, I hadn't really had anything like that happen before. So that is something that really puts down the staff because they've been working so hard.

The whole event seemed to be a challenge for Diana, but she was determined to establish some boundaries in how her staff could be treated: "I don't like confrontation that way. I probably go to great lengths to avoid that kind of negative confrontation, but, you know, I needed her to know that that was totally unacceptable."

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Overview of Diana's Stories

1) Diana experienced a "tremendous blow" and a wide range of strong emotions in connection with her organization being denied an important and significant grant, and she feared for the organization's future. Diana managed her communication with her staff. She informed them to maintain transparency and prevent rumors but tried not to scare them. She reached out to her board members for support and conveyed some frustration to her board's vice president.

2) After the disappointment with the grant denial, Diana became very excited with some new positive prospects for her organization. She e-mailed her staff with the good news. She talked directly with her development person, since she was directly involved in fundraising and gave her good news.

3) Diana's board president was "definitely emotional about things."

4) Diana was very upset that a participant in one of her organization's programs treated one of her staff extremely bad. She would not tolerate it and found a nonconfrontational way to let the person know her behavior was inappropriate.

5) Diana reflected on previous bad experiences as an employee and how they led her to decide that in her current job she was going to create a different organization and protect her staff from "being bullied and intimidated."

Composite Depiction

This composite depiction is based on similarities and differences identified for four themes that occur in all interviews:

- Attitude towards emotion in the workplace: how emotions should be verbally expressed in the workplace (if at all)

- Context sensitivity: what emotions should be verbalized, to whom, by whom, where, when, how, and why

- Participation of subjectivity in a leader's verbal expression of emotion

- Shaping aspects of the ever-emergent OAC

Attitudes Toward Emotion in the Workplace

For each research participant, an attitude towards emotions in the workplace transpired through their stories and commentary. When examining similarities, it can be noticed that Clare, Peter, and Nancy emphasized the risks associated with verbally expressing emotion in the workplace. While an exception was made for emotions seen as positive like gratitude and appreciation, emotions were generally presented as personal and not belonging to the professional realm. In the event that it couldn't be avoided, the rule of thumb was that emotions in the workplace should be verbally expressed behind closed doors, as Nancy illustrated:

> And I don't know if this is part of the leadership thing, I don't even remember, but you never get emotional or talk to somebody about something or call the man on something in front of anybody else. You take the man to your office and then talk to them.

Rare exceptions may be when you are trying to make a strong point or be more persuasive, as Clare pointed out in her story about her last day in government.

The attitude illustrated by Jim, Diana, Jasmine, Paul, and Sarah held that emotions were in the human realm and therefore part of what people bring into the workplace. The researcher's attitude aligned more closely with this group of research participants as well. Verbal expression of emotions in the workplace was accepted and even encouraged, within certain boundaries, usually connected with being respectful of others and mindful

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of the OAC but not totally submissive, and considerate of the impact of the verbal

expression of emotion on self and others. Jim's beliefs about emotion in the workplace,

for instance, were as follows:

> I believe in a healthy balance. We do Gallup surveys to see how engaged our
> employees feel, and we consistently score very well in my program. People enjoy
> coming to work and have the resources and the opportunities they need, and as
> long as that, I think it's a healthy measure. And I think emotions in the workplace,
> making it feel more like a home environment, may contribute to these good
> scores, may add a positive impact and the positive response that I am getting from
> my clients. We have quarterly events with my team members and we try to get,
> just social events, we try to get family members involved, we try to, so that people
> feel it's more like a family and they can feel connected to where their spouses are
> 8 hours plus a day. I just think it's real healthy.

Context Sensitivity

In the eight interviews conducted, there were stories and comments on the

appropriate setting for the verbal expression of emotion as well as variations on what

emotions needed to be private and in what kind of context. This theme highlights the

intersubjective dimension of the experience and expression of emotion, bringing the other

as trigger or target, participant or audience to be considered. Peter expressed the most

contradiction within this theme. When asked how emotions were handled in an

emergency situation, Peter explained:

> Usually through some type of a collective group process. I remember a colleague
> who is a physician and actually a board-certified psychiatrist hugging us and
> breaking into tears because we all knew the impact of what had occurred. When
> you look and you see a trained psychiatrist break into tears because the emotion of
> what's occurred here, and you can understand that the decisions that are being
> made are that bad, you know that you are in a pretty tough emotional point and
> really it's collectively, speaking among the group, without being mutinous and
> being professional and trying to turn issues around and the best way for
> everybody.

It is worth mentioning that Peter described a group process for dealing with strong emotions, somewhat authorized by the presence of a recognized authority in emotions, the psychiatrist, and possibly allowed due to the strong emotions being shared by all members in the group. However, in the same interview, he said:

> You can't be emotional. . . . It's interesting because in the moment [recounting the case of the boys hurt or killed by wolves] there was no emotion. . . . It certainly hits you later, and it will hit me now recounting it 10 years later, but in that moment if you're a true professional, you step up and you do what you were trained to do.

Clare's stories seemed to translate a similar sensitivity to context. Coming back to her position in a foreign country after a vacation, Clare found her boss weeping. She interpreted her boss's behavior as a moment of "breakdown" and a sign that she couldn't "cope with all that was going on." In this kind of situation, Clare explained, "You just have to shut the door and be private."

While Clare may have had similar beliefs to Peter as to what should be kept private, in one of her stories she very passionately expressed her disagreement with policies from her superiors:

> They were going to take most of it [funding] and put it into infrastructure like roads, and I didn't believe that was right. . . . Toward the end of the meeting I said, "Gentlemen, what you have here is a strategy that is going to have schools, vaccines, and unless you can use reconstruction money to meet the everyday needs of the [name of country] people, we're going to lose this war." So it was a very emotional appeal to them.

There was a link between this story and Clare's beliefs about leadership:

> I've always believed that it's our responsibility to prevent our bosses from making a mistake, so I put a lot of pressure up when I think the policy is going in the wrong direction. And then within government, if you feel really strongly and you can't change their mind, and you can't be a part of it, you can ask to transfer, which I'd done once before, actually twice.

Comparing Clare's story of her last day in government with the story about her boss's overwhelmed response to a crisis, we see how the context affected what emotions she said could be expressed. Her boss's weeping was interpreted as a sign of professional weakness and something that should be kept private. Clare's strong feelings about the potential drawbacks of a government policy for the people of a particular country had to be expressed because it was expected of someone in her role, especially when the issue related to people: "Well, my shtick is the focus on people, so that the human element is the focus and that kind of connects people with the emotion."

For Peter, considerations of the potential negative outcomes of expressing dissent led him to follow the preestablished procedure:

> It's mutinous to go against the decision of the captain, but even then there are ways and rules, etc., etc., that allow for a more rational approach when the captain has made a poor decision. But when you dissent, there are huge prices to pay in not only your career but in general disruption to the entire organization and the loss of the integrity of the organization.

Jasmine, Paul, Jim, and Sarah talked about emotion in a way that was more accepting, even though both Paul and Jim had a military background. This group of research participants focused less on whether emotions should be verbally expressed and more on how they should be expressed. Sarah represented this attitude well:

> It's important for people to be available to one another. I mean the setting matters, but there isn't anything that you shouldn't talk about if you feel a need to talk about it. It's a question of just picking an environment that makes sense to you and the group. I mean, I wouldn't want someone to come into a staff meeting and say "I really hate that person, I can't work with them at all," you know. It's important for them to be able to get out and communicate and feel free to communicate, but I'd like them to do that in a way that isn't disruptive of everyone else.

More than the setting, though, there seemed to be nuances as to what could be expressed to whom. For Jim, customers should not hear about certain emotions:

> I want to make sure that we have an environment in which they can feel comfortable expressing their emotions. I encourage people to express their emotions within their work teams as opposed to in external organizations. . . . You only have these interactions so many times a year, and I think you need to make a good first impression. And once you've established the relationship, you are free to be more open.

Obviously Jim was talking about "negative" emotions:

> Yeah, I'm thinking negative emotions. Enthusiasm is fine, excitement, pride are all good things. I think that we work on tools that are making a difference in this war on terrorism, and there's lots of reasons to be proud. And I think that comes through when people are talking to customers. I was thinking negative emotions. There's lots of positive that I would like to see.

About the frequency with which someone verbalizes strong emotions, Jim said:

> Everybody can be expected to have a periodic emotional issue, but I would hope that for the balance, it's not the norm, that things happen on a semiannual or annual basis and that's observed and supported, but it's not the norm. But if you see people going through these emotional ups and downs on a recurring basis, then I'd think there might be . . . maybe more personality driven than event driven. That may become an issue.

Paul discussed what emotions should never be expressed, even in the private setting:

> Peer to peer, it's accepted to talk across the spectrum of emotions. With the exception that, peer to peer, it's not accepted to express emotions about an individual: meaning, I'm unhappy with a situation, or I'm upset with a situation, I can talk about that all I want. If I hate Sally Smith, you don't say it to anybody. There's always exceptions to that, but even this fellow director that flamed on me, it was almost against the rules for other people to come to me and say, "That person really did you wrong by flaming on you, and I'm sorry that they did it." The culture says we don't talk about that: we don't mess with that, it's over, it's done with; deal with it between the parties that were involved. But if some other director comes to me and says, "Man, that person really did you dirty," it's almost like now I have to think about how I am going to deal with them . . . taking sides in the event or them speaking ill of another director.

