INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6” x 9” black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600
AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF
THREE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY FIRMS USING
JAMES C. SCOTT'S THEORIES RELATED TO
everyday forms of resistance to power

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
Cynthia Joseph Smith, B.A., M.A.

The Ohio State University
1998

Dissertation Committee:
Professor Richard H. Moore, Adviser
Professor Erika Bourguignon
Professor Amy Zaharlick

Approved by
Professor Erika Bourguignon
Adviser
Department of Anthropology
Copyright by
Cynthia Joseph Smith
1998
ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the use of James C. Scott’s theoretical framework to analyze data collected in three business organizations. Primary concepts from the framework used in this analysis are: the moral economy, hidden and public transcripts, and everyday forms of resistance. The interplay of the moral and material economies of business settings, and the use of figurative communication to enact everyday forms of resistance are explored in detail.

Participant-observation methods were used over the course of nearly eight years in the first organization, three years in the second, and over two years in the third. My roles within the organizations included independent researcher, employee and consultant. All organizations studied provide information technology consulting services to business and government. Each represents a different segment of the information technology industry. One is a professional services partnership, another is a large mainframe computer manufacturer, and the third is a development software product company.
An overview of anthropological involvement in contemporary business and my use of ethnographic methods in business settings is presented. Brief descriptions of the three organizations in this study are provided. James C. Scott's body of work is discussed extensively. Using the data from my research, the interplay of the moral and material economies in organizations is explored as a means to understand resistance behavior and the informal aspects of organizational time and expense accounting systems. Figurative communication is defined as a broad category including linguistic as well as a wide range of other behaviors used for communicative purposes. Figurative communication is discussed and its use in everyday forms of resistance to power emphasized.

The results of this analysis indicate Scott's conceptual framework provides a very robust approach to analyzing ethnographic data gathered in business settings. In combination with sociolinguistic techniques emphasizing the use of figurative communication, the dynamics of power relations can be effectively analyzed and discussed. Additionally, Scott's framework and attention to figurative communication is proposed for use in applied business anthropology as a means to develop practical applications.
To Sara and Mitch

and

with gratitude to Bill
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation is the culmination of a long career in business punctuated by retreats into scholarship which has helped make sense of that experience. I would first like to thank the Department of Anthropology for making me feel welcome every time I turned up on its doorstep in the past twenty-five years.

Dr. Richard H. Moore could not have been a better adviser for this effort. His hard work and dedication are an inspiration. He has provided steady and invaluable guidance, yet has allowed me the freedom to pursue my individual interests. I greatly appreciate all the time and effort he has put forth in my behalf, his unfailing support and encouragement, and the great wealth of knowledge and experience he has shared over the years.

I am indebted to Dr. Erika Bourguignon not only for all she has taught me in her seminars and her help with this dissertation, but also for being an exemplary role model. She is not only a formidable intellect and indomitable spirit, but is also a consummate professional and a gracious lady. Her skillful interviewing, probing questions, and incisive comments have taught me as much about life as about
anthropology. Probably like many others, I am glad Dr. Bourguignon does not drive. Our excursions here and there have been a real pleasure, and I look forward to "driving Dr. B" for many years to come.

Dr. Amy Zaharlick's excellent seminar in linguistics inspired my interest in using sociolinguistics to analyze the extensive data I have collected. Her encouragement and suggestions helped with completing my Master's thesis on the topic of metaphor, and with the further extension of this work into the area of figurative communication reflected in this dissertation. Dr. Zaharlick's command of her specialty and great clarity in teaching are truly impressive and have been immeasurably helpful.

I would also like to thank Dr. Ojo Arewa for his help with my Candidacy Exam. His questions helped greatly in clarifying my thoughts about business anthropology. I have truly enjoyed the many hours of pleasant and stimulating conversation on a wide range of topics that we have had over the years.

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Frank Poirier for not only what he has taught me about physical anthropology, but also for what he has taught me about teaching. It has been a real privilege to be his student and his graduate teaching assistant. As a member of the committee overseeing my
Master’s thesis, Dr. Poirier provided important feedback and insights that have also been useful in completing this dissertation.

Dr. William Dancey was also instrumental as a committee member for my Master’s thesis on which this dissertation is based. It was Dr. Dancey’s introduction to archaeology that put me on the path that made anthropology my major. Not only has Dr. Dancey been an excellent teacher, but he is also a friend with whom I have shared some of life’s ups and downs.

To Dr. Paul Sciulli I owe a great intellectual debt for the excellent foundation in evolutionary theory he provides through his seminar. Other seminars with him furthered my appreciation for the importance of physical anthropology to a well-rounded education. I have very fond memories of the summer I spent in his lab sorting and measuring bones.

I am very grateful to Dr. Kenneth David of Michigan State University who put research before consulting to help me in the early stages of my fieldwork. His great energy and wit were instrumental in getting an important stage in this work completed successfully.

It has also been an honor and privilege to know and work with Dr. Leonard Sayles of Columbia University. For more than ten years he has been a mentor, a colleague, and a friend. Not only do I treasure sharing good food and many pleasant hours of conversation with he and his wife, Kathy
Ripin, but the opportunity for the three of us to collaborate has also helped me grow as a professional.

Many anthropologists actively involved in business anthropology have generously given of their time, advice and support. I wish to thank Drs. John Sherry, Tomoko Hamada, Marietta Baba, Frank Dubinskas, Roger McConochie, Margo Smith, Lorna McDougall, Susan Squires, Helen Schwartzman, Richard Reeves-Ellington, Jo Rainie Rodgers, and Darby Stapp in particular for their assistance, especially during the formative stages of my work. I am also grateful to Dr. Juliana Roth for her hospitality during my stay in Munich and for sharing her experiences during our long and pleasant conversations.

Harry Blaine who encouraged my study of anthropology from the beginning and gave me his very fine library of anthropological classics is especially thanked.

I thank Anita, Phyllis and Susan for all their cheerful assistance over these many years. They are not only very knowledgeable and ever-ready to help, but they make visits to the Department's office an invariably enjoyable experience.

I also wish to thank all the business colleagues who, over the past thirty years, have helped me both personally and professionally. Hundreds of people contributed directly and indirectly to the research I have conducted.
A very special thanks goes to William Yeack, who more than any other, has made this work possible. I have had the privilege of knowing Bill for over fifteen years and have watched him help many individuals, besides myself, realize their aspirations. Of all the executives I have encountered over the years, none compare to Bill in terms of intellect, curiosity, courage and hard work.

I have been blessed with the good friendship of Rowena Ironside and Ellen Stein, both admirable professionals. Their stimulating conversation, correspondence and encouragement has meant a lot to me over the years. My friend, Greg Koser, has provided me with many hours of pleasant conversation and his thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated. Wayne Philpott is another very good friend whose own professional experiences have been invaluable to my research.

My daughter, Sara, has grown up during this research and has sacrificed considerably for the sake of it. Her resilience during periods of extended absence necessitated by my work and acceptance of the financial sacrifice of my return to graduate school have been sustaining.

Words cannot express my appreciation of all the support and encouragement provided by my dear companion, Mitch Lear.
VITA

September 14, 1949 ................ Born - Cheyenne, Wyoming


1972-1973 ................ Data Systems Manager, Park Federal Savings and Loan, Columbus, Ohio

1974-1977 ................ Assistant to Principal Investigator, OSHA Project, College of Business, The Ohio State University

1977-1979 ................ Data Systems Manager, Mollmann and Associates, Columbus, Ohio

1980 ................ B.A., Anthropology, The Ohio State University

1979-1981 ................ Homemaker

1981-1982 ................ University Fellow, The Ohio State University

1982-1989 ................ Anthropologist, International information technologies consulting firm. Not identified because data is used.

1989-1993 ................ Graduate Teaching Association, The Ohio State University

1991 ................ M.A., Anthropology, The Ohio State University
1991 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Senior Researcher for Dr. Leonard Sayles, The Center for Creative Leadership, Greensboro, North Carolina

1993-1996 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Consulting Anthropologist, Computer mainframe manufacturer. Not identified because data is used.

1996-1998 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Consulting Anthropologist, Development software product vendor. Not identified because data is used.

PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Anthropology
Emphases: International business, information technology industry, project management.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ......................................................... ii
Dedication ....................................................... iv
Acknowledgments .................................................. v
Vita ............................................................. x
List of Figures ..................................................

Chapters:
1. Anthropological Involvement in
   Contemporary Business ............................... 1
2. Research Background and Methods ..................... 38
3. Research Site Description:
   Consulting Partners .................................. 69
4. Research Site Description:
   Hardware Corporation and Development
   Software Corporation ................................. 106
5. Moral Economy, Hidden and Public
   Transcripts, Infrapolitics, and
   Everyday Forms of Resistance to Power .......... 144
6. The Interplay of the Moral Economy and
   the Material Economy in Business Settings ....... 189
7. The Use of Figurative Communication
   in Everyday Forms of Resistance ................. 250
8. Conclusion .................................................. 303

Bibliography ................................................ 314
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1 &quot;Stress&quot;</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 &quot;The Hatchet&quot;</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 &quot;Professional Growth Seminars&quot;</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 &quot;Special High Intensity Training&quot;</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5 &quot;The Copier from Hell&quot;</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6 &quot;Real Programmers&quot;</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7 &quot;A Typical Day in Data Center Land&quot;</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.8 &quot;Retirement Plan Memo&quot;</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9 &quot;Restroom Privileges&quot;</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

ANTHROPOLOGICAL INVOLVEMENT IN CONTEMPORARY BUSINESS

Introduction

This dissertation is part of the growing field of business anthropology. Its aim is to explore everyday forms of resistance to power in business settings. The theoretical framework set forth in the work of James C. Scott (1976, 1985, 1990, 1998) will be used to analyze data collected during extended periods of participant observation in three information technology firms. Scott’s theoretical framework is discussed extensively in Chapter 5.

Initial research was carried out between 1982 and 1989 in a large information technology consulting services organization in which I held various positions, including the role of independent researcher during a major phase of the project. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 2, which describes methods. Subsequently, two other organizations became field sites from 1993 to 1998. Chapters 3 and 4 present description and discussion of the three organizations.

Chapter 5 highlights the concepts of moral economy, hidden and public transcripts, infrapolitics, and everyday forms of resistance to power that will be applied to the
analysis in Chapters 6 and 7. In Chapter 6, I will use Scott’s theoretical framework to discuss the interplay of the moral economy and the material economy in business settings. Chapter 7 will focus on the use of figurative communications as a means of negotiating power relations within business settings. Chapter 8 will present conclusions. Before beginning discussion of the specifics of my research, the following general discussion of anthropological involvement in contemporary business organizations is presented as background.

**Anthropological Involvement in Contemporary Business**

Anthropologists pursuing research activities related to contemporary business are involved in the study of human subsistence. Business plays a vital role in shaping economic and political institutions at macro and micro levels. The environment, familial, educational, and religious institutions are also directly and indirectly effected by business. Production, exchange and trade systems have always had significant effects within the socio-cultural systems of which they are a part, and late twentieth-century business is no exception. Organizational structures and technologies have evolved that support business on a very large, international scale. However, all of these contemporary trappings subsume the small scale, day-to-day economic phenomena that have been closely studied by anthropologists such as reciprocity systems, barter, trading partner relations, household economic
systems, and various branches of informal economics. Anthropologists have studied subsistence from a contextual perspective that takes historical processes and physical environment into account; maintains an emphasis on the relationship between subsistence and technology; and, focuses on how subsistence relates to cultural systems as a whole in terms of how it affects, is affected by, and reflects economic, political, familial, educational, and religious institutions and their interrelations.

Research in contemporary business settings offers intrinsic value to the study of human subsistence. However, too great a rush to practice and only pragmatic motivation could obscure this potential for basic research within anthropology. Thus, the balance of research and practice are of paramount concern as business anthropology develops. Many anthropologists involved in research and practice within contemporary business settings are motivated by a sense of urgency predicated on the powerful ramification contemporary business has on cultural systems and the environment. It has even been suggested that this pursuit be classified as "urgent anthropology" (Fox 1975).

A case is being made in both academic and popular media¹ for what anthropology can offer the business sector in support

¹ Academic publications such as Anthropological Perspectives on Organizational Culture (Hamada and Sibley 1994) or the NAPA Bulletin series published by the American Anthropological Association (Bishop and Amoss, multiple years) are examples. A range of popular media examples includes Louis (1985), Weber (1986), Zemke (1989), Gales (1989), Deutsch (1991), Garza (1991), and Laabs (1992).
of anthropologists who have become practitioners. Various public relations efforts of associations such as the American Anthropological Association, and of private sector anthropologists, have steadily created some increased public awareness of what business anthropologists uniquely offer employers and consulting clients. The pragmatic rationalization often made for anthropological involvement in business merits discussion. Establishing a research and practice specialization in contemporary business could increase access to material resources by opening whole sectors of funding for research. Also, such involvement could increase entre of graduates into new sectors of the economy, thereby, making anthropology a more practical choice as a college major. Since creating jobs for students creates jobs for faculty, anthropology departments would have to swell to meet increased demand. By extension, becoming more visibly relevant outside academe could serve to bolster the discipline as a whole which is at risk of diminishment in a period of educational pragmatism that takes business as its model. Basic survival and a hoped for expansion are often invoked as rationales for research and practice in contemporary business. These pragmatic reasons having to do with the material issues that must concern all formal disciplines reflect the elements of what is commonly called "the numbers game" as it is played in both business and academic settings. There are compelling
practical reasons for anthropology to establish and promote a recognized specialization in business.