Paul explained the rationale for this rule of thumb:

> Speaking ill of others to a subordinate is absolutely not appropriate, and part of that is because so often the subordinates try to read what you're thinking or what you're feeling and what their emotions are going to bear what you're doing, and if I emote displeasure toward somebody else, that can rapidly travel around the organization and pretty soon my people are emoting displeasure about someone they don't even know the details on.

Emotions normally regarded as positive can be more openly expressed, but Paul recommended some caution:

> So, success, pleasure, happiness, those are very, very much norms, crawling a little bit because sometimes you go a long time between big successes, but that's just the nature of the beast. Those are very, very much included up to a certain level. Just to a point where it's kind of internal to your shop. But if we start in my shop to be really, really pleased about something that we've done outside of our particular space so that it would impact on another shop, then it becomes, "You guys are bragging." So reign it in a little bit, you know, that sort of thing.

Considerations about what emotions others might experience as a result of the leaders' verbal expression of emotions led them to regulate their own expression, as shown in this story by Paul:

> So the people that are my technical people, that are actually doing the grunt work, I talked with them, and my talk with them was focused on what I needed them to do to make sure we had everything in line. And in talking with them I had to be very, very positive and downplay the roller coaster because their long-term employment is tied to the success of this program. So I knew that if I didn't, if they heard my concern, that I would impact them dramatically because of who they are. So for them it was, "Here's what I need for you to be able to get the program ready for the next level of briefing." With my deputy, it was "Here's what I need you to do to run the office to make sure that I don't have to worry about anything but getting this thing fixed." And then for the person who is, and I don't know what the right word is to use, not confidante, but you know what I mean, someone that you communicate with on a personal level, that's the person that I called and aaaaaaaaahhhhhhhh!!!!

Subjectivity and Verbal Expression of Emotion in the Workplace

In all interviews, participants mentioned aspects of subjectivity, such as

personality, affective style, and previous experiences, as playing an important role in how

someone expressed their emotions in the workplace. Jasmine said, for instance:

> A lot of the people, I think, in the engineering environment don't know how to
> handle emotions very well, and that has nothing to do with the company; it has to
> do with their family of origin, who they are, the kind of person they became.

Even though Sarah described her organization as rather "communicative" when it

came to the verbal expression of emotion, her own style could differ:

> Sharing emotion is not my forte. I mean, I think that I am probably less gender
> stereotyped than you might expect it in that way. . . . I think it's a great thing for
> people to do it; I'm not the best at doing it, but I admire it in others.

When Sarah's team made important progress, she experienced strong emotions: "I

probably felt a real sense of sort of maternal pride in their success in watching them

really set a goal, pursue that goal, and then achieve it. And that to me was great." She was

not the one who shared those emotions with the rest of the staff, however: "One of my

colleagues was with me there. She wrote a wonderful retelling of the story back, so I

would say more of the emotion was communicated by her than by me."

Within the theme of subjectivity, another domain to consider is the leader's

beliefs about leadership. This is what Clare said: "I've always believed that it's our

responsibility to prevent our bosses from making a mistake, so I put a lot of pressure up

when I think the policy is going in the wrong direction."

The verbal expression of emotion was often connected in participants' stories to

beliefs about what it meant to be professional. Here's one of Nancy's stories depicting

this connection:

I have a lieutenant who was in the office about 4 or 5 years ago and he became way too emotional in his professional dealings. He did something that was really not acceptable in the office, and I told him at the time, "This was not right, what you did is not right," and he did it again. And the senior people got involved and it was something that he should have told us in advance. He chose to hide something. And so I told him that was just very, very inappropriate. And he sent me a long rambling e-mail that was way too personal and emotional on this particular subject. Totally inappropriate.

For Peter, being professional was different from being "mutinous," "emotional," or losing "rationality":

When you look and you see a trained psychiatrist break into tears because the emotion of what's occurred here, and you can understand that the decisions that are being made are that bad, you know that you are in a pretty tough emotional point and really it's collectively, speaking among the group, without being mutinous and being professional and trying to turn issues around. . . . In an emergency situation when leadership becomes emotional or they lose rationality and they are doing things for either political will or for some way in which to look good and not look bad, and it's at the capital of human life, it's a tragedy. And it's very difficult to deal with that, but there's leadership, they are in charge, they make the ultimate decision.

Shaping the Ever-Emergent Organizational Affective Culture

Whether they are doing it intentionally or not, leaders shape the OAC through their own expression of emotion as well as through the way they react to the expression of others. Diana's story of a summer intern who mistreated her staff depicts this:

I'm a person who can't stand that kind of stuff happening, so I was really struggling with like how to address it and so forth. And it ended up being that I actually decided to address it at two levels. One, that these people were chosen because they are future leaders, so the next day I really hammered down that you've got to think about your actions in terms of the leadership model you are in and also in this field your reputation is all you have and that you also need to really care about the people behind you, because part of it was she thought that she was above my person, you know; it was kind of a condescending thing. So without naming her I made it about the concept of why they were there. The night before I couldn't sleep. I was so upset that someone would treat my person like that. I was so angry. So I did that, and I was also going to talk to her, but the next day after the thing she came up to me and she apologized. So I said she didn't need to apologize to me; "you have to apologize to my person that you yelled at."

And so anyway, that was, I hadn't really had anything like that happen before. So that is something that really puts down the staff because they've been working so hard. I don't like confrontation that way. I probably go to great lengths to avoid that kind of negative confrontation, but, you know, I needed her to know that that was totally unacceptable.

Jim, too, made reference to how he attempted to shape the OAC in the department he led:

> I am trying to achieve a certain comfort level, so I want to make sure that we have an environment in which they can feel comfortable expressing their emotions. I encourage people to express their emotions within their work teams as opposed to in external organizations. And I think it's everybody can be expected to have a periodic emotional issue, but I would hope that for the balance, it's not the norm, that things happen on a semiannual or annual basis and that's observed and supported, but it's not the norm.

Another example came from Paul. Even though Paul did not express the attempt to influence the whole organization, like Diana, he acted to affect his immediate surrounding group. He told this story about when he noticed that another person in the group was verbalizing his emotions in a way that contradicted the norm:

> I was able to observe that this individual's behaviors were starting to diminish how other people saw him in his role. It was going to cause him long-term damage because it was so outside the culture. And so I spent sometimes an hour every single day, for months, chatting with the individual and explaining why the way he was reacting to these issues was counterproductive—not to the organization; I wasn't concerned about the organization, I was concerned about his ability to continue within the organization.

Creative Synthesis

This final stage of the heuristic analysis is a lively reflection on the researcher's experience of the inquiry process (Moustakas, 1990). I opted for combining quotes from my research participants that had the most emotional impact on me. I arranged the quotes in poetic form to capture some of the sharpest feelings contained in each participant's

stories. Each stanza contains quotes from a different participant, meant to portray some of

the conflict and contradictions that I perceived in each interview, and the range and

power of affect verbalized. The last stanza contains a brief poetic synthesis of my own

experience throughout this study.

I Am [Hung up on This Word] Very Emotional

I am hung up on this word very "emotional"
There's a difference between complaining and being emotional
We're kind of a family
We take care of each other
He sent me a long rambling e-mail that was way too personal and emotional
Totally inappropriate
That's way too emotional for a guy
He was just syrupy emotional
I also don't want to stop people coming to me
And expressing emotion
People need outlets
Even men

  There were many heart-wrenching moments
  I didn't express feelings, I expressed facts
  There's no place in any of this for emotion
  You know, I just don't give a shit anymore
  I have gone to my limit and I am not going beyond my limit
  This has gone terribly awry
  We're all very orchestrated
  So you can't be emotional
  You say that's going to hang out for later
  It certainly hits you later
  And it will hit me now

It's a rush
It's like a rush of ideas
Definitely a huge curve in emotions in one week
I didn't want to scare them
I'm just so upset!
I don't want to burst into tears
I was like totally in shock
She probably shows her emotions more
It doesn't bother me
I seem to be prompted to do things I'm angry about

You know emotions do play a big part
I don't feel like I'm holding a bunch of stuff in

       You just have to shut the door and be private
       It was a very emotional appeal
       I was pretty upset
       I was pretty fed up
       I didn't think I hit the veil
       The hour was about up
       She was getting a little hysterical so I calmed her down
       When I feel strongly about something I always express it
       You can't just run around emoting
       I just tried to comfort her
       She couldn't cope with all that was going on
       Comedians don't cry

I know I am not a touchy-feely person
Sharing emotion is not my forte
I really thought that was inappropriate, hurtful, unnecessary, horrible
I never confronted that head on
It was not worth it
I don't think it was going to have a positive impact on the way people looked at me
I don't know there's much openness to express real displeasure
At times people are put off by that
Emotion is a big part of the work we do
You can't automatize
It would be a little weird
I think people like me, I think they respect me

       It's been a roller-coaster week
       Knowing that it's in place, then having it fall apart
       A great deal of apprehension
       It was really distressing
       It was a real fear factor to me
       When no resistance came, it was very satisfying
       It was hard not to smile real big
       She laughed, and she said, "If it was easy anybody could do it"
       Like when I went and yelled at my boss really hard?
       I don't lose my temper very often but I was pretty straightforward
       You don't get to do that very often

I might need to be more emotional
I had felt this way with this person before
They were taking it out on me
I didn't scream or yell
They think they can come here and feel more in control

I knew she was very upset
No one said anything
She's the kind of person who's passionate about a lot of things
She was called on the carpet
Everybody sat still
I've seen other people get upset
They may be happy with a promotion but they won't really say that

> This was a week full of emotion
> There's much emotion in how we deal with it
> Things like this can be disruptive
> I feel one of my issues is that I'm too approachable
> It's a tough dynamic to manage
> How long is enough?
> Do you hold a grudge for a year?
> Do you hold a grudge for 2 years?
> He feels like they're turning on him
> There's been a fair amount of tears
> That happens all the time in my program
> Oh my god, this was a very emotional week as a matter of fact

Intrigued by the mystery and taboo around emotions in organizations
I am reminded of my own struggle to express myself in authentic ways
And at the same time survive in this world
I am humbled by each experience conveyed to me
As I moved along this learning journey
I am, too, astonished at the prohibition of emotion (to being human?)
Lurking quietly yet powerfully
In the corners of the unspoken organization
And then, again, I am humbled by each experience conveyed to me
Can't we at least stop pretending emotions do not exist?
That is crazy! (This is a poem, I can say it)
I am like Nancy:
> I am [hung up on this word] very emotional

CHAPTER 5:

INTERPRETATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains a brief overview of the results obtained in this study followed by interpretations, conclusions, and recommendations, including implications for theory, research, and practice.

In the context of the organizational behavior literature, employees' expression of affect or emotion has been described as being regulated by implicit and explicit organizational norms (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Fineman, 2000) sustained by the attitude and belief that emotion can be undesirable and counterproductive for organizational processes (Mumby & Putnam, 1992). Employees manage or regulate their emotional expression and attempt to suppress or influence which emotions they feel or convey in order to comply with organizational norms (Gross, 1998; Hochschild, 1983; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1989; Simpson & Stroh, 2004). Recently, the idea of display rules has been expanded into the concept of organizational affective culture (OAC), thought of as normative systems that include display rules about expressed emotions at the collective level and prescribe what is appropriate or not in terms of emotional expression in the organization (Barsade et al., 2003; Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Barsade & O'Neill, 2004). Additionally, empirical studies on display rules and emotional labor (Lewis, 2000; Simpson & Stroh, 2004), which focus on overt and covert demands on individuals concerning what emotions and feelings to express, seem to indicate that people in organizations collectively attach different valence (Varela & Depraz, 2003) to different affect and expect individuals to behave in certain ways in connection with how they manifest affect.

This study attempted to make a contribution to the understanding of the role that OAC plays in how leaders talk about their emotions in the workplace. For the purpose of this study, leaders were defined as employees at the director level and above who have formal supervisory roles, thus having institutional status that tends to enhance their ability to affect others (French & Raven, 1959). A focus on leaders is relevant because studies show that leaders' emotion can influence followers' affect and organizational outcomes (Johnson, 2008). Talk, on the other hand, is another of the ways in which leaders' influence is exerted (Hatch, 1997).

This study proposed to explore the role of OAC in the way leaders talk about emotion in the workplace, viewing emotion as an aspect of an integrated body and mind, assuming that the expression of emotion is an intersubjective process and that subjectivity and culture dynamically coemerge (Thompson, 2007; Colombetti & Thompson, 2007). The research question for this study was as follows:

What is the role of OAC in the way leaders talk about their emotions in the

workplace?

There were two subquestions:

a) What are leaders' perceptions of their organizations' OAC?

b) How does the perceived OAC influence the way leaders talk about their emotions in the workplace?

Brief Overview of Results

Through the data analysis, I identified three broad types of experiences of the OAC (discussed in detail in chapter 4), based on the key characteristics of the OAC narrated (described or implied) in research participants' stories and the ways or modes

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(Maturana & Varela, 1987) in which leaders in this study related to the narrated OAC. I have named these types of experiences "other as problem," "other as inter-action," and "other as inter-being" in parallel with Varela's (1999b) "steps to a science of interbeing" (p. 87) (see Table 5-1). No type of experience was fully realized in every member of the group that illustrated it or in a completely pure and coherent way. However, the name for each type synthesized what appeared as the most striking aspect of each type.

In all three ways of experiencing the OAC, leaders enacted the OAC in one way or another. The first group was enmeshed with it, abided by it, enforced it, lived it, embodied it, and rarely questioned it. The second group either consciously or unconsciously enabled it or slowly undermined it, creating small incremental changes, demonstrating it can be navigated in different ways. The third group was out to generate it by imbuing it with their own point of view (De Jaegher & Froese, 2009). Even though their behavior did not always match their expressed intentions, and contradiction between the OAC they would like to create and how they talked about their emotions or reacted and responded to the verbal expression of emotions of others occurred in their narratives, the leaders in this group used their power, behavior, and language to attempt to shape the OAC norms according to a more integrative view of emotion.

Table 5-1

Overview of Narrated Organizational Affective Cultures and Related Modes of Coupling

Type of experience	Key characteristics of the perceived OAC	Mode of coupling	Participants in this group
Other as problem	Prohibitive OAC is rigid and punitive. Emotions are narrated as predominantly dangerous or a nuisance. The expression of emotion puts the leader at risk. The OAC plays the role of a strict normative system according to which the leader manages his or her own emotions and interprets, judges, and responds to the expression of others.	Imperative Leader tends to accept and enforce OAC without question. Reduced agency.	Peter Clare Nancy Exemplar: Peter
Other as inter-action	Manageable OAC tolerates a wide range of behaviors. With awareness and skill, the leader can express and deal with a wide range of emotions in acceptable ways. The OAC plays the role of a reference system that the leader navigates, recognizing that it may have limitations and choosing to abide by or divert from it depending on specific context.	Relative Leader respects OAC but may cautiously divert in specific circumstances based on his or her own perspective on what is needed and appropriate. Moderate agency.	Paul Jasmine Researcher Exemplar: Jasmine
Other as inter-being	Integrative OAC is flexible and integrative of emotion and plays the role of an ideal the leader strives to achieve. Emotions are a natural part of human experience in the workplace. Leader seeks to openly integrate emotion and promote emotional well-being and makes specific attempts to shape the OAC so that it is accepting and respectful of verbal expression of emotion.	Generative Leader sees the OAC as affected by his or her own influence and makes conscious attempts to enact it and shape it according to his or her perspective on emotion. High degree of agency.	Jim Diana Sarah Exemplar: Diana

The analysis of the narratives also yielded four broad themes (presented in more detail in chapter 4):

1) Attitude towards emotion in the workplace

2) Context sensitivity

3) Subjectivity and the leader's verbal expression of emotion

4) Shaping the ever-emergent OAC

A more in-depth interpretation of these results follows, with relevant discussion in connection with the literature.

Interpretation and Conclusions

The conclusions presented and discussed in this section are not meant as generalizations. They refer only to the data provided by the participants in this study. Whether these conclusions apply to other leaders, industries, countries, or specific demographic groups needs to be determined by further research.

Conclusion 1: Leaders' Agency and Organizational Affective Culture:
Different Modes of Structural Coupling

Leaders retained varying degrees of agency in the different modes of structural coupling. The stories gathered for this study indicate that leaders used their capacity for agency in connection with the OAC in different ways, establishing different modes of relation with the perceived cultural environment of the organization. Maturana and Varela (1980, 1987) referred to an organism's interactions with the environment or another organism as structural coupling. The term refers to a process through which transformations in each of the systems lead to reciprocally triggered change and was

defined by Maturana and Varela (1987) as "the history of recurrent interactions between two or more systems that leads to a structural congruence between them" (p. 75). Considering the OAC one of the coupled systems, it seems that the leaders interviewed for this study practiced different modes of structural coupling, with more or less congruence, awareness, and exercise of their agency, defined here as the capacity to enact and affect the environment.

The imperative mode of coupling. When the leader described a clearly defined, rigid, and static OAC (Nancy's, Clare's, and Peter's stories) and appeared to believe that the OAC norms represented how things should be, the narrated OAC, that is, the OAC described or implied in participants' stories, took the role of a powerful normative system strongly internalized and reinforced by the leader through his or her own verbal expression of emotion or judgment about the expression of others. These leaders told stories in which the OAC appeared as a preexisting, independent, prescriptive, and also legitimate system of norms to be obeyed. Additionally, their stories illustrated the danger and nuisance that the verbal or nonverbal expression of emotion could cause. As such, they made no attempt to modify the OAC and gave no or very little indication of being aware of their capacity for agency, that is, their ability to enact and affect the OAC in any way. Clare and Peter, especially, told stories of an OAC in which the verbal expression of emotions was denied in organizations where individuals were frequently exposed to profoundly emotional events and actually experienced strong emotions, not unlike the avoidance of expression of fear in the OAC of search and rescue volunteers studied by Lois (2003). In the imperative mode of coupling, leaders indicated little or no awareness of the blatant contradictions within the perceived system of norms of the OAC described

in their stories and the actual experience of its participants. This is where their agency may have been diminished.