However, there is also a case to be made for what research in contemporary business settings can intrinsically offer anthropology. As it proceeds, the following discussion will particularly endeavor to point out some of the potential intellectual value to the discipline as a whole of pursuing a research program in business anthropology.

**Contemporary Business**

The extremely large-scale and global nature of some contemporary businesses means they increasingly transcend the ability of political institutions to serve as any check or balance of the power that such size and control of resources confers. A recent newspaper magazine article (Iyer 1998:37) aptly describes this growing population which it terms the "business class": "Today's executives live everywhere at once, inhabiting a growing community of the air that is responsible to no nation or governing body but only to the imperatives of commerce." The term "executives" overstates the position of the effective population also described by the article (Iyer 1998:1) as "a new elite of glazed nomads." Additionally, the nomadic "business class" described in the article includes a growing number of technologists and lower level ranks that cannot accurately be classified "executives." In concluding, the article suggests these people are more than "supersonic versions of the Phoenician traders or Bedouin
merchants" (Iyer 1998:38). But are they, and if so, just how? It would seem this new variant of nomadism would merit investigation by anthropologists as well as journalists looking for an intriguing story angle.

The association between contemporary business and technology is also of interest to the study of human technology. Anthropologists identified the centrality of technology to the study of humans early on and maintains a strong focus on human technology. Some anthropologists, such as Leslie White, have even made technology the key variable in cultural systems and using mathematics have attempted to make formulaic expression of this fact. Anthropology as a discipline maintains a contextual perspective that incorporates the nonmaterial as well as material aspects of technology, its cumulative nature, and the fact that human technology is intricately bound to human relations. Material technologies researched, developed and deployed by contemporary businesses now extend into extreme direct interventions in biological evolution and mimicry of human intelligence that are both as alarming as the capacity for atomic mass destruction and as promising as fire. The degree to which even the smallest and most remote of cultural systems

\footnote{For example, handwriting, stone engraving, and painting done by hand with simple technology is still ubiquitous though overshadowed by newer technologies, such as typewriters, printing presses and computers.}

\footnote{I am deeply indebted to Dr. Richard H. Moore for the clarity of his lecture materials on the characteristics of human technology that highlight these points.}
are directly and indirectly involved in contemporary business is increasingly well documented in ethnography. These phenomena are undergirded and accelerated by information and telecommunications technologies made possible by a greater understanding of physics, and technological control over invisible forces by means such as electrical and electronic devices. Anthropological involvement in research and practice in contemporary business is essential to extension of understanding human tool usage as well as human subsistence, human institutions, human organization, culture change, systems of exchange, dynamics of human relations, linguistics and communication, to name but a few major topical areas.

Issues Related to Practicing Anthropology

The issues related to establishing areas of practice within anthropology are not unique to the practice of business anthropology. A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (1957) considered the particular issue of practice in 1937 in a discussion before a faculty seminar at the University of Chicago on the topic, "A Natural Science of Society." He characterized practice as an obstacle to a theoretical science of society, and expressed concerns that "the demands for practical results are so insistent" (Radcliffe-Brown 1957:148) that attention to theory would be compromised. Looking at the larger context of social science, he stated:
The sociologists, the political scientists, the economists, the lawyers, follow each their particular line, without any coordination of studies, without desire for it, creating a situation in which the institutional set-up is such as more or less to exclude the possibility of a theoretical science of society. That is why it has led me to take refuge in departments of anthropology as the only place left to it.

In 1935, T.K. Penniman (1952:17) in his preface to the first edition of A Hundred Years of Anthropology characterized anthropology's role as fulfilling the "need for a Master Science which will collect the harvest of these special sciences.... . None of the departmental sciences alone can tell the whole tale. Anthropology must act as the liaison of all of them." While this seems putting it in rather grand terms, anthropology still does provide a unique perspective, though we struggle to define just what it is. The distinctive role and contribution of each of the social sciences within the system of social science, and social science within the overall intellectual framework as it has come to exist is of importance. It is at this level that concerns about balancing theory and practice within anthropology are actually about whether the social sciences in general should have a segment that remains somewhat more isolated than others from the influences of practice. Unfortunately, an isolation that may in fact be desirable will lead to marginalization and potentially extinction in today's environment, so anthropology may no longer have the luxury of such a debate.
The practicality of complete isolation has always been questionable. As S.F. Nadel (1958:52) states: "While certain anthropologists would remain aloof from these practical questions, others consider it a right and duty to 'apply' anthropology in practice." [emphasis added].

Even if it were possible to remain largely isolated in terms of severely limited practice, it is clear that practitioners in other disciplines will find their way to anthropological knowledge, directly and indirectly, by independent invention, diffusion, and borrowing. Sometimes this is even "once removed" in that a discipline that borrows directly from anthropology is in turn borrowed from by yet another discipline. An example of this would be the discipline of communications which in turn has acted as a conduit for anthropological knowledge into management science.

In the early 1980's, anthropologists were caught by surprise and somewhat taken aback by the seemingly sudden and vigorous appropriation of the concept of culture itself by management sciences. Some anthropologists have felt compelled to enter research and practice in this area in order to correct simplistic notions of culture, encourage solid development of empirical data, and as a counter to frivolous, speculative narratives, anecdotal stories and opinions (Hamada and Sibley 1994:4).

Of particular note is the publication of the book entitled, Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life (Deal and Kennedy 1982), which became a management best seller and popularized the concept of culture.
In the publication of his 1937 discussion on "A Natural Science of Society" at the University of Chicago, Radcliffe-Brown invoked a taboo on the term "culture" until two-thirds of the way through the book. His rationale (Radcliffe-Brown 1957:94):

... 'culture' has now become the name for a lot of material things as well as for modes of behavior -- for both concrete things and abstractions. You throw the lot together and say, 'All this is culture,' and finally reach the reductio ad absurdum of a definition like this.

Practical application of anthropology in business has led to what I call "culture as an excuse." Surprisingly often, managers now characterize difficulties across functional and organizational boundaries; inherent in the aftermath of mergers, joint ventures, and acquisitions; and, intrinsic to global business situations as being cause and effect differences in cultures, as if that is the end of discussion. Sometimes an individual can articulate some particulars of this "difference." More often, it is a vague, general statement, said with a shrug, that rationalizes the status quo, particularly for the dominant entity -- the larger or more powerful functional group, organization, or country associated with a particular situation. "Culture" has also become an excuse for poor, even unethical practices; bad communications; ineffectual structures; and, a whole host of other organizational ills. We have in this the "reductio ad absurdum" that concerned Radcliffe-Brown.
Just as "culture" is not an excuse, it is not a panacea. The pressure for "quick fixes," and related to this, the recent burgeoning of the consulting industry creates a business context often described as faddish. Some managers are stating openly that nobody really knows what to do. Some hire an endless stream of consultants, initiate organizational development programs, and constantly re-organize in an effort to find solutions to business problems. In particular, the scale of global organizations being created in the wake of the greatest wave of mergers and acquisitions to have ever occurred, which is currently underway, and probably has not yet peaked (Blackford and Kerr 1990, Wayne 1998), is beyond the scope of experience in the business sector. This leads to a certain amount of experimentation, which is theoretically a way to figure out improvements. However, pressures for rapid results often lead to poorly conceived, unrealistic program designs, and failure to fully implement appropriately long-term change programs required by the adoption of new approaches to acculturative events such as joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions, or implementation of organizational designs intended to improve the operation of organizations. Organizational "culture change" initiatives have become part of these efforts and have met with varying success. Whether or not "culture" goes out of fashion in business because it does not offer a hoped for panacea should not be linked to
whether or not anthropologists pursue or suspend academic interest in contemporary business.

The question of motivations behind anthropological research and practice in contemporary business is very real and very valid. E.E. Evans-Pritchard (1946:93) raised these issues in an article on applied anthropology:

Moreover, there is a grave danger that the pressure of political and administrative interests, and the allurements that accompany them, may draw away so many of our small band from the investigation of purely scientific problems that the advance of the science may be seriously retarded. That is, granting that we separate the study of scientific problems from the solution of practical issues, without prejudice to either, it is argued that it is the long view, the research seemingly removed from issues of the day, that will really yield richest reward to society. [emphasis added]

Unless anthropologists in academe make research a priority, the dearth of ethnographies of business, paucity of empirical data, inadequacies of available models, and lack of theoretical agreement that Hamada and Sibley (1994) suggest characterizes the current state of affairs in business anthropology will persist. Also, there is a new issue raised by the recent resurgence of activity in business anthropology. Consulting was not the industry it is now when Evans-Pritchard was writing in 1946. In addition to the concern he expressed that too many of "our small band" will be drawn away outright, there is currently the issue of whether those who remain in academe pursue an appropriate balance of teaching, research and consulting. Having personally played both the role of researcher and of consultant, there is no doubt in my mind the
two roles are incommensurate. Anthropologists can look to other disciplines for examples of what can happen if consultancy supersedes research as a priority. Consulting is a valid area of practice. However, conflating it with academic research by apologists in that realm will not stand up to the harsh light of day. If anything, anthropologists should concern themselves with studying the effects of this intrusion of business consulting into academic institutions. The difficulty of gaining access to business organizations for research purposes is often cited as a rationale for "resorting" to consulting. Though this is a real issue, it is not always insurmountable. In some situations, consulting is perhaps better than no access at all, and if carefully handled, may serve double duty as research.

Mutuality in Intellectual Histories: Business and Anthropology

Even though business colleges have managed to distance themselves structurally from social sciences within academe, the mutuality of the intellectual history of business and social science, including anthropology, is notable. In a volume of classic papers on organizational theory arranged largely chronologically beginning at the turn of the century (Shafritz and Whitbeck 1978), it is impossible to miss the similarities in intellectual development among organizational theorists, social science in general, and anthropology in particular. Familiar figures to anthropologists, such as Max Weber, Talcott Parsons, Erving Goffman, Bronislaw Malinowski,
A.L. Kroeber, S.F. Nadel, Ralph Linton, and Burleigh Gardner, appear in the volume as authors and references. Striking parallels in development of theory between organization theory and anthropology are evidenced by the near lock-step progression of both disciplines through structuralism, functionalism, structural-functionalism, personality theory, culture and technology, and sociolinguistics. There is also similarly heavy borrowing from evolutionary and other biological sciences as organic rather than mechanistic models are put forward. With a note of irony for anthropologists, the last statement in the last article in this collection of classics concludes:

As you know, organizations are extremely complicated. To have as much knowledge as we do have in a fledgling discipline that has had to borrow from the diverse tools and concepts of psychology, sociology, economics, engineering, biology, history, and even anthropology is not really so bad. (Perrow 1978:322)

Some of the irony of this statement hinges on the fact that it was first published in 1973 which is part of the period (1960's through 1970's) characterized by histories of business anthropology as a period of hiatus from this area of study (Baba 1986; Hamada 1994). Anthropologists may have taken a hiatus from organizational (business) theory, but organizational theory clearly did not take a hiatus from anthropology. During this period the term "culture" and the work of anthropologists appears in a number of these classics of organizational theory. The emergence of the emphasis on
"culture" by organizational theorists in the 1980's was clearly not as abrupt an event as it seemed to anthropologists.

Histories of anthropological involvement in business organizations (Baba 1986; Chapple 1953; Gamst 1990; Hamada 1994; Morey and Luthans 19875) are important and useful. However, a thorough investigation of the mutualities of the intellectual histories of anthropology and organization theory suggested here would make an interesting contribution. Of course, the two disciplines are not fully commensurate despite some shared intellectual history, and an exploration of that fact would also have value.

Historical assessments of anthropological research and practice in business might also more closely examine the 1960's and 1970's currently characterized as a hiatus. Individuals who were part of the post-World War II heyday of what was then called "industrial anthropology" just preceding the 1960's remained active, a few in Business Colleges, and used anthropological methods and perspective throughout their careers. A most notable example of this is Leonard R. Sayles (Burgelman and Sayles 1986; Chapple and Sayles 1969; Sayles 1957, 1963, 1964, 1970, 1989, 1993; Sayles and Chandler 1993; Sayles and Strauss 1960, 1967). Sayles, who was part of the

---

"old gang" of industrial anthropologists of the 1940's and 1950's, has had a productive and distinguished career creating a body of work which is the anthropology of business. The corpus of writing produced by Sayles has the additional value of being largely focused on technological organizations. In a recent book, Sayles (1993:251) writes a special Research Appendix in which he acknowledges his research methods as "derived from social anthropology: observation and open-ended interviewing." He is unapologetic about his lack of interest in "instrumented" research methods, and suggests that "some basic flaws in the underlying or implicit theory of the core of managerial work" might be attributed to the failure of researchers to "go out and look at the functioning of real companies and ... watch what managers had to do in order to get something done effectively" (Sayles 1993:252). Sayles suggests there is a distinction between an anthropologist "going into the field" and what is considered "going into the field" by other disciplines:

And when they did go into the field (usually with an instrument), it was with a clear hypothesis in mind that would brook no interference from the anomalies and imperfections of the real world.

In this discussion, Sayles (1993:253) characterizes himself as an inveterate interviewer, and uses the term, informant, common to anthropology:

---

6 Sayles refers to the industrial anthropologists active during the 1940's and 1950's such as Eliot Chapple, Conrad Arensberg, and William F. Whyte with whom he worked and studied, several of whom he maintained a life-long relationship with, as the "old gang."
Wherever and whenever I find a line manager with whom to carry out a discussion, I take advantage of the opportunity to probe his or her recent work experiences. Modestly, I think I am able to get most such informants to discuss their jobs and their organizations freely."