As De Jaegher and Froese (2009) explained, "Autonomous adaptive systems enact a world of meaning and value through their movement in it" (p. 447). I conclude from this key proposition based on the enactive approach (Thompson, 2007) that all individuals enact their world somehow. However, this does not necessarily mean that they are intentionally exercising their agency. For that, they will be required to demonstrate sensemaking, which De Jaegher and Froese defined as "the capacity of a system to enact a world and imbue it with significance from its own point of view" (p. 447). In the stories narrated by Clare, Peter, and Nancy, we heard the organization's point of view most clearly, as in this quote from Peter: "While 95% of the people would elect to turn to the left, some will turn to the right just because they want to follow the leader and they are not interested in dealing with the ramifications that would come from dissension." With this statement, Peter was explaining his decision to follow predetermined procedures instead of challenging them—even while knowing of their disastrous consequences—based on the potential negative outcomes of dissent.

The relative mode of coupling. The second group of leaders presented the OAC as a system to be navigated or a menu of behaviors (Swidler, 2001) of varying degrees of acceptability from which to pick (e.g., Paul's and Jasmine's stories). The OAC narrated by this group certainly had an aspect that indicated what was or was not acceptable generally regarding the expression of emotion, but there was a wide range of behaviors from which to draw, which created space for the leader and others in the organization to exercise some kind of influence and to interpret the norms and the context, thus making

the norms relative as opposed to absolute or prescriptive. The OAC narrated by this group did not seem to be accounted for in the definition by Barsade and colleagues. It approximated more closely to Swidler's definition of culture as a menu of behaviors and Hatch's (1993, 1997) dynamic view of organizational culture. Both of these authors inquired into the processes through which culture is created and allowed a much more important position for the subject of experience to relate and influence it.

From an enactive perspective (Varela et al., 1991), a moderate amount of agency seemed to be maintained by leaders in these stories. The narratives showed people who were deeply aware of the OAC but also capable of agreeing and disagreeing with its perceived norms, interpreting these norms for themselves and others. They were mindful of perceived norms and would often abide by them as a way to maintain credibility. As they did so, they enabled and supported these norms. Yet, they also recognized inadequacies and limitations in the OAC. These leaders appeared in their stories as occasionally choosing to stretch the limits of the OAC by picking from a repertoire of expressive behaviors that would be tolerated even if they did not fit exactly within appropriacy norms. Their stories depicted them partially abiding by the perceived OAC, at times reinforcing it, at times contradicting it, and frequently being intentional about what emotions to express, when, how, and to whom as a way to engage the environment. The individual point of view described by De Jaegher and Froese (2009) as a characteristic of agency can easily be noticed in the stories told by this group.

The generative mode of coupling. In the stories that showed the leader as someone who can create the OAC (Sarah's, Diana's, and Jim's stories), the OAC played the role of an ideal towards which the leader was striving. The leader appeared in these

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stories as someone who was designing and creating the OAC and exercising a high degree of agency. These leaders expressed the intent of creating an OAC that was accepting of emotion and where emotion was viewed as a natural and legitimate aspect of work life. Not everything was rosy, though. In spite of the leaders' intentions, stories revealed occasional incoherences between leaders' intents and their narrated actions. Sarah wanted staff to feel they could express themselves openly, but she did not often verbalize her own emotions. Jim became very angry when he found out one of his staff was dominated by stage fright in front of customers. Still, this group's stories depicted a distinct approach to the OAC and expressed the strongest degree of purposefully chosen behavior in connection with an environment they were attempting to create.

In summary, the role the OAC played in the way leaders in this study talked about their emotion appeared to be strongly linked with how leaders positioned themselves as agents—or not—in relation to the OAC. Applying the concept of structural coupling (Maturana & Varela, 1980), I suggested above that this could be explained as leaders' practicing different modes of relation with the OAC in which agency (capacity to enact and affect the environment) was conserved in a larger or lesser degree. It is important to note that, to be loyal to the theoretical framework of the enactive approach, we should place agency within the realm of subjectivity, which should be understood as the structured complexity that emerges within the intersubjective or relational dimension of the embodied subject (Coole, 2005). Thus, a leader's capacity for agency in regards to the OAC not only expresses the leader's point of view (subjectivity) but also implies the existence of relations that enable and coconstruct that point of view.

Conclusion 2: Context Sensitivity and the Emergent Nature of Emotion

Context played a highly important role in the verbal expression of emotion. In the eight interviews conducted for this study, there were stories and comments on the appropriate setting for the verbal expression of emotion as well as variations on what emotions needed to be private and in what kind of context due to the anticipated effect they may have on others and on self. Leaders participating in this study told stories in which they presented themselves as people who considered what emotions should be verbalized to whom, by whom, where, when, how, and why. Calculations of how the verbal expression of emotion could influence the leader's professional image and on what emotions others may experience as a result of the leader's verbal display of emotions led them to regulate their own verbal expression.

Context sensitivity finds support in the literature and might be explained from different perspectives. The concept of emotional contagion (Hatfield et al., 1994; Johnson, 2008) expresses the idea that one person's moods or affect may be communicated to another, making it relevant to consider and possibly manage emotions in anticipation of how they might impact other people. However, this process may be a little more complex than the concept of emotional contagion initially implies. Thompson (2007) posed two ideas that offer an additional rationale for this conclusion: "The first idea is that self and other enact each other reciprocally through empathy. One's consciousness of oneself as a bodily subject in the world presupposes a certain empathetic understanding of self and other" (p. 383). Thompson's proposition regarding empathy can be linked to how leaders in this study seemed to operate from the principle that their expression of emotion would be interpreted somehow as well as judged for its

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appropriateness, and they in turn adjusted to their own anticipations of what those interpretations and judgments might be. When it came to what was appropriate regarding the verbal expression of emotion, though, expectations could be extremely ambiguous or conflicting. Leaders could have to resort to their own attitudes and preferences as a reference in what appeared to be an empathy-based process. They could imagine what the other would do based on what they themselves would do, activating the knowledge of self and other that Thompson mentioned.

Thompson's (2007) second idea is that "human subjectivity emerges from developmental processes of enculturation and is configured by the distributed cognitive web of symbolic culture. For these reasons, human subjectivity is from the outset intersubjective, and no mind is an island" (p. 383). This idea is similar to Mead and Morris's (1934) notion of copresence. However, Mead and Morris's account does not address the valence and productive nature of affect, emotion developed in affective neuroscience, nor does it explain biological autonomy, an important component of the enactive approach.

The importance of the role of affective culture and the emergence of human subjectivity from a system of meanings can be seen in the valences attached to different forms of affect. For instance, a noteworthy aspect of Clare's story of her last day in government is that she may have been regulating her verbal expression of emotion based on a hierarchy of valences regarding emotions. Her strong feelings about the potential drawbacks of a government policy for the people of a particular country had to be expressed because she believed that was expected of someone in her role, especially when the issue related to people: "Well, my shtick is the focus on people, so that the

human element is the focus and that kind of connects people with the emotion." On the other hand, Clare's boss's overwhelmed response to a crisis should be kept private because it was seen as a sign of professional weakness, and that was negative for Clare. Jim provided another example when he described nuances as to what can be expressed to whom. For Jim, customers should not hear about certain emotions: "I think you need to make a good first impression, and once you've established the relationship you are free to be more open. . . . I'm thinking negative emotions. Enthusiasm is fine, excitement, pride are all good things." Clare's and Jim's examples illustrate the presence of valence in relation to emotion as part of the process through which a leader's verbal expression of emotion emerges in a particular context, and these valences can probably be traced back to their professional background as well as personal history.

Depraz (2008), based on her work with Francisco Varela, described valence as the attraction-repulsion dynamic that occurs in the neurovegetative system and informs our interpersonal relationships: "This attraction/repulsion dynamic is deeply anchored in our somatic organization and it often reveals itself through the most archaic sensory modality of taste. One need only note the axiological alternative of gust/disgust and its affective transposition as pleasure/displeasure" (p. 241). As shown in all stories collected for this study, participants attached different valences to emotions, seeing them as either positive or negative. As Varela and Depraz (2005) discussed, as movement tendencies, emotions carry movement and posture valences such as toward/away, engage/avoid, receive/ defend. As feeling tendencies, they carry affective valences such as pleasant/unpleasant, positive/negative, productive/destructive. They also bring with them social valences, e.g.,

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dominance/ submission, as well as normative and cultural valences, such as good/bad, praiseworthy/ blameworthy.

Clare's stories seemed to show an approach similar to Peter's, well summarized in her statement "You just have to shut the door and be private." However, she also said that there were situations in which she would draw from emotion as a way to persuade others, as she did on her last day in the government. Differently from Peter, who attempted to dissuade his leader through "facts," Clare made "a very emotional appeal" to her leaders, which aligned well with her description of her beliefs about leadership: "I've always believed that it's our responsibility to prevent our bosses from making a mistake, so I put a lot of pressure up when I think the policy is going in the wrong direction." Interestingly, Peter did not manage to persuade his leader. Clare did.

Paul also had ideas of what emotions should never be expressed, even in the private setting. For instance,

> If I hate Sally Smith, you don't say it to anybody. There's always exceptions to that, but even this fellow director that flamed on me, it was almost against the rules for other people to come to me and say "That person really did you wrong by flaming on you, and I'm sorry that they did it." The culture says we don't talk about that: we don't mess with that, it's over, it's done with; deal with it between the parties that were involved.