Sayles was making important contributions to management science throughout the period of the 1960’s and 1970’s characterized as anthropology’s hiatus from business activity. In a career stretching back to the early 1950’s, Sayles has conducted extensive fieldwork projects within IBM, NASA and other notable organizations that form the basis of his numerous books and publications. Sayles was among the early editors of Human Organization, is a Fellow of the American Anthropological Association, and holds similar distinctions and awards in management science. Yet, he is conspicuously absent from histories of industrial anthropology. The works of scholars such as Sayles should be included in the general body of anthropological knowledge in this area, and comprise an excellent foundation for training anthropologists who specialize in contemporary business.

Another figure that might be incorporated into the history of business anthropology is Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. Vonnegut studied biochemistry at Cornell between 1941 and 1943. Following that and his experience in World War II, he studied anthropology from 1945 to 1947 at the University of

---

7Having had the privilege of working with Dr. Sayles, his characterization of his skill with informants is indeed modest. He is able to engage informants in very intensive and productive sessions in a wide range of formal and informal settings. He is not only an inveterate, but a consummate, interviewer.
Chicago. Even though his thesis, "Fluctuations Between Good and Evil in Simple Tales," was rejected for a degree, his works carry the imprint of his anthropological study of this theme. After being rejected for a degree at the University of Chicago, Vonnegut took a job doing public relations writing at General Electric in Schenectady, New York. His book, *Player Piano*, written in 1952, is a futuristic look at society dominated by managers, engineers, and computers, and includes an anthropologist as a character. This book falls within the genre of organizations as psychic prisons that characterized many works of the 1950’s. *Player Piano* is made more interesting by way of the attempt made by George D. Downing, a former General Electric executive turned academic, to counter Vonnegut’s characterization of General Electric’s annual "island meetings." This annual executive meeting formed a core enculturation mechanism and symbol for the company’s management from the 1920’s until the island’s sale in 1956 (Downing 1979).

According to both accounts, each year members of management anxiously awaited their invitation to the meeting on an island in Lake Ontario owned by the company. For younger managers, an invitation indicated the person was on his way up in the organization. Upon arrival, attendees were greeted by a small band playing music composed for the island meeting, passed through a reception line of executives, and set up housekeeping in two-man tents. The opening ceremony
was held beneath a large elm, known as "The Elm" which took on enormous totemic import. The closing ceremony traditionally included the arrival of a lone Indian in full battle regalia, who paddled a canoe to the shore and made a "sentiment-charged speech" (Downing 1979:278). The degree to which Downing's article, first published in 1967, appears to be a rather long apologia to counter the impression of General Electric created by Vonnegut in 1952 is quite striking, especially given that he makes no mention of Vonnegut. Vonnegut's book, based on his insider vantage point, can be fruitfully explored by anthropologists working in this specialty, particularly because of the contrast provided by Downing's insider account, and should be mentioned in business anthropology histories. Vonnegut's extrapolations about the implications of computers, an emerging technocracy, and very large organizations are still provocative today.

Further, a recent review of some anthropological classics yielded considerable references to business in the works of many anthropologists in the early half of the twentieth century that are not included in historical discussions. For example, Melville Herskovits (1952) had a good deal to say about business as he discussed economic anthropology, yet is not mentioned in historical accounts (for example, Baba 1986; Hamada 1994). For that matter, it seems there is more disconnection than warranted between those involved in
business anthropology and the field of economic anthropology in general.

Lastly, anthropologists working in the area of business anthropology would benefit by more inclusion of the work done by scholars in other disciplines who use anthropological methods or concepts. Examples of this can be found in articles drawn from various disciplines involved in management science in the edited collection entitled, *Life In Organizations: Workplaces As People Experience Them*, (Kanter and Stein 1979). Another example is some of the further work produced by Terrence Deal following his ground-breaking work with Allen Kennedy (*Deal and Kennedy 1982*). It often seems striking that so few non-anthropologists are cited by anthropologists writing about business, yet some excellent work has been done.

**Mutuality in Subject Areas: Business and Anthropology**

Anthropologists and business scholars investigate many of the same subject areas. A few of these will be explored in this section in order to highlight the degree to which both disciplines might benefit from increased interdisciplinary exchange.

Human organization is, of course, central to understanding the dynamics of businesses and of cultural systems. Much of anthropological attention has been directed at the negotiation of scale engendered in transitions from band, to tribal, to chiefdom, to state levels of organization.
Large-scale, global business enterprise presents us with a new level for analysis that is uniquely informed by the anthropological foundation created by the study of human organization at the band, tribal, and chiefdom levels. The phenomenon of re-organization as it plays out in contemporary business environments should also be of interest for anthropologists, and presents some intriguing avenues for study. Anthropologists have only recently taken up the issues of larger-scale organization to any significant degree. Urban anthropology; the anthropology of cultural systems at the state level (studying Japan rather than the Ainu); specializations in large-scale policy issues such as poverty, mental health, medicine, immigration, trade, or development; and, an increasing tendency to tie traditional cultural studies to a regional and global context are examples of this trend in anthropology.

Margaret Mead addressed some of the still present criticisms of anthropological studies of complex, contemporary societies. The issues were raised by her attempts to investigate national character stemming from applied work during World War II when she was commissioned to study the friction that arose between Americans and the British. Mead explained she was able to elucidate the problems in this relationship by concentrating on "exploring some small particular segment of a society and only a special aspect of its culture" (Mead 1962:404). Mead demonstrated that varying
meaning placed on this "partnership" could be traced through British sports behavior and American business culture. The ability for an anthropologist, such as Mead, to ferret out a particular aspect of a cultural system that elucidates complex issues in more manageable terms may be a real strength of the discipline's holistic and integrative orientation.

Some of the concerns commonly raised about the use of anthropological concepts and methods in studies of complex, contemporary cultures and now large-scale, global business, involve whether the methods used to study small-scale, nonliterate cultures are suitable to other contexts; whether "primitive man" is somehow so different that there is little basis for comparison; and whether small-scale cultures are too qualitatively different for findings to be commensurate enough to be of value. One of the criticisms of method addressed by Mead suggests that anthropological emphasis on the use of informants rather than quantitative approaches makes for a sampling problem. Mead (1962) counters this criticism by explaining that anthropologists use a different kind of sampling which considers informants in terms of a large number of variables rather than the restricted standard variables of statistical means, such as age, sex, or socioeconomic status. The strength of this approach is the ability to surface patterns that can be missed in other methods. Combining informant interviews with document analysis and quantitative approaches yields the richer methodological approach needed
for studies of large-scale, complex subject matter. Mead also suggests that another criticism, lack of replication of observations, can be addressed by using a team approach. Nadel (1958:50) also advocates a team approach: "In the field study of widespread groups and complex civilizations the old techniques of single-handed observation becomes sadly inadequate." A team of specialists can more readily overcome the obstacles of space and time inherent to studying large-scale human organization.

Even if some anthropologists find the study of large-scale organization more daunting than members of other disciplines seem to, there are levels of study and analysis within such organizations that are very compatible with traditional anthropological study. Using factory cliques as an example, Max Gluckman (1954:76) points out a very important phenomenon characteristic of human organization: "Studies of group formation as it goes, ... suggest that all groupings of persons tend to split into smaller groups." Besides the fact that formal subdivision is characteristic of large organization, informal subdivision is characteristic of even small-scale organization in the form of cliques and work groups of various kinds. The actual day-to-day workings of large-scale organizations occurs at a scale amenable to anthropological method and analysis (for example, Briody and Baba 1994; Fiske 1994).
Of particular interest with respect to scale is the extensive use of project teams in business organizations to accomplish specific tasks. Project teams can range from a few individuals up to one or two hundred, or more. The project level of analysis generally lends itself very readily to anthropological methods. Since the investment represented by these projects now often reaches levels in the tens or hundreds of millions, even billion-dollar, range, their successful organization and management is an issue of great import to the business community (Cleland and Gareis 1994). Anthropologists are uniquely well suited to study the dynamics of projects, in particular, those that consist of international teams. In the course of my research, a number of these types of projects have been studied in which as many as a dozen or more nationalities were represented. The field of project management has considerable potential for anthropologists specializing in the business sector.

Also, along the lines of scale in business, J. Birdsell's (1972) magic number hypothesis suggesting there are consistent population numbers related to band and tribal organization has profound implications for organizational theory. Primatologists suggest the average band size of about 25-50 is also "generally consistent with the average size of many primate social groups" (Poirier, Stini and Wreden 1994). There may also be some interesting implications in the oft-used number of five as the average family size for hunter-
gatherers. The issue of finding optimal sizes for teams, work
groups, management span of control, and facilities planning is
a persistent one for business. Business literature is full of
tries to articulate principles related to optimal or
natural population numbers.

Anthropologists might also consider whether recent trends
toward participatory management and self-managed teams are
efforts to create a more band-like level of organization that
reduces large-scale organizations to a more practical human
scale. Or, they might consider the efficacy of these attempts
in view of the tendencies toward hierarchical organization
characteristic of human cultural systems of much smaller scale
than many contemporary business organizations and findings
concerning hierarchy in nonhuman primate organization.

Division of labor and specialization are also topics of
study in both management science and anthropology.
Contemporary business raises some interesting issues in these
areas. Indeed, the establishment of Master of Business
Administration (MBA) programs was initially predicated on the
need to transcend specialization considered to have reached
problematical proportions by cultivating general managers.
Even so, MBA programs and management education generally has

---

The Scalar Principle (Mooney 1930) is one example. Discussion of optimal "span of control" for
managers is tied to specific numbers based on context. Also, optimal sizes for teams and at what
numeric levels will structural use of subteams be required are commonplace in literature. Decisions
about physical facilities are also influenced by theory related to optimal sizes for particular
situations. For example, one prominent Silicon Valley company dictated that none of its new facilities
would house a population greater than 300.
specialized to the degree that there are still concerns about a dearth of general management skills and a lack of breadth in these programs (Porter and McKibbin 1988).

Enculturation processes are also an interesting point of intersection between anthropology and business. Particularly, anthropologists interested in contemporary, complex societies cannot overlook the role of workplace enculturation in the larger scheme of things. Orientation, training and development programs9 with both overt and covert goals relating to enculturation processes of organizations are supplemented by informal enculturation processes wherein "elder" workers impart wisdom to new members. Many organizations construct what are commonly referred to as "boot camps" because they have the same intent to serve as a rite of passage as their military counterparts. These camps can last anywhere from a few days to months. By holding this training in special facilities, participants are most often deliberately isolated from their normal context (home, family, friends), and even from the rest of the organization they have joined, during these periods. Participants are intentionally made to undergo hardship, and the events are ended by incorporation ceremonies. Besides these "boot camps," there are often the longer processes of learning as one changes roles in the course of a career. How these workplace

---

9These types of programs are frequently referred to as "socialization." Sometimes sardonically, they are referred to as "brain washing" by insiders.
enculturation processes ramify throughout a cultural system, extending to effects on families, political beliefs, or involvement in religion are of anthropological interest.

Reciprocity systems and trade relations are two more areas in which both business and anthropology have mutual interests. Anthropologists can shed some interesting light on the role of reciprocity in business environments. Economic anthropology and studies of the informal economy (for example: Herskovits 1952; Malinowski 1922; Mauss 1967; Ortiz 1983; Plattner 1989; Sahlins 1972; Smith 1990) have explored reciprocity systems, but this has yet to be well and truly studied in the context of contemporary business organizations. It might surprise anthropologists to know how elaborate and complex reciprocity systems can be in contemporary business organizations. *The Gift* by M. Mauss (1967) and M. Sahlins' (1972) book, *Stone Age Economics*, suggest some provocative lines of exploration when read with contemporary business in mind.

In particular, telecommunications and information technology businesses have formed an increasingly intricate complex of trading partnerships among themselves, in addition to the more conventional trading partnership between a business and its customers or distributors. A number of categories of business relations exist in these industries: alliances, partnerships, certification programs, distribution channels, and various outsourcing arrangements between and
among businesses. The phenomenon is distinctive enough that people are struggling to coin a new term that can characterize this way of doing business, such as "coopetition." Organizations are finding it difficult to adjust to these new types and mixtures of relations. Of course, new specializations have arisen among management and staff dedicated solely to managing these relationships, even including the title of "relationship manager." Besides being an interesting phenomenon in its own right, this trend merits examination of the implications it has for the public interest with respect to potential for collusion and abuse. After all, these relations do not fit neatly into existing categories that are conventionally monitored by regulatory institutions.

Another phenomenon that would be of interest to anthropologists involves changes in household economics that are byproducts of waves of downsizing and reorganization in business; promotion of telecommuting as a new option for the workforce; and outsourcing that has made it possible for more individuals to work, often in their homes, as independent contractors. Despite the fact that the unprecedented levels of merger and acquisition activities are creating ever larger-scale entities of truly mind-boggling proportions, the concomitant trends just mentioned have created an increase in self-employment, clusterings of cooperating independent contractors, and telecommuters whose employment is now located in the home. "Virtual workers" and "virtual office" are
recently coined terms for the combined effects of outsourcing, which purportedly allows a business to expand and contract readily without commitments to permanent employees, and increasing numbers of telecommuting employees who no longer require physical location in an office to perform their jobs.

The experiences reported by individuals adjusting to working at home have some interesting implications along the lines of household economies. For example, one individual who began doing computer consulting from his home quickly found that his teenage son was capable of performing some of the work. He reports getting a certain amount of pleasure from telling clients he will have his "junior" work on a segment of the project. "Junior" is a common term in consulting referring to less experienced professionals. He enjoys the fact that his clients do not always realize that he means junior in a quite literal sense.