For Paul,

> If I emote displeasure toward somebody else, that can rapidly travel around the organization and pretty soon my people are emoting displeasure about someone they don't even know the details on. So, success, pleasure, happiness, those are very, very much norms, crawling a little bit because sometimes you go a long time between big successes, but that's just the nature of the beast. Those are very, very much included up to a certain level. Just to a point where it's kind of internal to your shop. But if we start in my shop to be really, really pleased about something that we've done outside of our particular space so that it would impact on another shop, then it becomes, "You guys are bragging," so reign it in a little bit, you know, that sort of thing.

Besides actually labeling emotions either "positive" or "negative," the use of metaphors also conveys valence. Emotional experiences are often described in metaphoric language (Crawford, 2009), and "associations between affect and physical domains such as spatial position, musical pitch, brightness, and size which are captured in linguistic metaphors also influence performance on attention, memory and judgment tasks" (p. 129). This framework is useful in discussing Paul's use of the roller-coaster metaphor to describe the variety of emotions he went through in a week. Paul's metaphor conveys the valence attached to the different emotions experienced, the positive ones representing the high regions of the roller coaster and the negative emotions representing the low regions, confirming Crawford's findings that the "vertical dimension of space is commonly used to describe valenced states." Although this study did not investigate Paul's attention, memory, and judgment performance, his story depicted how he selectively expressed the different emotions in the roller coaster to different people, possibly taking into account the valence (negative or positive) and how it could affect his interlocutors.

The assumption that leaders in this study made about the effect of their verbal expression of emotion on others also finds support in the literature about emotional display. There is evidence that leaders' emotional display can have a profound impact on the organization, relationships, and members as well as on how the leader is perceived by others (Lewis, 2000; Van Kleef, 2009). Leaders interviewed for this study were obviously aware of the social nature of emotion: that we not only feel our emotions but we express them in social interaction, through which others may observe them and be affected by them (Van Kleef, 2009).

Recognizing that valence participates in the interpretation of emotions, Van Kleef proposed to go beyond valence in his model of emotions as social information. He identified two processes through which an observer's behavior might be influenced by the expression of emotion of others: inferential processes and affective reactions. According to the model, emotional expressions could affect observers' behavior by providing relevant information about the situation (inferential path) and/or by affecting observers' emotions and liking of the expresser (affective reactions path). The relative predictive strength of these paths depends on two classes of moderators: the observer's information processing (observer's motivation and ability to process the information) and social-relational factors (the nature of interpersonal relationships, cultural display rules, and the way emotion is expressed, e.g., directed at the situation or at the person). These moderators may operate separately or in parallel and in any order (Van Kleef, 2009).

Van Kleef noted that his model focused on discrete emotions and proposed that each discrete emotion conveys specific information. With that, it attempts to go beyond models based on valence alone as a way to explain how one's emotional expression affects another person. So, according to Van Kleef, inferential processes are in effect when observers utilize another person's emotional expressions to make inferences about their feelings, intentions, attitude, and relational orientation. An example of how a discrete emotion conveys information could be anger. Reporting on appraisal theory, Van Kleef explained that when "one is the target of an anger expression, one may therefore infer that one did something wrong, and this inference may in turn inform behavior (e.g., apologizing, changing one's conduct)" (p. 185).

While Van Kleef's assumption that a particular emotion can be associated with specific information remains to be tested, his model points to the complex interaction of aspects that participate in emotional expression, verbal expression included, and can help us better understand how the relational, intersubjective dimension of the expression of emotions plays out.

What is not discussed in Van Kleef's model is the emergent nature of emotion, a crucial aspect that might explain why the narratives that comprise this study also included stories of leaders that were not always in control of their emotion display behaviors in spite of their context sensitivity. Although attempts at self-regulating and even suppressing emotion appeared several times, contradictions also appeared that challenge the image of the cool and in control leader that carefully crafts his or her verbal expression of emotion based on the anticipated effect on others. In the "roller-coaster week" story, for instance, Paul carefully managed his verbal expression of emotion. However, in another story, he could not avoid turning red in a team meeting when confronted by a peer. Similar contradictions occurred with other participants. In one story, Peter held back on his emotions so as to be able to provide emergency care to children attacked by wolves. In another, Peter cried with his peers in face of the tragic consequences of another leader's behavior. As powerfully as emotions appear in Peter's stories, he repeated "You can't be emotional" and insisted that feelings were a matter for the "employee assistance program."

This apparent dissonance or disconnect between stories and within each interview may well be expressing two aspects of emotion that do not quite fit into ideals of leadership or professional behavior contained in the stories gathered for this study: (1) the

emergent, self-organizing nature of emotions (Colombetti, 2009) and (2) the ability of emotions to occasionally bypass cognitive processes and therefore prevent emotion management (Theodosius, 2006).

Conceptualizing emotion within what she called "dynamical affective science" (Colombetti, 2009, p. 407), Colombetti emphasized that emotions are complex systems and as such they unfold from the interaction of several parts whose individual behavior is not possible to track and whose contribution to the system's overall behavior is very difficult to determine. So, as hard as individuals attempt to consciously examine the context and adjust their verbal expression of emotion to it, emotional expression has a degree of biological autonomy and adaptivity that can override the control of the individual.

Using a different theoretical framework, Theodosius (2006) attempted to "begin the process of recovering emotion by identifying hidden unconscious emotion processes from its management" (p. 908). Theodosius's study tried to expand Hochschild's (1983) theory of emotion management by highlighting the social significance of emotion and the existence of unconscious emotions in social interaction. Theodosius introduced transference as a tool of analysis and argued that "engaging with both conscious and unconscious emotional processes is important to developing sociological understanding about emotion management" (p. 908), even though this is empirically very difficult to achieve.

Conclusion 3: The Role of Subjectivity

Leaders' subjectivity expressed through their attitudes, affective style, temperament, and possibly beliefs about leadership behavior, emotions, and what it

means to be professional participated intensely in the way they expressed emotions

verbally in the workplace. The OAC alone was not determining or prescriptive of how

leaders expressed their emotions verbally. In all interviews conducted for this study,

participants mentioned characteristics such as personality, affective style, temperament,

and previous experiences as playing an important role in how someone expresses their

emotions in the workplace. For instance, Jasmine said:

> A lot of the people, I think, in the engineering environment don't know how to handle emotions very well, and that has nothing to do with the company; it has to do with their family of origin, who they are, the kind of person they became, if they get in trouble when dealing with emotions now.

Even though Sarah described her organization as rather "communicative" when it

came to the verbal expression of emotion, her own style could differ:

> Sharing emotion is not my forte. I mean, I think that I am probably less gender stereotyped than you might expect it in that way. . . . I think it's a great thing for people to do it. I'm not the best at doing it, but I admire it in others.

Jim also discussed his beliefs about emotion:

> I believe in a healthy balance. We do Gallup surveys to see how engaged our employees feel, and we consistently score very well in my program. People enjoy coming to work and have the resources and the opportunities they need, and as long as that, I think it's a healthy measure.

Within the theme of subjectivity, another domain to consider is the leader's

beliefs about leadership. Clare was very forthcoming about how she thought a leader

should behave:

> I've always believed that it's our responsibility to prevent our bosses from making a mistake, so I put a lot of pressure up when I think the policy is going in the wrong direction. And then within government, if you feel really strongly and you can't change their mind, and you can't be a part of it, you can ask to transfer, which I'd done once before, actually twice.

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Additionally, the verbal expression of emotion was often connected in participants' stories to beliefs about what it meant to be professional. Nancy's story about her direct report who sent her "a long rambling e-mail that was way too personal and emotional" pointed to what she considered appropriate or not in the professional realm.

For Peter, being professional was different from being "mutinous," "emotional," or losing "rationality." Peter's story of the out-of-control leader also illustrated that being professional implies obeying the chain of command: "It's very difficult to deal with that, but there's leadership; they are in charge, they make the ultimate decision."

To interpret this conclusion from a biological perspective, we can take Varela's (1997) comment:

> Ordinary life is necessarily one of situated, embodied agents, continually coming up with what to do faced with ongoing parallel activities in their various perceptuomotor systems. This continual redefinition of what to do is not at all like a plan, stored in a repertoire of potential alternatives, but enormously dependent on contingency, improvisation, and more flexible than planning. Situatedness means that a cognitive entity has—by definition—a perspective. (p. 83)

Applying Varela's concept, I propose that a leader's "situatedness" and "perspective" is his or her intersubjective and emergent subjectivity: history, attitudes, affective style, temperament, and beliefs about leadership, emotion, and professionalism. We can say that, by enacting the environment, a leader constitutes himself or herself and, by the same process, configures the external world, which leads to the next conclusion.

Conclusion 4: Dynamic Coemergence of Subjectivity and Organizational Affective Culture

Subjectivity and OAC dynamically coemerge. Applying a dynamic coemergence conceptualization of OAC to the results of this study, it makes sense to say that all three

groups of leaders represented in the stories gathered for this study enacted and likely

affected the OAC in one way or another and were affected by it. Clare attempted to

comfort her boss in distress, only to see the relationship go sour, which reinforced her

belief that emotions should remain private. Jasmine attempted to express her emotions

more authentically and discovered an internal satisfaction with making boundaries clear

to her peers. Jim tried to create an environment where emotions were accepted as a

natural aspect of human interaction and had to deal with his subordinates' negative

feedback when he "overreacted" in connection with an employee's stage fright event.

This implies that the OAC is not an independent, static set of rules by which people in an

organization abide.

The OAC is constantly being cocreated in the relational space, as Nancy tried to

explain:

> It's all personality dependent, and we all have been sent to leadership classes, and you learn that different leadership styles for different people. And I know that sort of juxtaposes with what I have just said, that we all learn chain of command and what have you, but everybody's leadership style is different. Everybody's personality is different. Some people are going to be much more open, more approachable; some people you are uncomfortable taking any issue or problem to, or showing any emotion. But some people you have no problem with it. You're not afraid that it's going to hurt you if you show a little emotion.

What Nancy seemed to be struggling with is that while there may be

organizational norms that are overtly stated, such as the principle of command and

control in the military, they do not determine how the OAC is really experienced. Rather,

that experience varies within a wide range that Nancy attributed to differences in

personalities.

Subjectivity and the OAC dynamically coemerge. Eight individuals participated

in this study, from eight different organizations within a broad industry, and yet, there

were similarities in their narrated experience of emotions as well as in how they described the OAC. In fact, when I compared what they considered appropriate with what seemed to be the more common practice in the several different organizations to which I have belonged over the years, within a wide range of industries from education to energy, there were many similarities. There were also differences.

Nancy and Paul, two individuals within similar organizations (military), had markedly disparate experiences, possibly pointing to the dynamic coemerging nature of subjectivity and culture. As Depraz (2008, p. 240) explained through the lenses of the enactive approach, the time dynamics of the organic coupling between organism and natural context is called *auto-poiesis* "because through it the organism emerges in its integrity by virtue of its very relationship with its environment. The organism does not develop in isolation from what happens around it; it is literally created (hence *poien*) by nature, while at the same time modifying both nature and itself." Depraz went on to stress that "the autonomy of the living ('self') is the very result of its contextual dependence," that is, "It is precisely thanks to its openness to its immediate constitutive environment that the individual organism accomplishes its autonomy—a process which reveals alterity as constitutive of the identity of the living being" (p. 240).

The narratives gathered for this study included the OAC as one of the many components of the work life-space that participate in the emergence of subjectivity (which Depraz may be referring to as "identity") in the organization: the verbal expression of emotion, together with power/hierarchy relations, professional training, personal affective style, temperament, attitude, beliefs and assumptions about what it

means to be professional and to be a leader, and emotion itself—which, in turn, are shaped in this relational space in a dynamic way.
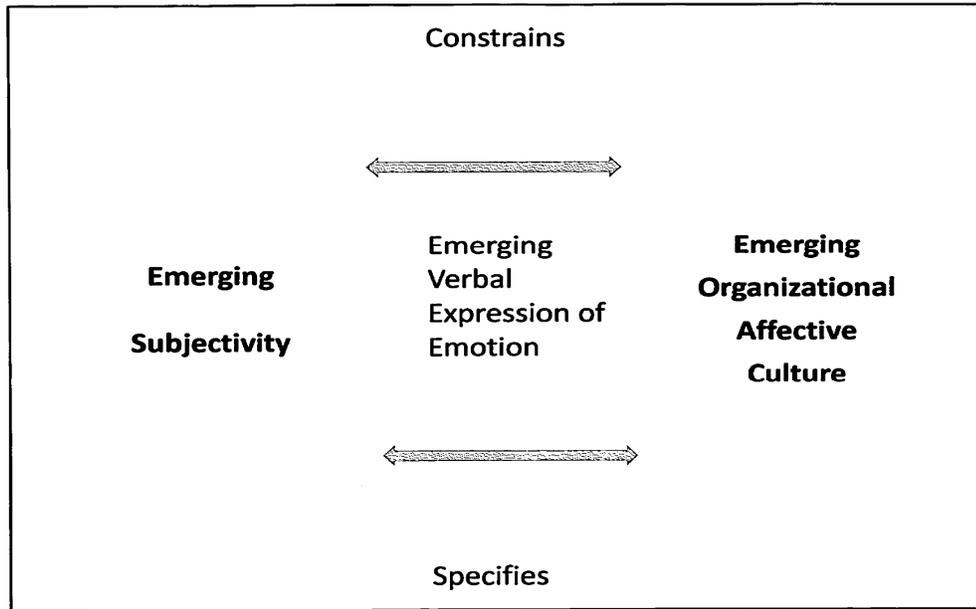
Figure 5-1. Dynamic coemergence of subjectivity and organizational affective culture. Adapted from "Imagining: Embodiment, Phenomenology, Transformation," by F. Varela and N. Depraz, in A. Wallace (Ed.), *Breaking New Ground: Essays on Buddhism and Modern Science,* New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Figure 5-1 attempts to illustrate the dynamic and coemergent relationships and overlaps that participate in the verbal expression of emotion, a phenomenon that is emergent, contextualized, and that does not always fit the OAC described by the expressor of emotion. Subjectivity is seen in this study as a constantly evolving and emerging phenomenon, constituted in relationship with the other and therefore intersubjective from the start. Subjectivity is both conscious and unconscious to the subject and encompassing of professional training, affective style, self-confidence, maturity, attitude, and assumptions about emotion in the workplace, about leadership, and

about being professional. Subjectivity is what the individual brings to bear at the moment of emotional expression, having to do with who the expressor is being, tenure, hierarchical position, and job security. Subjectivity shapes and is shaped by the OAC and by the verbal expression of emotion itself. The OAC, in turn, is dynamic, imagined, assumed, learned, and experienced. It influences the valence attached to emotions, what, how, when, where, why, and to whom emotions can generally be verbally expressed. Because it is dynamic, emergent, and imagined, it shapes and is shaped by the individuals who are participating in the moment when the emotion is verbalized. It shapes and is shaped by the expression of emotion itself.

Recommendations and Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice

Based on the conclusions of this study, this section of chapter 5 suggests ways in which theory and practice may be enhanced as well as further aspects that could be explored through research.

Recommendation 1: An Expanded Definition of Organizational Affective Culture

One of the key constructs in this study is that of OAC, articulated with formulations of emotion or affect. Barsade and Gibson (2007) defined OAC as collectively held implicit or explicit norms "about appropriate emotions to express or hold in the group and/or organization, which shape the type of emotions that are allowed and expressed in the group context" (p. 49). In that sense, the OAC is a prescriptive normative system that defines the appropriateness or inappropriateness of particular emotional expressions in the organization (Barsade et al., 2003; Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Barsade & O'Neill, 2004).

It is curious to note that in more than 50 stories collected for this study, not a single one narrated a case of romantic emotions. Unless this is a coincidence, we may be encountering a strongly shared collective norm on a specific emotion not to talk about that exists even across different organizations. Other norms may not be that consistent or clear to each person in an organization. In some stories told as part of this study, individuals verbally expressed their emotions in ways that apparently contradicted the OAC norms they described. In other stories they attempted to create their own norms. In at least one interview (Nancy), I was told there were no norms—it all depended on the individual! All of this raises important questions about (a) whether the units that compose the OAC are really norms—they might be more essential meaning systems, such as "if you express sadness it means you are weak" possibly connected with "if you are weak it means you can't accomplish the job"; and (b) the degree to which OAC norms (assuming they exist) are collectively held and as prescriptive as one may infer from the current definition offered by Barsade et al. These might be valuable questions to pursue in further research.

The stories gathered for this inquiry aligned more closely with the idea that OACs are complex and continually emerging phenomena, rather than an objectifiable, static, prescriptive set of norms. Therefore, their study must acknowledge their dynamic and complex nature, the participation of individual agents in their production, as well as the participation of the OACs in the emergence of subjectivity. As Schwandt (2008) discussed, summarizing the mutually affecting dynamics of individual and social structure, "One of the outcomes of human interactions is a continuing emergent social structure that defines future interactions of the agent" (p. 102). To do justice to the

understanding of the OAC phenomenon, it is important to capture what Schwandt (2008, p. 105) described as the "interdependent and coevolutionary relation between an individual agent's actions and the social structure of the collective." It is important to redefine OAC to account for its complexity as a phenomenon, dynamicity, the coemergent nature of subjectivity and the OAC, and individuals' agency.

Summarizing, it seems that in the stories in this study, not all norms that comprised the OAC were shared or prescribed behavior in expected ways. For instance, Paul's peer did not refrain from challenging Paul in public. Paul, on the other hand, in spite of feeling strong emotions, waited until the meeting was over to verbalize his dissatisfaction, and he did so in private. The OAC, as depicted in the stories gathered for this study, is a complex socially constructed phenomenon and therefore it lives partly in the subjective space of the imagination of each person. One cannot find written descriptions or policies that explain the OAC for each organization. Therefore, it is possible that many of the implicit OAC norms (and it seems that the vast majority are implicit) are partly imagined by individuals based on their own subjectivity, that is, affective style, temperament, professional training, previous experiences in other organizations or family, attitudes and beliefs about emotion, professionalism, and leadership. This in no way, shape, or form makes them—the imagined OAC norms—less valuable or legitimate. As Varela and Depraz (2003) very well explained based on neuroscience and phenomenology, imagination is an integral part of perception and cognition and is "central to life itself, not a marginal or epiphenomenal side-effect of perception" (p. 202). Furthermore, imagination "is, most strongly and directly, a *lived experience.* People through all times have experienced, used, delighted, and feared what

the mind's eye displays, in vivid colors and with the clarity akin of the 'real,' perceived image" (Varela & Depraz, 2003, p. 204).