In another case, a couple with two small children are both employed by the same company as virtual workers. Like many others, they are finding it a challenge to balance work and family, and like many who work at home, they report they are spending more time on work because "it is always there." To express the degree to which they feel work has come to dominate their household, they have taken to frequently quoting a phrase they picked up in an article, "We live where we work." They, like many others, have expanded their definition of who is in the household and part of the
household economic system by hiring a full-time nanny and housekeeper. In many cases, individuals who provide child care and housekeeping services live in the household. In this case, the person did not. Decisions about household economics now include the effect on this individual. The degree to which this type of change in household economics is effecting architectural approaches to designing and remodeling homes to incorporate office space, living quarters for service providers, and specialized wiring for telecommunications is also quite interesting.

Other potentially productive areas for anthropological research and practice in business relate to accountancy. There is a specialty in accounting known as behavioral accounting that explores the effects of accounting, such as its role in producing differing business behaviors in different countries. Cost accounting structures that have been increasingly elaborated as technologies make more refinements possible are a major behavioral factor in cross functional relations within businesses. In some cases, cost accounting seems to have run amok. The cost of these very elaborate systems is not accounted for, and poorly designed systems can create hyper-politicized environments. Ill-conceived accounting systems can produce extreme internal competitive dynamics ultimately detrimental to forming
cooperative relations necessary to efficient operations. Anthropologists could make some interesting and perhaps uniquely insightful investigation of this field.

Also, accounting includes an area termed "intangibles." The International Accounting Standards Committee recently issued new proposals on how companies should account for intangibles. In its report on this effort, the Financial Times stated (Carey 1997:14):

Moreover, many enterprises’ most valuable assets, their people and their corporate culture, will rarely qualify for recognition in the balance sheet yet will have a far greater influence on results than many that are recorded.

Herskovits (1952:283) recognized this area in Economic Anthropology stating: "Intangibles form an important category of property in all societies, as witness the economic value placed on patent rights, on good will, on copyright in our own culture." Herskovits might be quite surprised by the recent inclusion of corporate culture by the International Accounting Standards Committee.

Examples put forward here highlight the fact that there are so many possible lines of anthropological inquiry that the real dilemma is considering how a program of research might be established which would help focus activity on critical areas. Establishing anything resembling a concerted effort is difficult given the fact that there is no department of Anthropology in the country that has enough concentration to
claim a specialty in applied business anthropology, much less any centers, consortia, or other organizational mechanisms that can help concentrate and direct larger-scale efforts.

**Conclusion**

There are clearly considerable mutual interests shared by anthropology and business. However, the incommensurability of the two areas is as important. Because anthropology is distinctive from other social and management sciences, it has value. Because anthropology is holistic, it can function as an integrative force in a field of many specialized fields. Because anthropology has the breadth and depth of all of time and place, and covers all aspects of humans, it can serve a very useful function, particularly in view of the globalization of business activity and the rapid proliferation and diffusion of information technologies. Anthropology might well be the only social science that can offer a suitably broad framework for conceptualizing contemporary business.

The potential for anthropology is indirectly highlighted by the most recent in-depth study of management education in the United States (Porter and McKibbin 1988). This report on a very large, complex, well-funded study of management education concluded there were six "undernourished curriculum emphases":

---

32
(1) **Breadth:** Business schools should avoid the specification of increased business course requirements and electives at the expense of opportunities for enrichment elsewhere in the university.

(2) **External environment of organizations:** Business schools need to strike a better balance between the attention focused on operational effectiveness of firms (the internal environment), and outside influences (governmental, societal, legal, international) by increasing their relative curriculum emphasis on the latter.

(3) **Information/Service society:** Business schools need to undertake a comprehensive examination of how an information and service orientation in the economy can be incorporated more pervasively throughout the entire curriculum and into major research activities.

(4) **Cross-functional integration:** More attention should be addressed to synthesis and integration of specialized functional areas in the curriculum than is now provided by the single, traditional "capstone" business policy course.

(5) **People skills:** The challenge of how to develop stronger people skills needs to be faced by both business schools in the education of their degree program students and by firms in their management development activities.

(6) **International dimension:** Business schools need to increase considerably the globalization of the curriculum, and the corporate community should apply pressure on business schools to incorporate a more thorough and rigorous global perspective in the education of students in all areas of the curriculum.

Failure to address the international dimension was the only one of the six areas the report recommended be sanctioned through accrediting bodies if not addressed effectively by all business schools. Even though anthropology can contribute to all six areas, the international dimension stands out as the most obvious intersection of anthropology and management
education. It is interesting to consider how a focus on addressing the international dimension would be the most efficient and effective way to make improvements in all five of the other areas. Many anthropologists are actively engaged in research and practice focused on the international dimension of business. However, an attempt has been made here to point out how wide-ranging the opportunities are in addition to this area.

Many anthropologists, myself included, are directly involved in research and practice in the information and telecommunications industries forming the basis of what the Porter and McKibbins report terms the information/service society. For example, there is a Silicon Valley Cultures Project at San Jose State University involving faculty and students; Xerox Parc has had anthropologists involved in research for quite a number of years; E. Schein's body of work is now focused on information technology¹⁰; L. Sayles has based considerable research on these industries; anthropologists are employed as writers and editors in the media that covers these industries; and within Hamada and Sibley's (1994) edited collection of papers on organizational culture, several are specific to the information technology industry.

Criticisms and misgivings about anthropological involvement in business should be part of an ongoing dialogue

¹⁰Schein is on the faculty of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
among anthropologists. E.E. Evans-Pritchard (1962:27) was forthrightly critical of application of anthropology in general in a lecture given in 1950:

In recent times the natural-science approach has constantly stressed the application of its findings to affairs, the emphasis in England being on colonial problems and in America on political and industrial problems. Its more cautious advocates have held that there can only be applied anthropology when the science is much more advanced than it is today, but the less cautious have made far-reaching claims for the immediate application of anthropological knowledge in social planning; though, whether more or less cautious, both have justified anthropology by appeal to utility. Needless to say, I do not share their enthusiasm and regard the attitude that gives rise to it as naive. A full discussion of it would take too long, but I cannot resist the observation that, as the history of anthropology shows, positivism leads very easily to misguided ethics, anaemic scientific humanism or -- Saint-Simon and Comte are cases in point -- ersatz religion.

C. Lévi-Strauss (1963:380) also had misgivings, stating flatly: "Personally, I do not care for applied anthropology, and I question its scientific value." However, despite his personal preferences, Lévi-Strauss (1963:380) counters criticisms of applied anthropology to the effect that this threatens to turn anthropologists into a "servant of the social order" by stating: "Even if this threat is real, it seems to me preferable to standing aloof, because the anthropologist's participation results at least in an understanding of the facts, and truth has a power of its own." Lévi-Strauss (1963:369) further discusses the difficult issues of applying anthropology that are salient today:
In this respect, anthropologists bear heavy responsibilities. Having been ignored or disdained for so long, they often feel flattered when asked to provide a smattering of anthropology as a round-off to some form of technical training. They should firmly resist this temptation. There is of course no question of turning everyone into an anthropologist; but if doctors, jurists, and missionaries must acquire certain notions of anthropology, it should be through a process of very thorough technical training in the few branches of anthropological research directly relating to the exercise of their professions and to the particular areas of the world which they propose to serve.

Lévi-Strauss also highlights some of the issues that are arising concerning ways to train new anthropologists with a specialization in business, and training business practitioners. On the temptation to make compromises, Lévi-Strauss (1963:374) states:

A paltry three weeks spent in a village or engaged in some kind of enterprise cannot create that psychological revolution which marks the decisive turning point in the training of the anthropologist or even give the student a faint idea of it. Indeed, these hasty practical courses are sometimes actually harmful; they allow for only the most summary and superficial methods of research; they often amount to a kind of anti-training. ... it is impossible to confuse professional training at the higher educational levels with forms -- even advanced forms -- of supervised play.

Academic anthropologists and practitioners specializing in business in general have these issues concerning the extended timeframes preferred in anthropological methodology. Business is driven by very short timeframes, is results oriented, and must grant permission for activities. Whether, or how, to modify ideal methods to suit real situations calls for a full understanding of, appreciation for, and experience with the
method that is a hallmark of anthropology -- long-term participant-observation.

For anthropologists, there are no easy answers to the dilemmas posed by involvement in contemporary business. Anthropologists who find themselves in difficult quandaries due to ethical or methodological considerations, should be prepared to turn down positions, work assignments, research projects, or consulting work if it necessitates compromises with which they are uncomfortable. They should also insist on being able to qualify findings appropriately in order to ensure that any factors related to methodology or analysis that should be stated are stated and maintained with their findings.
CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND METHODS

In this chapter, I describe the background of my research project and the methods employed. Coleman (1996:341) suggests there is a need for more "formal methodology presentations in ethnographic accounts, with specific reference to access." Access to research sites is a definitive issue for business anthropology; therefore, this topic will be included in the following discussion. I will also highlight some of the application development activity that was essential to sustaining a field presence within an organization over an extended period of time. Further discussion of methodological issues will also occur in later segments of this dissertation when it is important for clarifying the context of events reported from the data.

In 1982, I formulated the hypothesis that traditional anthropology could be adapted for practical applications in a business context. This occurred during a year of direct participation as an employee in the organization that became the primary field site for my research. A number of anthropologists have similarly become involved in business anthropology during the course of their employment in
organizations. Tomoko Hamada (1991), for example, was initially employed as a translator for one of the organizations that ultimately became a field site for her investigation of a Japanese-American joint venture. Peter Reynolds (1994) was an employee of the firm he describes in his article.

I cannot speak for Hamada and Reynolds, but in my own case, the process of realizing the application potential for anthropology was very stimulating intellectually. Throughout the course of day-to-day activities, I increasingly thought in terms of my anthropological training and began contributing to discussions with co-workers in terms of anthropology. Very often this was by means of introducing a term, concept or model taken from anthropological sources. For example, one day, I became involved in a small group discussion of the social and psychological dynamics of the partnership structure of the organization. Early in the discussion, I introduced the concentric circle model presented by Kawamura and Kawai (1956) in their study of "Social Organization of the Natural Group of Japanese Macaque." In the conversation that ensued, the group arrived at a consensus that this model had better explanatory power than other models. Once the novelty of being compared with Japanese macaques wore off, I presented the details of Kawamura and Kawai's observations. The discussion group I was part of went into the conceptual merits of the model in terms of applying it to their circumstances as
members of professional services partnership. Following this
discussion of social and psychological aspects of the
partnership, I introduced the topic in numerous subsequent
discussions with members of the firm over a period of years.
The initial novelty of anthropological language and concepts,
such as in the example here, proved to be very useful to
engaging people in extensive discussions. Americans often
mentioned having taken a course in anthropology during
college. In those cases, I would probe the nature of their
course experience and make use of this prior knowledge in our
discussion.

Over a more than seven-year period, research in a
professional services partnership was collected through three
primary roles: employee, researcher, and consultant. The
research informally began during a year of employment.
Employment was discontinued for a two-year period during which
formal research was conducted. This was followed by a period
of consulting to the organization. Then, an offer of formal
employment as an anthropologist was accepted because it
provided an opportunity to create a permanent position for an
anthropologist within the organization. The position was
subsequently held by two other anthropologists.

In the early 1980’s, there were no jobs in the business
sector defined as anthropological except the occasional
research position. By the end of the 1990’s, this changed.
Anthropology is now considered a viable, sometimes even
preferred, credential for some positions. Marketing and training are examples of areas of organizations and industries that now employee anthropologists.

Particularly, as international business activity has intensified throughout the 1980's and 1990's, more anthropologists are working in business settings as employees by virtue of career choice. Anthropologists within academe are more frequently being hired as translators, trainers, and consultants. Also, by the end of the 1990's, a few academic anthropologists have been able to augment their research in business settings by means of long sabbaticals during which they are involved with a company as an employee, consultant, or researcher.

In my case, many years of previous business experience were invaluable to accurately conceptualizing a research project that would be accepted by the organization I wanted to study. This experience was also very helpful in producing viable practical applications that would test my hypothesis that anthropology could be effectively applied in a business setting. Demonstrating practical value, and the potential for practical value, served to maintain the direct involvement of the business entity in my research activities over an extended period of time.

Gaining access to business settings is difficult. In a discussion of obstacles and opportunities specific to access to professional work organizations, S. Coleman (1996) points
out that in his review of 45 items in the literature on anthropological field methods, he found relatively sparse treatment of access. He found that older books often make no direct mention of the issue. Traditional anthropologists often have the benefit of "elder" facilitation of access from early stages in their careers, having an academic position may make more of a difference, and the dynamic of power is often in favor of the anthropologist. None of this is very much the case in business anthropology.

Over time, if the specialization does in fact become well established, more ingrained connections may provide the benefits to students that come of having "elders" who can facilitate entre. Access may, however, always be problematical because of the nature of relations between the business and the academic sectors and the dynamic of power disfavoring the anthropologist. In the United States, for example, there is generally, but particularly in business, open hostility, or at best ambivalence, toward academe. Academe is often a subject of derision in business circles. For example, an extremely common joke asks, "What does P-H-D really stand for?" The implicitly scatological answer being, "Piled High and Deep." Also, maxims to the effect, "Those who can, do. Those who can't, teach." are examples of how these negative attitudes are expressed. The relations between business practitioners and academics may be variable in cultural contexts. However, in the case of business
anthropology, the United States is a critical cultural context within which to be able to pursue this specialization. To offset these negative stereotypes, I found it useful to emphasize my practical business experience during new encounters or when setting the stage for interviews.