I propose a definition of OAC that applies an enactive approach to the notion of culture (Baerveldt, 1998; Baerveldt & Verheggen, 1999a, 1999b; Baerveldt et al., 2000). This approach is founded on the work of Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela (Maturana, 1978, 1980; Maturana & Varela, 1980; Varela et al., 1991). Within this framework, the OAC can be operationalized as a complex, dynamic system of emotion expression norms and meanings that evolve in the dialogical relations of the people who comprise an organization, affecting those very relations in a circular causality process through which subjectivity and the OAC coemerge. This definition is meant to integrate (a) the complexity of the OAC phenomenon; (b) its dynamic nature; (c) its intersubjective dimension; (d) the important role each person in the organization has in the constant creation of the OAC, and (e) the coemergence of subjectivity and the OAC. This is why in the future, research on OAC will benefit from the use of an ethnographic or phenomenographic approach to better define OAC as a phenomenon and as a construct from the cultural perspective. Those types of studies may prove very fruitful.

Recommendation 2: Busting the Myth of Control

Across the stories collected for this study, the theme of emotion management or emotional labor (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Morris & Feldman, 1996; Simpson & Stroth, 2004) recurred. Whether leaders were supposed to suppress, ignore, grade, adjust, or modify their emotions and their verbal expression of emotions, the underlying belief seemed to be that emotions *can* be controlled and managed. Interestingly, I also heard stories where emotions got out of hand and attempts to manage them would have been

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futile and after-the-fact. This disconnect between stories could be expressing a gap between the available theories (scientific or popular) and actual human experience in organizations. We have shockingly clear examples of how emotions can take charge, but we continue to say that they cannot be experienced or openly expressed or that they should be managed.

This state of affairs is very unsatisfactory. We are in urgent need of a theoretical conceptualization of emotion that more accurately reflects experience and complexity and integrates 21st-century neuroscience. To do justice to the nature of emotions, and to create realistic expectations for people in organizations attempting to regulate them, it is important to recognize that emotions emerge from the complex interaction of many parts (Colombetti, 2009) and that they often bypass cognitive processes (Theodosius, 2006), which limits our ability to control them. This might help us better understand and deal with situations in which, in spite of norms and personal beliefs about leadership, professional demeanor, and what is appropriate expression of emotion, leaders can't help but express emotion in ways that contradict their own standards of appropriateness. Perhaps the best way to manage emotions is to recognize first of all that they are legitimate.

Recommendation 3: Role of Subjectivity in Leaders' Expression of Emotion at Work

I have suggested, based on the stories collected for this study and the theoretical framework adopted, that the verbal expression of emotion and the OAC coemerge. The results from this study seem to indicate that leaders' subjectivity plays an important role in how they express emotion and how they specify, in mutual reciprocity, the OAC. Further research on the complexities of this process would be beneficial.

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Recommendation 4: A New Understanding of Emotion for Leadership Development

If there is one thing that theorists and researchers appear to agree on, it is that

emotions are present in most everything that goes on in organizations (Fineman, 2003). It

is clear in the narratives obtained for this study that leaders struggle daily with their own

emotions and the emotions of others in the organization. Oftentimes, they simply have no

idea how to respond to them!

Leadership development and executive education programs owe it to their

students and customers to provide them with current, in-depth knowledge about

emotions, challenging, as opposed to corroborating, ill-sustained conceptions such as, for

example, the separation between emotion and cognition (Pessoa, 2008). Current

neuroscience challenges this separation for two reasons:

> First, there is a large amount of anatomical overlap between the neural systems
> mediating cognition and emotion processes, and these systems interact with each
> other in a reciprocal and circular fashion, up and down the neuraxis. Second, the
> emergent global states to which these interactions give rise are "appraisal-emotion
> amalgams," in which appraisal elements and emotion elements modify each other
> continuously." (Thompson, 2007, p. 371)

It is important that leaders understand how emotions work, develop a vocabulary

to identify and name them, and become acquainted with how they exist in organizations,

in themselves, and in others. Leadership and management education would make a

significant contribution to the quality of human experience at work in helping prevent

stories like Peter's, which, on the one hand, claim definitive rules about the inadequacy

of emotions in the workplace, and on the other hand, narrate potent emotions erupting

everywhere. It just seems that some of our leaders are at a loss when it comes to emotion.

They do not understand them. They do not know what to do with them. So they fear them, are ashamed of them, and put shame on others who express them.

Summary

This qualitative study combined heuristic and narrative research approaches to explore how leaders talk about emotions in the workplace in relationship with the OAC by examining the experiences of eight leaders in the national and international security industry. This inquiry attempted to describe and interpret the role of the OAC in the way leaders expressed their emotions verbally in the workplace. Following the heuristic methodology, the researcher's experience of verbal expression of emotion in the workplace was also included in the data. Narratives were collected through in-depth, semistructured interviews and analyzed through the creation of individual depictions, exemplary portraits, a composite depiction, and a creative synthesis.

The results of this study were discussed through the lenses of the enactive approach in cognitive science (Varela, 1970; Varela et al., 1991; Thompson, 2007). Conclusions suggest that the OAC may play three different roles in how leaders in this study expressed their emotion verbally: (a) strict normative system; (b) reference system; and (c) ideal to be attained.

The role played by the OAC in the narratives gathered for this study seemed to be connected to how each leader related to it or what modes of coupling were being experienced between the leader and the OAC. In the imperative mode of coupling, the OAC appeared as a strong normative system that the leader accepted and enforced with no or very little questioning. There were no clear boundaries between the OAC and the leader's own perspectives on emotion, and the leader avoided the verbal expression of

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emotion. In the relative mode of coupling, the OAC played the role of a reference system that the leader respected but could cautiously divert from in specific circumstances based on his or her perspective on what was needed and appropriate. The leader was more open and accepting of the verbal expression of emotion and would attempt to express emotions in ways that were mostly respectful of but sometimes challenged the OAC. In the generative mode of coupling, the OAC was an ideal to be achieved. The leader saw the OAC as a product of his or her own influence and made conscious attempts to shape it according to his or her perspective on emotion. Tempered with respect, the verbal expression of emotion was modeled by the leader as a way to demonstrate that it is considered a natural and integral part of human behavior at work.

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Stage 1: Establishing rapport

Researcher will greet participant, introduce herself, and thank candidate for his or her interest in this study. Researcher will ensure participant is comfortable and at ease.

Stage 2: Determining whether candidate fulfills sample criteria

Researcher: *The purpose of this study is to understand the role of organizational affective culture in the way leaders talk about emotion in the workplace. To ensure that I can obtain data that is relevant to this purpose, I have some criteria that I must follow regarding participants in the study. To determine whether you fulfill these criteria I will ask you a couple of questions. Is that OK?*

    a) *What is your role in this organization?*
    b) *How long have you been in this role?*
    c) *How long have you been an employee here?*
    d) *Can you recall two or three events that happened at your workplace in the last 6 months in which you have experienced strong emotions? If yes, would you be willing to share them as part of this study?*

If the candidate does not fulfill the criteria, the researcher will thank him for his interest and conclude the interview. If he fulfills the criteria, the researcher will proceed to stage 3.

Stage 3: Determining whether candidate can commit to providing all the data required by the study design

Researcher: *I would also like to give you a very brief overview of how this study is designed and what you will be expected to do as a research participant.*

Researcher explains the purpose of the study in more detail and the data collection strategy and then asks: *Is this something you can agree to doing?*

Stage 4: Conclusion

Researcher: *Well, thank you very much for agreeing to talk with me today. I was wondering if there is anything else you would like to ask, add, or comment on?*

If participant responds affirmatively, researcher continues to listen attentively. If participant responds negatively, researcher thanks participant for contributing to the study and informs the participant of when he or she will be contacted again for the first phase of data collection.

Stage 1: Establishing rapport

Researcher will greet participant, introduce herself, and thank participant for agreeing to contribute to this study. Researcher will ensure participant is comfortable and at ease.