**Participant-Observation Methodology**

Traditional participant-observation methodology was used for my research. It has been difficult for anthropologists to fully employ this longitudinal, qualitative approach in contemporary business organizations. In some cases, management may find the method threatening precisely because it is intended to gain deep access to the "real" versus the purported "ideal" of a culture. A manager may be concerned that lengthy presence of a researcher will create too much distraction to workers, may have a negative effect on employee morale, or become a political liability to himself within the organization. In all cases, there are concerns about participant confidentiality and organizational privacy if research is to be published.

In many cases, it is difficult to use participant-observation because the anthropologist either does not have the business or the technical skills to participate directly. This is a concern for those in academe assuming responsibility for training anthropologists for a specialization in business (van Willigen 1987). Yet, traditionally trained anthropologists are not so devoid of skills useful in business
settings as it may first appear. Van Willigen (1987) puts forward the many practical skills cultivated through anthropological training that may be put to use in the business sector. Anthropologists working in traditional settings also often stop considerably short of full participation due to lack of skills, access, or physical, psychological, or moral discomfort with what participation might entail. Business anthropologists can use the same kinds of methodological compensations for shortcomings in degree of direct participation as traditional anthropologists, such as extensive use of informants.

In the case of my research, I had skills and previous experience in business. The first year of activity with my primary field site involved regular employment and was not initially entered into with any thought of performing research. Coleman (1996:336) aptly describes this kind of experience as being an "observing participant." During this period, observations were made that led to the development of the research design. Some of these observations were communicated informally to the population in order to gain the view and knowledge of others (informants), test validity, and peak interest in a potential research project.

As my interest in using the organization as field site for an ethnographic research project developed, it became clear that fully informed permission from management should be obtained. Some anthropologists have based reporting largely,
or entirely, on their employment experience with organizations without seeking official permission, and this can be ethically acceptable (Reynolds 1994). However, my research design called for establishing a formal participant-observation project if enough data were to be systematically collected to produce an ethnography of the enterprise. For that to occur, permission and active cooperation was required. Permission was granted with only the stipulation that the organization’s identity be protected.

Entering an organization through employment without an anthropological research agenda can actually be very beneficial to subsequent analysis of an organization. In some cases, anthropologists have entered employment situations without any initial realization that they could, would, or even should, in fact, "do anthropology" in these contexts. There can be considerable value in situations wherein all parties share a certain degree of naiveté in the initial stage of what may ultimately become an ethnographic field site. For example, P. Reynolds' (1994:302) account of his own experience is very similar to my initial experience in this research project:

But I had been hired not as an anthropologist but as a software trainer through an executive-recruiting firm, so my observations were never confounded by people in the company playing a role for the benefit of the visiting scientist. Even those who knew that I had a doctorate in anthropology thought that anthropologists studied only savages, and that therefore my previous interests and experience had nothing to do with them.
When research begins through regular employment, a researcher may need to compensate for the element of subjectivity this experience can entail. In my particular case, the ability to conduct formal, independent research; the passage of time; and, the ability to investigate other organizations have contributed to increasing objectification of the research data. These factors also help to obviate the difficult issues of anonymity for the organization and confidentiality for individual research participants.

There can be considerable advantages to long delays in reporting on research. With passage of time, a number of individuals who participate in research may leave the organization studied; may be transferred; or, may be promoted, and are thus more likely out of harm's way if any unintended backlash occurs. If such delays are able to be filled with activities that extend the range of the field research into other organizations, or extend the analytical background by means of academic research activities, reporting when it is undertaken may occur more freely and in more depth. In the case of my research, subsequent to the initial, primary research described here, supplemental fieldwork in two other organizations occurred, which will be described further in Chapters 3 and 4. Also, my return to a graduate program further extended the reporting delay and afforded the benefit of faculty guidance in determining the analytical background to be used here to discuss the ethnographic data collected.
Following my first year of employment, it took over a year to fully conceptualize and design a formal research project and gain permission to begin. This stage of the process was somewhat hampered by the general dearth of activity in the area of business on the part of anthropologists at that time (1983-84). It was relatively difficult to identify either academic or practicing anthropologists actively involved in business anthropology. However, once identified, a number of individuals were contacted and consulted for advice on designing and implementing my research project. As a result of these efforts to locate business anthropologists, it was very helpful to be able to communicate to the organization targeted for my research that Kikkoman, General Motors and Xerox were also actively investigating the use of anthropology in their business activities. All of these recognizable companies were either allowing research access or employing anthropologists.

The process of apprising business people of the nature and potential usefulness of anthropology would be considerably easier today given the current level of activity in business anthropology. Also, the general media campaign efforts of individuals and the American Anthropological Association that have positioned information in publications read by management and presented before business audiences has increased general awareness.
It should also be mentioned that the popularity in management circles of a book by T. Deal and A. Kennedy (1982) entitled, *Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life*, was very useful in explaining anthropology and gaining permission to do a research project. Deal’s affiliation with McKinsey and Company, a large, prestigious management consulting firm, and Kennedy’s affiliation with Harvard University lent credibility to the book in management circles. The year after the Deal and Kennedy book was published, the CEO of the organization I wanted to study made it formally known that this was his favorite book of that year. This recommendation ensured that it gained a very wide readership within the organization’s management circles. In discussions concerning permission to begin the research, I pointed out that the authors directly credited the "keen anthropological insight" of Jeannette Robinson, who acted as their researcher. This direct reference to anthropology proved very useful. If this book had not appeared when it did, it would likely have been more difficult to gain access for the research I was proposing, even given the strong relationships that had been developed through my employment experience.

Once I formulated a preliminary design of the research project, and it was time to explore the possibility of using the organization for ethnographic research, employment with the organization ceased. It seemed prudent to not engage in
any relationship to the organization that would confuse the employee and researcher roles. A general research design was formulated, including a preliminary stage consisting of formal, taped interviews. I approached senior management for permission to proceed on the research plan after formal and informal discussions of the plan had occurred with numerous individuals throughout the office with whom I had formed relationships during employment. A middle manager took a keen interest in the idea, and acted as sponsor to senior management. He was instrumental in facilitating meetings, agreements, and arrangements for the research. He also participated very directly in the research, often taking initiatives that would further the project scope and give it visibility at senior levels.

After permission was obtained, the first stage of the research plan commenced. This stage marked a clear change in my role from employee to independent researcher. I accepted no remuneration during this period and the population involved in the research was made aware of this fact. This independence was helpful to establishing trust and providing assurances of confidentiality. During this phase, I collected a series of formal, taped, semi-structured interviews, conducted focus group sessions, and made site observations at various projects as well as in the business office. Extensive document analysis and informal elicitation sessions were also ongoing activities.
Management did not insist on pre-screening questions I used in interviews or activities that were conducted in focus groups. Despite this, I scheduled the first interview with a senior manager. This allowed for a member of that group to report not only on the questions, but on the entire conduct of the interview. Management placed little restriction on movement or access to documents. Occasionally, it was impossible to go on site with a project team due to a project manager’s sensitivity about client reactions or a client refused access outright. Most often, if I requested access to a particular site, project managers and clients were amenable to participation. I believe the novelty of anthropology in business settings made it easier in many cases to gain access.

Business practitioner awareness of the concept of "culture" was steadily increasing in the early to mid-1980’s, and my point that projects could be viewed from a cultural perspective was of interest to project managers.

Management did not make any direct demands for reporting. However, the manager sponsoring the activity and helping with its arrangements most certainly was providing some form of informal reporting to senior management throughout my activities. Since all senior management participated in the formal interview phase of the research, they had direct experience of the interview process. Also, senior management would have continuously received both solicited and unsolicited feedback from those participating in the project.
Senior managers often use informal means of getting information about what is going on in their environment. Side conversations during activities such as meetings (Schwartzman 1994), conversations at social events, chance encounters, and so forth are all commonly used by managers as a means to gain information. These techniques are remarkably similar to those used by anthropologists.

Anthropologists should not ignore the productivity of culture-at-a-distance research techniques such as pioneered by R. Benedict (1989)\(^1\) combined with participant-observation when researching contemporary business organizations. There are often a wide range of sources including regulatory filings; various public media; former employees; individuals who have contact with a business as clients, vendors or competitors; and even friends and relatives of individuals who work for organizations that offer supplementary information to participant-observation research conducted directly within an organization. In researching very large, heavily publicized organizations, this can make for a vast amount of ancillary data. For example, in 1983, the organization I studied consisted of a base population in the tens of thousands, and it has grown considerably as of 1998. The organization I first studied pursues an up-or-out employment policy. Also, having a job for only two years in this firm is considered a good credential for a resume so many people take positions

\(^1\)Original publication date is 1946.
intending to stay only two years. Together, these factors make for a high employee turn-over rate. This means that at any given time, the number of former employees of this firm is obviously huge. Encountering former employees, or friends, relatives and acquaintances of employees and former employees quite by chance is a very common event. I have made a concerted effort to include these types of informants as appropriate.

The primary organization that forms the basis of my research data is a private partnership; therefore, exempt from the public filing requirements of a corporation. However, because of its size and status, business press of all types cover the organization regularly in announcements, in-depth stories, and by means of interviewing members of the firm as experts. The work of employees is also regularly published in meeting proceedings and journals of many kinds. Occasionally, employees are authors of books. Also, in the case of large organizations, research done by others is often readily available. For example, a dissertation was located that was based on research done in one of the firm's I studied. In addition, research done by faculty of universities and by consultants commissioned by the companies was also available. The primary firm studied during my research maintains an

---

2Publicly available documents make for citation dilemmas here. I am unable to cite works that make direct reference to the identity of the organizations used for my research. A few works I obtained attempt to disguise the identity of the organization. In some cases, where disguise is used, a work can be cited here. However, in other cases, I have found protection of this type to be inadequate, so will not cite the work.
extensive library system that is a source for a considerable amount of this information. However, some of the consultant findings had to be obtained from particular individuals who controlled access to these documents.

By not allowing the organization to contribute funding for my formal research phase, pressures to "produce" anything or report to upper management were essentially eliminated. Also, pressures to compromise a long-term, ethnographic methodology to meet short organizational timeframes were avoided. It was possible for me sustain the research project for well over a year on this basis, which was in keeping with traditional lengths of fieldwork conducted by anthropologists. During this period of research, my activity concentrated on thoroughly investigating a local office population, which was a representative microcosm of the organization.

It is important to make a sustained effort to gain direct access to organizations for at least a period of a year and to follow research sites over time, including repeated visits, if possible. This is for similar reasons as the emphasis on a minimum ideal of about a year and repeated visits for traditional ethnographic fieldwork. For one thing, organizations have annual cycles. Business as a whole operates in twelve-month cycles. Also, over time organizations may experience major acculturative events such as mergers or acquisitions; radical re-organization or development programs may be initiated; or, extreme shifts in
environmental conditions may occur. The annual cycle of organizations is generally delineated by monthly intervals (month-end), and is also delineated by the "quarterly system" of accounting. A quarterly system may, or may not, coincide with the calendrical year. These quarters are commonly referred to as "Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q4." Many businesses will also formally mark the semi-annual point in this cycle. The annual (year-end) milestone is the most significantly observed by means of extensive analysis and reporting on the state of the business’s affairs and ceremonial events.

Business informants are often able to characterize the annual cycle by means of reporting distinctive features of each Quarter ("Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4"), almost as if describing changes in seasons common to other modes of subsistence such as hunting and gathering or farming. The annual cycle is also often characterized by a ceremonial round that may be highly elaborated. There is a full range of great and small traditions. For example, small traditions may include work group celebrations of birthdays, births, and other milestones in members’ lives, or may have their own small celebrations of holidays, award ceremonies, and so forth. Great traditions, may involve very formal, highly ritualized celebratory events marking milestones, conferring awards, and providing forums for major pronouncements often including prognostications. Most recently, formal events in organizations have elaborated considerably in terms of use of entertainment technology and
an emphasis on "production values." Techniques and technologies associated with the entertainment industry are increasingly used in business events to produce very polished performances that bring to mind the academy award ceremonies or modern political campaign events. Consultants from the entertainment industry may be hired. In larger organizations, full-time staffs may be devoted solely to the production of these types of ceremonials.

Longer cycles and major events that punctuate the equilibrium of organizations are as significant to gaining deeper understanding of a business as they are in understanding the traditional cultural systems studied by anthropologists. Even very long field periods may not provide opportunities to be present during significant events in a cultural system. If a major event occurs after onsite fieldwork is concluded, it is often possible to follow it in public media. Contact can also be initiated with informants associated with the organization to obtain additional background even though a researcher may not be able to be physically present. These are techniques commonly used by traditional anthropologists following cultural systems longitudinally. In business settings, the ability to maintain some level of contact with individuals in a research population is greatly facilitated by extensive communications technologies.
Use of informants of many types is critical to gathering ethnographic data. During my research, "specified informants" participated in formal, taped, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and projects related to developing practical application of anthropology to business. In addition, to the formal, taped interview segment of the research, a number of other interview rounds occurred over the years, which were not taped due to the circumstances of their conduct. In these cases, notes were made in between interviews and at the close of the day's interviews to provide documentation for subsequent analysis.

"Chance informants" provided me with a "running commentary" (Nadel 1958) from individuals in the population who were not formally designated to participate in activities. Chance informants included: individuals who were clients, subcontractors and competitors; former members of the population; family and friends of members of the population; individuals who were vendors to the organization, including cleaning people, limousine drivers, staff of regularly frequented restaurants and clubs, and workers in the travel industry.

"Key informants" emerged in the course of my research. As is often the case, this core of individuals consisted of self-selected individuals who were very interested in the project, or were hoping to gain advantage through participation. I also actively solicited key informants based
on their specialized or very extensive knowledge of the organization by means of position or longevity.

In the case of business settings as sites for fieldwork, there is the potential to obtain considerable information through various forms of business documents, their own historical archives (which may even be maintained by professional archivists), and public media. Many organizations also establish specialized libraries under the management of professional librarians. In the case of my primary research site, an exceptionally extensive global library system staffed by a considerable number of professionally-trained librarians existed. One of the real challenges in applying ethnographic methods in environments where a considerable quantity of written documentation exists in addition to data gathered orally, is the sheer volume of information available. One advantage of studying a cultural system with a written tradition is that documents can often provide key information concerning confirmation of, or discrepancies in, oral accounts. Also, when an anthropologist suspends presence in the field, existence of extensive public information on many firms provides a means of continuously supplementing data gathered through ongoing contact with informants.

The proliferation of information technologies that include electronic mail capabilities, intranets, and the internet is placing more emphasis on written communication in
business environments. Many communication events that would have occurred orally are now transacted in text. Research methods involving business settings will need to consider what, if any, adaptations should be made in light of the effects of these technologies. For example, I was given an electronic mail account in the third organization I studied even though I was a consultant, not an employee. As part of the internal electronic mail system, I routinely received intraorganizational communications as if I were an employee. This type of access in any organization that is studied is very helpful.

It is important to note that as research proceeds, informants gain considerable insight into the extent and nature of an anthropological investigation and become self-conscious. An anthropologist should be alert to this shift toward self-consciousness and adapt accordingly. For example, it may become appropriate not to attend some types of events such as ceremonies or private gatherings because the researcher's presence will compromise the spontaneity, enjoyment, or purpose of the event. In the case of my research, all significant types of events were attended initially because of status as an employee and during research. However, toward the later stages of research in the local office environment, I did not attend a number of events. This was because there was no exceptional need to repeat
attendance, and because of the increasing self-consciousness of the population.

The spatial aspects of large, global enterprises such as the one I studied can present dilemmas for adapting traditional ethnographic methods to business settings. The cost of coverage and the physical limitations of a single individual, or even a small team, make it difficult to directly experience the entire physical environment and population of these cultural systems. However, it is possible to capitalize on the existence of mechanisms within business organizations that are intended to ensure that these highly dispersed populations have face-to-face contact. Projects that include individuals from various locations, task force activities, meetings, organizational events such as annual kick-offs, and sales events provide venues in which the sample of the population can be enlarged. Certain areas of organizations may serve as points of convergence for the population at large, and positioning in these contexts can also enable a wide sampling opportunity. For example, World Headquarters of global organizations, or training and development groups in an organization may provide a context within which to encounter a very wide range of the population. Over the course of my research, I was able to attend many of the types of organizational events that brought members together, as well as spend extended periods of time within World Headquarters and within the training and development
group of the primary organization. I was also able to be on site with international project teams. Additionally, communications technologies as they developed during this period became very useful in resolving some of the spatial difficulties. These technologies make it possible to establish informant relations at great distances with individuals not encountered face-to-face. Technology also makes it easier to extend communication with individuals met at meetings and so forth beyond a brief face-to-face encounter. As mentioned previously, new technologies also make it easier to maintain communications with informants when not in the field setting.

As is also the case with anthropologists engaged in more traditional fieldwork, multiple roles and changes in primary role occurred over the long duration of my fieldwork. Employee, researcher and consultant were my three primary roles with dominance of one or the other at various points in time. Even though one role might dominate, once research began it was always an undercurrent no matter what my official role might be. At one point, the roles of employee, consultant and researcher were all conflated due to the fact that the organization used what are called internal consultants. Internal consultants are employees with specialized expertise, in my case anthropology, who do consulting work for various groups within the organization.
One role that came up during my research which seemed very alien to an anthropologist was that of clinician along the vein of psychologists. During time on site with international project teams, some people assumed my role as an anthropologist included providing individual therapy. Project team members struggling with culture shock during a particularly difficult international assignment asked me for "sessions." These requests took me by surprise and I was uncomfortable with the idea that my role would be equated with clinical psychology. A clinical specialty of this type could be very useful in international business settings; however, I was certainly not trained to undertake this role. My response to these requests was to make it clear that I was not a clinician. However, I would include the individual in my activities in the event that participation might help them overcome some of their personal difficulties. Since my activities with international project teams were intended to devise means of improving project management techniques and staff preparation for these assignments, individuals often did find participation helpful. Since there was no formal preparation for individuals sent on relatively short-term international project assignments, they often knew little or nothing about the symptoms of culture shock and had few skills or techniques for negotiating this type of experience. One of my objectives during these activities was to determine what the organization's training program could do to address these
rapidly emerging needs. Another objective was to determine how the organization's project management methodology might accommodate the special conditions involved in international projects.

Following the independent research phase of my project in 1986, an additional multi-year segment of research was conducted as consultant and employee within the organization. After a period of consulting, a position as a staff anthropologist in the Management Development Group within the firm's international training center was offered and accepted. This presented me with an opportunity to institutionalize a position for an anthropologist, which has subsequently been filled by two other anthropologists. The individual most recently in this position indicated in a telephone conversation that the organization is interested in hiring more anthropologists, but has had difficulty finding suitable candidates.

Overall, it was possible for me to employ participant-observation methods characteristic of anthropology to an unusual degree for nearly seven years. The first segment of my study included an intensive study of a representative local office. Later segments provided an opportunity to study the upper management context (World Headquarters), and the international aspects of the organization (World Headquarters, the international training center, and international projects) more thoroughly than could be accomplished from a local office.
vantage point. During later segments of research, I was able to perform on site investigations of international project teams located in Asia, as well as within the United States. The organization supported my presentation of papers at professional project management and training and development societies. These presentations suggested improvements in international project management methodology and training and development programs for organizations.¹

The organization also encouraged and supported the development of practical applications of anthropology. Indeed, the ability to demonstrate the potential for unique practical applications derived from anthropology was directly responsible for the longevity of my research effort.

Examples of Application Development

Application of anthropology in the business context in which I did research ultimately centered largely on the adaptation of anthropological methods. The most central application developed during my project involved augmentation of the firm’s formal information systems project management methodology. The methodology is proprietary; is considered to be central to the growth and success of the firm; is extensively documented (and sold to clients); and, all members

¹Co-authoring these professional meeting paper presentations with other members of the firm and representing the firm at these events makes for an awkward dilemma in terms of including references to these works in this document. Normally, such earlier work would be cited here; however, the need to preserve anonymity for the firm in this document precludes citation. A similar dilemma also arises concerning publication of other research involving this organization or direct citation of sources from the business press that would allow the organization to be identified.

63
of the firm received formal (and informal) training in using the methodology for projects. During the early local office study phase of my research, an augmenting section for the firm’s methodology that focused on the issues of project cultural risk management was developed*, and attracted the attention of upper management. The practicality of this material was critical to my ability to sustain this research over an extended period.

Central to this application was the use of anthropological field methods to obtain information about new environments. This would conceivably lead to more rapid adaptation of a project team to the client environment, and better decisionmaking about the adaptation of the firm’s core methodology to a particular project. The cultural contexts of large information systems development projects can be extremely complex. These projects often involve at least one client organization (sometimes more), numerous (in some cases all) departments, multiple vendors, other consulting organizations and subcontractors. Projects also often involve staffing from multiple offices of the firm. Some of the projects I investigated involved as many as 12-14 different nationalities on the project team. Cultural factors can be conceived in terms of general risk management as it is practiced within business. An understanding and use of basic

---

*Dr. Kenneth David, Michigan State University, and members of the local office population participated in this activity.
anthropological concepts and methods provided improved
identification of risk and better informed risk mitigation
strategies and tactics.

The extreme interest on the part of management in the
proposed project management methodology application provided
me with an opportunity to include another anthropologist, Dr.
Kenneth David (1994)* from Michigan State University, in the
early stage of this development project. The first stage of
my research project had been completed when Dr. David joined
the effort to develop the project cultural risk management
methodology.

Permission was asked and granted for me to share the
taped interview data with Dr. David prior to his participation
in the research. During this phase of activity, management
agreed to have teams from four different types of client
projects participate in the preliminary development of a
cultural risk management methodology. In addition, we
conducted focus group activities with professionals involved
in other projects. The four projects used in this effort were
chosen for distinctive characteristics and contrast. Dr.
David and I visited the four project teams weekly over a
period of two months. During visits, we provided training in
basic anthropological concepts and methods for identifying
salient cultural characteristics and devising strategies that

*Dr. David has used data gathered during this project in subsequent publication. Because he
has disguised the identity of the firm, this work can be cited.
would mitigate identified cultural risks. At the end of two months, the four project teams presented the lessons they had learned to the entire office at a regularly scheduled quarterly training event. The enthusiasm of participants and management carried the project into a subsequent stage wherein the methods we had developed with the project teams were documented in a style that was consistent with the firm’s methodology. This was then forwarded to upper management at World Headquarters. The methodology development group at World Headquarters then commissioned further activity on a consulting basis. At that point, Dr. David had to return to his duties at Michigan State University, so I proceeded alone with this phase of activity, which provided me with an opportunity for an extended presence in World Headquarters.

As a logical extension of my consulting activity, I was offered a position in the Management Development Group of the firm’s international training and development center. It is quite common for consultants to be offered positions if an organization realizes an ongoing need for their services. For one thing, it is often cheaper to hire the individuals than to retain them as consultants for an extended period of time. The offer of a position made it possible to institutionalize the role of anthropologist in the organization and was accepted primarily for that reason.

Accepting the staff position provided me with access to yet another vantage point from which to study the
My activity at the training and development center afforded the opportunity to explore the application of anthropology to improve customized training for the professional population. An isolated, country club-like setting is often deemed suitable when businesses establish internal training centers. This firm was no exception. However, this approach had created an unintended consequence of isolating the training and development staff from the realities of the work environments of the population they were charged with training and developing. Application of anthropological field methods were suggested as a means to strengthen the training and development center’s own customized project management methodology and improve training and development content.

Most large, complex organizations maintain internal training and development staff and facilities to meet their particular needs in these areas. Typically, development of course content consists of bringing experts (known as "talking heads") to the training developers for what are called "brain dumps" which are turned into training materials. Or, in the case of management development topics, it is often a matter of course developers reading up on the topic at hand and extracting material from the literature for course content. Training and development professionals never went directly to the field for these purposes.
The novelty of anthropology (and my previous work on the information systems methodology) made it easy for me to develop a case for experimenting with a field approach to obtaining content which would more specifically meet the needs of trainees. Relying solely on "talking heads" created problems engendered by selective memory or the failure of course developers to adequately capture tacit knowledge. Relying on books could not provide specific information on the actual circumstances of the professional work environment of trainees. These shortcomings led to a general lack of credibility of training and development professionals with the professionals they were charged with training. They were perceived, correctly, as having no direct experiences in the field. I was able to gain support for field development of content related to international project management, and it was possible to include junior members of the management development group in these efforts. Junior staff who worked on site with project teams quickly became strong advocates of the advantages of this approach.

The discussion of methods presented in this chapter is focused primarily on events related to the first organization I studied. Chapters 3 and 4 which present description of all three of the organizations included in my research and will also contain some further discussion of methods.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH SITE DESCRIPTION:
CONSULTING PARTNERS

As mentioned in the previous chapter, extending research into multiple organizations offers considerable advantages beyond obtaining additional data. It helps preserve the anonymity of all organizations and individuals involved. One firm in my study provides far more extensive and intensive data based on the conduct of a formal, independent research phase and the longevity and variety of my involvement with the organization. Discussion of methods in Chapter 2 is based on this field site and this chapter contains a brief description of the organization. Between 1993 and 1998 it was possible to include data from two other organizations in my research. In order to differentiate the three organizations where necessary in this dissertation, they will be referred to as: (1) Consulting Partners, (2) Hardware Corporation, and (3) Development Software Corporation. The pseudonyms highlight major differences among the three organizations on the basis of their particular industry niche. Consulting Partners is described in this chapter. Hardware Corporation and Development Software Corporation are described in Chapter 4.

69
The general description here and in Chapter 4 is intended to provide some background for the theoretical discussion in Chapter 5 and the application of theory in Chapters 6 and 7. Discussion in Chapters 5 through 7 involves numerous examples used for illustration that are drawn largely from the organizations I studied directly.

All three organizations are within the information technology industry. In all three cases, the professional consulting services segment of the organization was the focal point of my activity. It is common within this industry for companies that produce hardware and software products to also offer professional consulting services to clients who purchase their products. This is especially true in the case of hardware and software that is sold to business or government, rather than to individuals. Clients of the companies I studied included all industries in the private sector, not-for-profit organizations, educational institutions, utilities, and government entities at the local, state and federal levels. In the course of studying these three companies, I also collected consulting project case study materials that reflect a broad sample of information technology projects, including organizational characteristics of clients.

All three companies are international. The extent and variety of my activities made it possible to explore this aspect directly through involvement in marketing and operations projects, meetings, and settings such as World
Headquarters and training and development centers. I was also able to explore this characteristic by direct involvement on site with international consulting projects being conducted by the organizations. In addition to my own involvement in consulting projects, I had access to individuals with considerable international experience throughout the course of my research.