Stage 2: Introducing the research

Researcher: *In order to be able to analyze the data later, I need to record our interview today. Is that OK with you? Thank you. Before we start, let me tell you a little bit about this study and how this interview is going to be conducted. This study explores the relationship between organizational culture and the way leaders talk about emotion in the workplace. Our conversation will last between 60 and 90 minutes and your answers will remain confidential. When I transcribe your interview, your name will be replaced by a pseudonym, and any word or expression you use that could identify you will be removed from the transcription. The recording will then be destroyed. Are you comfortable with this process? Can we proceed? Just to be clear, you can stop this interview at any time. So, would you please read and sign this consent that I have informed you of this study and your rights?*

Stage 3: Introduction to the interview

1. *Tell me a little bit about the organization you work for. What industry is it in? How large is it? How is it structured?*
2. *Now tell me a little bit about yourself and your role in the organization. What nationality are you? What's your educational background? How long have you been in this role? Who do you work with?*

Stage 4: Interview

1. *Tell me about a moment or event in which you experienced strong emotions while at work in the last 6 months. What happened? How did you feel? Did you share your feelings with somebody? Who? Where were you? What did you say? How did others react? Why?*
2. *Tell me about a moment or event in which anyone else in the organization shared their emotions with you. What happened? What did they say? How did you react? Why do you believe they came to you?*
3. *Can you tell me about a moment in which you felt very emotional but decided not to express your feelings? What happened? What made you decide not to talk about how you felt? How did you anticipate others would react if you had talked about how you felt?*

4. *Tell me about a situation in which a supervisor expressed his or her emotions to you. What happened? How did you feel about it during and after your conversation? Why do you believe they shared their emotions with you?*
5. *Tell me about a meeting where someone expressed his or her emotions. Who did it? What happened? How did you feel about it? Did you say or do anything? Why do you think this occurred?*
6. *Do you recall a situation in which you thought somebody inappropriately expressed emotions in the workplace, either negatively or positively? What do you think the emotion was? How was it expressed? What about the expression do you think was inappropriate? Were there any consequences or repercussions for the inappropriate expression? What feelings arose for you at the time?*
7. *Have you ever seen anyone cry in your organization? If yes, what happened? How did you feel about it? Did you say or do anything?*
8. *In general, what do you think are this organization's rules or norms regarding talking about emotions? How are these different from those of any other organization you have experienced? How did you notice or learn these were the norms in your organization? How important are they in the way you conduct yourself regarding talking about your emotions?*
9. *If you were uncertain about the acceptability of expressing an emotion in the workplace, to whom would you look for guidance (how many people and at what level in the organization)? What method would you use to discover acceptability (direct conversation, observation, presumed reaction of others, intuition, past experiences)? If you remained uncertain, what would you do?*
10. *Can you think of situations where you did not conform to your organization's rules or norms regarding talking about emotions? What happened? Why?*

Stage 5: Conclusion

Researcher: *Well, we have only a few more minutes left and I was wondering if there is anything else you would like to ask, add, or comment on?*

If participant responds affirmatively, researcher continues to listen attentively. If participant responds negatively, researcher thanks participant for contributing to the study and stops the tape recorder, ending the interview.

APPENDIX C:

PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS FOR FURTHER INPUT

In addition to participating in an interview, participants were invited to submit an expressional piece, journal, or letter to leadership. The instructions for each piece are presented below.

Expressional Piece

Recall an event that happened at work in the past 6 months in which you felt strong emotions. It can be a positive or a negative situation or maybe even a combination of the two. With that event in mind, create a collage, sculpture, painting, drawing, song, poem, cartoon, short story, essay, play, or photograph in which you describe what happened and who else was involved.

Journal Questions

The following questions are meant to guide you in reflecting on emotional events of your day. Each week, create a new journal entry by writing the date, and then use the questions below as a framework for your notes.

1. What were some of the moments this week in which you experienced strong emotions?
2. Did you talk with anybody about how you were feeling?
3. If yes, what did you say? To whom? Why?
4. What did they say back to you?
5. If you did not talk with anybody about how you were feeling, why?
6. Did you consider what people usually do in your organization regarding talking about emotion in your decision to express yours or not?
7. What are your thoughts about participating in this research study so far?

Letter to Leadership

In your ideal world, how would you like people to express their emotions verbally in this organization? Write a one-page letter to the top leadership in your organization, and explain

a) what current practices you feel are adequate and why, and
b) what you would like to see in terms of changes and why.

Note: This letter will not be sent. It will only be kept as part of the research data set without any identifiers.

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

Dissertation Study:
Leaders' Emotion Talk

The George Washington University
Graduate School of Education and Human Development

GW IRB number: 070807
Principal Investigator: Dr. Clyde Croswell   Telephone number: (540) 535-6644
Student Investigator: Beatriz Coningham   Telephone number: (703) 731-5757

You have volunteered to take part in the research project described below. The student investigator will explain the project to you in detail. You should feel free to ask questions. If you have more questions later, Dr. Clyde Croswell or Beatriz Coningham can discuss them with you.

1) Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study under the direction of Dr. Clyde Croswell of the CHAOS Department of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, George Washington University (GWU). Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary, and you may decide to withdraw from the study at any time.

2) Why is this study being done?

You are being asked to take part in this study because you occupy a leadership role in your organization and you work in the national or international security industry. The purpose of this study is to better understand the phenomenon of organizational affective culture, focusing on how the organizational affective culture influences the way in which leaders talk about their emotions in the workplace.

A total of 10 to 15 participants will be asked to take part in this study. There may be one or two more participants from the same organization you work for. The name of the organization for which you work will not be mentioned in the study.

3) What is involved in this study?

If you decide to take part in this study here is what will happen: You will be asked to share experiences of events in which you have felt very emotional. You will be asked to share these experiences through an interview. You will also have the choice to supplement the interview data through optional artwork, stories, and written text. You will have the opportunity to share:

a) One sample of your artwork or creative writing depicting at least one event that happened in your workplace in the last 6 months in which you felt very emotional.

b) Your experience of emotional events in the workplace through one 60- to 90-minute interview with the researcher. This interview will be conducted in a neutral and convenient place, recorded and later transcribed. All identifiers will be removed from the transcription and the tape will be destroyed.

c) Your reflections on emotional events and on your participation in this study captured by weekly journal entries for a period of 2 months.

d) One letter to the organization's leadership where you appreciate current practices of emotional expression that you find appropriate and suggest changes to improve the emotional well-being of employees in relation to the expression of emotion—if necessary. Note: This letter will not be sent. It will only be kept as part of the research data set without any identifiers.

Items a, c, and d above can be produced at your home and handed in to the researcher. Detailed instructions will be available. The data collection phase of this study, in which you will be participating, is expected to last 2 months. During that period of time, you will dedicate a maximum of approximately 15 hours.

4) What are the risks of participating in this study?

Participating in this study poses no risks that are not ordinarily encountered in daily life. There is, however, a small risk of loss of confidentiality. Every effort will be made to keep your information confidential; however, this cannot be guaranteed. Some of the questions we will ask you as part of this study may make you feel uncomfortable. You may refuse to answer any of the questions, and you may take a break at any time during the study. You may also stop your participation in this study at any time.

5) Are there benefits to taking part in this study?

By reflecting on your experience and expression of emotion in the workplace, you may gain deeper awareness of yourself and your organization. Your participation in this study will contribute towards informing organizations and individuals on how to enhance emotional well-being in the workplace.

6) What are my options?

You do not have to participate in this study if you do not want to**.** Should you decide to participate and later change your mind, you can do so at any time.

7) Will I receive payment for being in this study?

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

8) Can I be taken off the study?

The investigator can decide to withdraw you from the study at any time. You could be taken off the study for reasons related solely to you (for example, not following study-related directions from the Investigator) or because the entire study is stopped.

9) How will my privacy be protected?

If results of this research study are reported in journals or at scientific meetings, the people who participated in this study will not be named or identified. GW will not release any information about your research involvement without your written permission, unless required by law. All records obtained as part of data collection will be kept at the researcher's residence and will be filed under pseudonyms. The recording of interviews will be transcribed, all identifiers will be removed, and the recording will be destroyed.

10) Problems or Questions

The Office of Human Research of George Washington University, at telephone number (202) 994-2715, can provide further information about your rights as a research participant. If you think you have been harmed in this study, you report this to the Principal Investigator of this study. Further information regarding this study may be obtained by contacting the researcher, Beatriz Coningham, at telephone number (703) 731-5757.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign below:

11) Documentation of Informed Consent

I understand the information printed on this form. I have discussed this study, its risks and potential benefits, and my other choices with Beatriz Coningham. My questions so far have been answered. My signature below indicates my willingness to participate in this study and my understanding that I can withdraw at any time.

*A copy of this informed consent will be given to you. Please keep it in case you want to read it again.

_____   _____
Participant's Name (printed) and Signature   Date

_____   _____
Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

_____   _____
Principal Investigator's Signature   Date

APPENDIX E:

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT AD

Participate in a Research Study and Contribute to Leadership Development in the National and International Security Industry

Have you been employed by a company in the national or international security industry for more than 5 years?
Do you occupy a director or above position and have direct reports?
Have you occupied this position for at least 2 years?

If you have answered yes to the three questions above, you are eligible to participate in a cutting-edge doctoral research study of the role of organizational affective culture in the way leaders talk about their emotions.

The way leaders express their emotions can have a strong impact in how they are perceived and how the people around them feel. Participate in this study and you will be contributing to a better understanding of how an organization's culture influences the way leaders talk about their emotions in the workplace, and how leaders can foster a culture of emotional well-being and contribute to organizational effectiveness and sustainability.

Participating in this study poses no risks that are not ordinarily encountered in daily life, and you can also develop valuable insight into yourself and your workplace that can help you become a more effective leader.

If you choose to take part in this study, you will complete a 60- to 90-minute interview, with optional research activities available if you are interested in a more comprehensive participation.

For more information, please contact Beatriz Coningham at (703) 731-5757 or by e-mail at beatriz@gwu.edu.