It should be mentioned that in the case of Hardware Corporation and Development Software Corporation, other former members of Consulting Partners besides myself were also working for these companies as employees or consultants. As mentioned in Chapter 2, at any given time, the population of former employees of Consulting Partners was quite large. It was not unusual for individuals who left Consulting Partners to directly facilitate employment for each other. Former employees at times actively recruited others still employed by Consulting Partners. Also, some information technology managers, whether former employees or not, stipulated to recruiting personnel and employment agencies that experience at Consulting Partners was a preferred credential for job candidates. Thus, individual personal and professional relationships formed at Consulting Partners often transcended this organizational context. People often maintained long-term friendships irrespective of whether they remained employed by Consulting Partners, in some cases, working together in more than one employment setting. The careers of
individuals could become closely intertwined over time. It is interesting to consider this phenomenon as a variant of long-term trade and reciprocity relations as studied, for example, by Malinowski 1922, Mauss 1967, or Sahlins 1972. For example, I have now worked, over a period of fifteen years, with two executives in all three of the organizations I studied. Additionally, I have worked with eleven individuals at two of the three organizations. This is not uncommon. The size of Consulting Partners and its up-or-out employment strategy contributed to creating a large former employee population. Also, it was a common career strategy for individuals graduating from college to gain about two years of training and experience at Consulting Partners as a kind of post-graduate credential. Thus, many individuals accepted employment with the intent to leave within two or three years.

The inclusion of a cluster of former Consulting Partner employees as a feature of my involvement with both Hardware Corporation and Development Software Corporation allowed for yet another extension of my original research. Some of the individuals encountered during consulting activities in Hardware Corporation and Development Software Corporation were personally known to me from research activities in Consulting Partners. These individuals had been participants in the early stages of my research in a local office of Consulting Partners. Others were never directly encountered during my activity in Consulting Partners, but had been employed there.
In the course of these events, it became evident that I had become a member of the vast population of former employees of Consulting Partners. This provided yet more data and another perspective on the original research.

It should be mentioned that my status of former employee of Consulting Partners is both a helpful and complicating factor in researching other organizations. Helpful because there is a great deal of mutual aid among former employees. Also, in terms of encounters with individuals who are not former employees of Consulting Partners, there is often a degree of prestige accorded this association. The firm is widely recognized in the business community and its very large size carries an element of prestige all its own. Consulting Partner’s top-tier college recruiting, extensive training and development program, and up-or-out policies are well known in the business community. Therefore, positive assumptions about the quality of an individual’s educational credentials and ability to successfully perform are often made. However, it is also not unusual to encounter individuals who have had negative experiences with, or hold negative stereotypes about, consultants in general, or Consulting Partners in particular. This can complicate rather than help initial encounters. For example, one executive I interviewed referred to his experience with Consulting Partners professionals as an encounter with "steely-eyed killers."
Consulting Partners: The Primary Research Site

Consulting Partners was one of the largest professional services firms in the world and was comprised of a number of different practice areas. "Practice area" refers to a designation of specialization. Specialization may be in a type of industry, service, or technology. "Practice area" may also designate a geographic unit, such as the "North American practice area." This term is commonly used by people involved in professional services, such as law, engineering, accounting or medicine. The term may be used broadly or narrowly. Practice areas may be structurally nested such that a broad practice area subsumes increasingly specialized practice areas.

Consulting Partners was a major provider of information technology consulting services globally. The firm began developing its practice in this area in the 1950's, and can claim a major milestone event in the history of computing as part of its organizational history1.

Consulting Partners was organized as a private partnership; therefore, had a very specific organizational form quite different from a corporation. This point cannot be emphasized too much. The effect of this structural feature ramifies throughout the organization making for minor, major, subtle and not-so-subtle differences when comparing this type

1The specifics of this event will not be presented because this could compromise anonymity for the firm.
of organization to a corporation. Most of management science literature is based on studies of corporations with only a small fraction of literature dedicated to other organizational forms such as sole proprietorship or partnership.

In a partnership, employment offers are termed "invitations to join the firm" and professionals refer to themselves as "members" of the firm no matter what their rank. Professionals are promoted through various ranks, but ultimately are formally elected to the partnership. Also, the role of Chief Executive in Consulting Partners was an elected position. Voting terminology, such as "black ball," was used internally to discuss election processes. In Consulting Partners, each partner had a vote in significant partner matters. Voting rights may vary in partnerships. In some cases, one or more individuals have a larger equity share of the partnership and may thereby have correspondingly more heavily weighted voting privileges. It was a point of pride in Consulting Partners that each partner vote was of equal weight. Members of the firm made a point of mentioning the "one-partner-one-vote" aspect of the organization.

Partner compensation levels were determined annually on the basis of the previous year's profit by means of a complex formula that took into account factors such as an individual partner's responsibilities and international monetary differences. The international monetary factors were a sore point with partners in less affluent countries. This factor
produced significant disparities. All partners were compensated at a rate that put them in the higher levels of socio-economic classes in whatever country they resided. However, in less affluent countries the basic standard of living of partners might not compare favorably with that of partners in countries such as the United States, and individuals in those countries were acutely aware of these differences. This was particularly highlighted when a partner from an affluent country was given an expatriate assignment in a less affluent country. The partner’s compensation was not adjusted according to the country in which he worked, but remained at the level of his home country. This could mean, for example, that an American partner working for a period of years in a country such as the Philippines, would have a noticeably higher standard of living than his peers, or even superiors, in that country.

A partnership structure makes for intensive and complex internal politics. Partners form political action committees and actively campaign for candidates in elections and lobby on behalf issues. Political action committees in Consulting Partners were referred to by the shorthand term, "PAC," borrowed from American politics. One of the founding figures expressed concern during early growth of the firm that a partnership structure could not expand beyond 100 partners and remain true to the ideals of the organizational form. Partnership variability relating to scale would make for an
interesting study. Globally, there are currently a number of extremely large partnerships with more than a thousand partners such as this one.

Even though operation of these very large firms may become somewhat more like corporations, they are still not corporations in terms of legal status, especially in this case where a one-partner-one-vote structure had been zealously preserved. One difference, for example, is that partnerships were originally specifically exempted from anti-discriminatory laws. It was not until the mid-1980's that a U.S. Supreme Court ruling loosely incorporated partnerships in this law. This ruling only went so far as to mandate that partnerships provide "sensitivity training" on the topic of gender issues. Another difference is that partners have personal liability for their own actions and those of the firm. One of the more interesting features of a partnership is that documents are signed with the firm's name rather than that of the individual partner. For example a contractual letter would have "Consulting Partners" handwritten by the partner where a name ordinarily goes. One newly elected partner described practicing his "Consulting Partners" signature and the thrill of first using it on a document -- similar to how women might "practice" signing a married name.

Since its founding the better part of a century ago, the firm had grown to a population in the tens of thousands located in approximately 200 offices in nearly 50 countries by
the mid-1980's. As of the late 1990's, the firm's population had grown considerably with operational structure extending to well over 200 offices in more than 50 countries. This was one of the largest and most successful firms within its industry and as such it enjoyed a high profile and considerable name recognition within the business world. Consulting Partners could be characterized as an elite organization.

The firm maintained an "up-or-out" policy for professionals which made for high turnover rates and intense pressure on individuals. References couched in terms of "survival" were common. People were cautioned about making CLM’s or CEM’s (acronyms for Career Limiting Moves and Career Ending Moves, respectively). Those who were near entry into the partnership were characterized as "dangerous" because they might be cautious to an extreme, or foolhardy in an attempt to gain attention.

At the same time every year, professionals were given an annual review in which they were informed of a promotion up the hierarchy or of intention to promote them in the future with estimation of when the next career milestone will occur. Or, a person is informed that they were out. The annual review was known as "bean day." It involved two or more superiors filling out extensive evaluation forms for each individual. Also, the quarterly personnel reviews, along with

---

*Numbers given here are deliberately vague in order to protect the identity of the firm.*

78
any additional reviews of the individual that may have been performed at the completion of certain assignments, were gathered into the person's review file. All of this information went to the individual who would conduct a face-to-face meeting with the subordinate. Preferably those below partner rank met face-to-face with a partner to discuss their annual review. In larger offices, low ranking professionals may instead met with a manager. During these meetings, the performance evaluations were discussed, news of whether the individual was up or out is made official, and salary increases were given. At the conclusion of the meeting, the superior conducting the evaluation documented the events of the meeting in a narrative form that became part of the overall personnel record. Prior to the concluding meeting of the evaluation process, individuals usually had received a number of formal and informal signals concerning its outcome. Formal signals included quarterly reviews and, in some cases, corrective interviews. Informally, signals included "off-the-record" conversations with superiors and office rumors. Certain assignments, such as being made chair of the entertainment committee for the annual dinner dance, being made part of a task force, or prestigious internal project could also informally signal an upcoming promotion. The timing of annual reviews in the Spring was coincident with the major recruiting season of the firm.
Consulting Partners was able to maintain this up-or-out policy because college graduates considered even two years of experience in this firm to be a strong credential on their resume, often characterizing it as "graduate school." Therefore, there was also a large volume of voluntary exiting from the firm each year. Because so many individuals sought employment with no intention to stay beyond about two years, the firm could be termed a "revolving door" context. Employee turnover rates were high compared to other business entities that make great efforts to retain employees and may take pride in very low turnover rates. Also, professionals frequently received unsolicited contacts from employment agency recruiters, and were often offered jobs by clients.

Although the firm may be characterized as "up-or-out," this was not strictly true. Ironically, the firm also offered lifetime employment opportunity. If one did "survive" the early stages of one's career and was elected to the partnership, there was considerable job security. This was very similar to academic tenure systems.

Virtually all professionals were recruited directly out of college and progressed through a lock-step career path as a member of a cohort, referred to as a "class," which was brought in at the beginning of each summer. Individuals who graduated out-of-sync with the normal Spring graduation could actually experience difficulties by not being part of a cohort. These practices led to a highly age-graded system...
within the firm with organizational rank being exceptionally
closely tied to chronological age. It also meant that the
average age of individuals in the organization was low. At
World Headquarter, an average age for professionals of about
24 years old was quoted for the individuals in those offices,
and an only slightly higher figure was generally true of the
whole organization. Although statistics such as this were
commonly quoted within the population, it was often hard to
ascertain the exact source of the information and manner in
which it was computed. Partners made such pronouncements
based on various sources of information such as administrative
records, research reports, consulting reports (consultants do
hire consultants), and the efforts of marketing professionals.
Statements about the youthful orientation of the population
were common, and a statistic such as median or average age
would likely be derived from insurance statistics on the firm,
which was self-insured. Given the fact that, at any given
time, the most sizable portion of the professional population
would consist of college recruits with less than two years
tenure at the firm, such statements are credible. The
youthfulness of the population was striking enough to also
merit comment from outsiders. Jokes such as characterizing
the arrival of a project team as, "The school buses have
arrived." or "The yellow bus is here." were common. At times,
a major negotiating point with a client would involve the
client’s insistence on contractual guarantees that young,
inexperienced staff would not be assigned to their project. Or, conversely, a client trying to bring costs down would agree to a disproportionate number of young, inexperienced staff for a project team and expect a discount for providing this on-the-job training.

A "top five percent" recruiting policy (recruiting from the top five percent grade-point population) aimed at obtaining the cream of the crop from what are termed "first-tier" schools, made for a very bright, very young (and very playful) population. A retirement policy aimed at retiring individuals at age 55 also served to keep the average age low. The benefits book for the firm contained the title, "When You Retire At Age 55," [emphasis added] for the section explaining retirement policies and benefits. Although exceptions were made, there was a strong effort to encourage retirement at this age in order to make room for new partners, thus maintaining the constant personnel flow "up" required for an up-or-out employment strategy.

In the mid-1980's, partners became concerned about "brain drain" inherent to an up-or-out strategy in this highly technical industry. Someone had calculated that, based on their estimations of future growth, there would be extremely severe personnel shortages. Since this would have the effect of driving basic costs of doing business (labor) up, it was viewed as an impending crisis. Attempts were made to moderate the up-or-out policy and improve retention. For example, an
Associate Partner position was created that allowed for another upper rank, short of full partner, with a more open-ended tenure. However, initially, this was not very successful. The Associate Partner category of personnel did not have the voting power of a full partner, nor the compensation, prestige or privileges. Many would not accept this position, or were not long content with this "second-class" status, so the new category was not as successful as hoped. This could change as there could be a greater acceptance of the position over time. Associate Partner is a rank common in professional partnerships in general, even though it was not previously in use by Consulting Partners. Given that the portion of the professional population that was not partner rank turned over about every fifteen years, some difficulties in the early stages of a change such as this can be expected to dissipate over time.

Also, to stave off "brain drain," efforts were begun to attract "experienced hires" (individuals who had other work experience since college). As of the early 1990's, the average tenure of experienced hires was quoted at about one year. Most of them left of their own accord. Despite initiating a number of programs to try and improve retention, quick turnover remained a fairly intractable problem. Poor retention of experienced hires was described internally as being a problem deeply rooted in the firm's "culture." Many attempts were made to figure out how to change the cultural
system to resolve the problem, and specialized training programs to accelerate "enculturation" were attempted.

The fact that individual professionals encountered in this firm, whatever their rank, had never worked elsewhere professionally made for an interesting characteristic of the organization. This is similar to many academic careers (although this is changing), or careers in other professional partnerships, such as law, where association with only one firm is common. Some corporations with college recruitment employment strategies and high retention rates may also have this characteristic. The extreme degree to which this was true of Consulting Partners was, however, unusual. Partners generally had no other adult work experience except perhaps a tour of duty in the military. In this respect, the frequency of military experience was diminishing in the American segment of the firm as the post-draft population grew and as more women were being incorporated into the partnership.

As mentioned earlier, conducting research in a consulting organization may also provide the opportunity to study numerous organizations in different industries (and government). As a vital part of doing business, the firm continuously monitored industries and particular organizations for the purpose of developing client service proposals and marketing plans. Consulting Partners was also well-known for conducting extensive research in various industries aimed, among other things, at predicting information technology
needs. The results of these surveys were readily available to
members of the firm, and were released to the business press
where they were published as authoritative sources. This type
of research report, as well as others, were available to me
during my research. I also had extensive opportunities to
perform on-site investigations of projects conducted in client
environments. The ability to be on site as projects were
being performed provided me with direct access to numerous
organizations in many different industries. For this
dissertation, I have spent anywhere from a week to years
inside approximately 50 organizations either through
employment or because of project involvement and research
activity. This direct experience, coupled with access to
other professionals with similarly varied experiences, plus
the extensive business documents and library of this firm, was
very helpful to gaining a better general understanding of
business, certain industries, and information systems
technologies during my research.

The firm's population was dispersed throughout the world
in a system of approximately 200 local offices. In effect,
the population was dispersed further by the nature of
consulting, which most often entails working in client
offices. The ideal, then, would be for a local office to be
empty of professionals -- partners out finding work and staff
out doing work.
Typically, in all local offices, partners and managers had private office space. In some locations, managers routinely shared offices. Since partners and managers were so often out of the office, their private offices were fair game for occupation by anyone, down to the newest recruit. Only the very most senior partner offices were entirely off limits, or off limits to ranks below manager. (A manager might use a partner office to impress a visitor.) Professionals from other offices who needed to use the firm’s local facilities were frequently in local offices and were given work space according to their rank if it is available. If the individual was a partner, every effort was made to give them a partner office; if this was not available, a manager’s office or small conference room would do. Administrative staff were accustomed to orienting professional staff from other offices to work space, office supplies and equipment, and support resources in the form of administrative personnel who performed tasks for professional staff.

Staff below manager rank typically did not have personal space assignments in an office. These individuals were expected to be perpetually out of the office. Space would be allocated for "staff rooms" that provided multiple temporary work areas for lower ranks who were in the office. These rooms might not even have cubicles to create individual space. Lower ranks might be permanently assigned no more than a drawer or two in a file cabinet for personal use. Alert staff
would find more space in filing rooms, storage rooms, and other stray areas of the office, which they appropriated either by means of "squatter" strategies, or with permission of administrative personnel who often control such space. Lower ranking staff often received clearance from administrative personnel to occupy a vacant office and quickly learned the ropes of getting the use of partner and manager offices. Staff also obtained permission to use conference rooms for privacy or when working in groups. 

There could be extended periods in which an office was virtually empty of professionals. Professionals would come in and out for scheduled meetings, to pick up mail and catch up on administrative work, perhaps not staying more than a few minutes. Some of these visits occurred in the evenings and on weekends. Often, individuals on long term, out-of-town assignments did not come into the office for weeks, perhaps months, at a time. Mail was forwarded by their local office to the client site, to the local office nearest the client, or to their home. However, savvy lower level staff and managers made sure they got what was called "face time" in the office. These individuals made a point of coming in the office regularly and timed these visits so as to have the most likelihood of encountering as many partners and managers as possible. This can be done by knowing regular meeting schedules that drew partners and managers into the office. Individuals who consciously made efforts to gain "face time"
would wander around so as to be seen by others, and took advantage of the chance encounters this afforded to engage superiors in conversations. They also used these visits to cultivate their relationships with administrative personnel. Time spent in the staff room made for opportunities to interact with peers. These individuals were ensuring they would not be forgotten by their superiors, especially if they were on long-term, out-of-town assignments. Management encouraged all of this and was often engaged in a correlating strategy that intended to keep them in touch with lower level staff. Managers also employed "face time" strategies to ensure they were in contact with partners and to get to know and assess staff.

If an office became too full of professionals for any length of time, a noticeable pall could descend on the population. A full office meant there was a significant lull in revenue generation. Since selling professional time was revenue, this was much like sitting in a warehouse crammed with products, none of which were going out the door.

Such a period could be the result of a temporary break between large projects. In this case, the knowledge that there was work to come mitigated the tension of having a full office. The ideal was to manage the flow of work in such a way that such breaks in the revenue stream are minimized. Occasionally, some break in the pace of project work would be needed to prevent "burnout" of human resources precipitating
higher than normal levels of attrition. For example, in the case of an extended or difficult project that involved protracted periods of overtime and high levels of stress, management might plan some kind of break for members of that project team before sending them on another long or difficult assignment. When staff was in the office, an effort was made to keep them busy on internal projects of various kinds. At times, these interruptions in the flow of revenue-generating work occur because "the bottom fell out of the backlog." This meant projects were ending and there were no contracts for other work in hand or assured for the immediate future. This was also referred to as having "nothing in the pipeline." These were the times when a pall could descend and a flurry of activity would be directed at "getting work." Request for proposal sources were scoured, networking with business contacts went into high gear, and staff was kept busy working on proposals for work that were generated at a furious pace. A time like this provided the opportunity for individuals to become "heroes" who saved the day by being first to obtain a contract that would empty, or begin to empty, the office.

Although upper management provided general policies and guidelines, local offices had considerable autonomy and were, therefore, highly idiosyncratic. Besides basic variations in size, local office variation in the mix of industry and technical specialties was considerable and had an effect on the overall characteristics of a given office. For example,
an office might be specialized in the banking and utility industries, another might be very strong in the retail industry or manufacturing. Some offices were highly specialized to government projects. In addition, an office might have technical specializations in certain hardware or software.

These specializations made for variability that could be reflected in subtle differences in the way individuals dressed, and use of specialized languages related to specific industries and technologies. An example would be specialization in the retail industry. These individuals tended to dress with somewhat more style consciousness. They wore slightly brighter and less conservative ties and shirts, had slightly more contemporary haircuts, and might carry less conservative briefcases. All this, however, was within the bounds of a generally conservative dress code. Communication involved the specialized terminology of the retail industry and those technologies most commonly used in that industry.

Standardized work methods embodied in a formal methodology, and centralized training that taught everyone the methodology in the same way, helped hold this highly dispersed system of local offices together. Staffing of projects also contributed to overcoming some of the difficulties in creating overall organizational cohesion in a highly dispersed population. Projects, especially large ones, were often staffed with individuals from more than one local office.
Large projects almost invariably at least drew staff from the very large local office that was collocated with World Headquarters, which also maintained a large staff that could be used on projects. World Headquarters and very large offices were referred to as "staffing warehouses."

In addition to providing extra staff for projects globally, World Headquarters was also a physical context in which to constantly mix the population. In a normal career, at some point, a professional was likely to be assigned to a project at World Headquarters. Surplus staff from offices throughout the world were routinely given assignments at World Headquarters if their local office could not find a client assignment for them for an extended period. Some assignments at World Headquarters were arranged as rewards for individuals, or at the individual’s request. Among other things, World Headquarters maintained a technical research and development group and associated computer facilities, including what were called "advanced technologies." Individuals could be sent to World Headquarters as part of a client project to work out highly technical aspects of the project. Or, staff was sent there to use the computer facilities to accomplish tasks in cases where a client did not own the required hardware or software. Technical specialists from the research and development group and advanced technology centers were also sent to project sites as part of
the planned work, or as "troubleshooters" if a project encountered technical difficulties.

Overall, World Headquarters and other very large offices served to fill extraordinary staffing requirements of projects, and to absorb staffing surpluses that could occur in local offices. As a byproduct of these profit-motivated practices, professionals gained physical experience of the firm beyond that of the local office to which they were officially assigned. Staffing practices thus provided mechanisms through which individuals developed a better sense of the whole organization and identification with "The Firm" as opposed to a local office. It was common in speaking and writing to refer to the organization as "The Firm." The term was used, capitalized in this way, in formal documents, such as contracts, as a substitute for the name of the organization. It connoted that the partners were speaking with "one voice."

Transfers to other offices and special events at regional, national and international levels also served to reduce tendencies toward parochialism that can develop within a highly geographically dispersed system of very autonomous local offices. Common symbols, standards for office design, similar office operations, and shared knowledge of polices and methodologies for work were deliberately intended to make all offices familiar places for a highly mobile workforce.
All professionals shared common knowledge and experience by virtue of attending required training at the firm's international training and development center. Training programs served as a primary enculturation mechanism that encouraged professionals to develop an identification with "The Firm." Time spent at the training center also provided the opportunity to create personal networks that extended beyond an individual's assigned local office.

By the early 1980's, the steadily escalating travel expenses incurred by maintaining only one facility at which everyone throughout the world received professional training would have long since caused most organizations to abandon this strategy. However, Consulting Partners clung stubbornly to this model because management believed it was critical to the firm's success in unifying the population and standardizing work practices. Management finally succumbed to the pressures of increased travel expense in the mid-1980's and created two additional training centers: one in Europe and one in Asia. Even as this was done, the plan called for certain courses in each professional's training to still be taken at the original training facility in the United States. This model ensured all individuals would continue to share the experience of being at the firm's original, and very symbolic, training center. The rationale given by management that this approach was essential to maintaining the firm's "culture" was overtly stated orally and in writing.

93
The opportunity to work within the context of the original, central training and development facility was invaluable to extending the scope of my research. Since participants were from all over the world, it was possible to explore international issues through direct formal and informal contacts made at the center. Further, the ability for two other anthropologists to subsequently hold positions within the training center made it possible to compare insider observations with other anthropologists after I left the firm.

In a paper entitled "Federal Organizational Cultures: Layers and Loci," S. Fiske (1994:97) characterizes organizational cultural systems in terms that are generally applicable to my own research:

I became aware that federal organizational cultures are complex nets of identities, languages, interpersonal exchanges, ceremonies and ceremonial behavior; that they overlay on different levels; that they are often situational, such that the individual can pick and choose between roles and identities [and actions]; and that some slices within organizations are more complete organizational cultures than others.

In the case of "slices" that are less complete, this incompleteness becomes important information as well. Fiske points out some very important aspects of studying organizational cultural systems: the degree to which there can be overlaying and overlapping of cultural domains, the situational nature of day-to-day activities, and the fact that individuals have multiple roles that change and are manipulated.
Besides roles associated with being a professional, personal relations formed through work, especially in a firm like Consulting Partners, may involve roles such as being a friend, a roommate, a mentor, an enemy. Increasingly, as the proportion of women in professional positions has risen, personal roles may also include being a boyfriend, girlfriend, or spouse.

Dating relations and resulting marriages among professionals took partners somewhat by surprise during the 1980's. During the later 1970's, women were increasingly recruited for professional positions. By the early 1980's, a new cohort of recruits might be as much as fifty percent women. Management explained that though they initially were resistant to employing women, they found women often worked even harder than men. Managers discussing this were well aware of the fact that it was often overcompensation on the part of women and were quite pleased that it worked so much to the firm's advantage. Prior to including women in professional positions, the firm had maintained a "non-fraternization" policy, which threatened sanctions including firing if members of the organization dated. Such policies are rarely entirely effective and exceptions were made. In one case I knew of, a senior manager was "allowed" to marry a secretary in one local office.

The realities of recruiting policy changes to include women in the ranks of professional staff inevitably led to
easing this restriction. Large numbers of young, unmarried individuals were being sent to a training and development center that was very much like a college campus which had changed from being essentially all-male to being co-ed. Training lasted as much as three weeks, which is more than enough time for dating relations to form. Training participants from outside the United States often "piggy-backed" several courses to conserve on airfare, so could stay for even more extended periods. Young professionals were also being put in situations where long-term, out-of-town assignments and periods of long hours of work isolated them from the larger population of potential dates and mates. As of the mid-1980's, partners had decided to deal with cases individually rather than eliminate the non-fraternization policy entirely, because the issues of nepotism were now raised.

The first instance of a marriage between two professionals in the local office I studied occurred in 1985. The couple had begun their relationship during a long-term, out-of-town assignment. At the conclusion of the project, the woman asked for and was given a transfer to the local office to which the man was assigned. After about a year, the couple approached the local office managing partner to inform him of their impending marriage. This was quite a surprise for the partner. The couple had been so careful to hide their relationship that virtually no co-workers were aware of it.
After much consideration of the precedent that would be set and the possible dilemmas that could arise, management gave the couple two options. One or the other could leave the firm, or they could transfer as a couple to a very large office. The partners felt the issues of nepotism could only be avoided in a larger office. They were given three offices as options for transferring. The couple elected to transfer to a very large office.

Professionally, in Consulting Partners, individuals had numerous roles involving among other things being both a superior and subordinate, consultant (outsider), employee (insider), mentor, student, administrator, salesperson, mediator, evaluator, advisor, and technician. All professionals were also expected to teach classes at the training and development centers beginning early in their careers. Roles played in client contact situations could be carefully orchestrated. It was not uncommon to hear someone offer to take, or be assigned, the role of "the bad guy" when something delicate or difficult had to be handled either with clients or employees. "Role-playing" was also a very frequently used heuristic device in training programs.

Because of the age-grading of the personnel system, individuals often found themselves undergoing similar life role changes, such as getting married and having children, at about the same point in their careers. For example, nearly all staff were married by the time they were a year or so from
being made a manager. Within a year or two of becoming a manager, most people would have a child. There was a considerable amount of sharing tips and techniques relating to personal matters such as pregnancy, child rearing, and how to balance work roles with other life roles. Formal training included acknowledgment of the various roles individuals play in life and suggested ways to successfully balance the time and energy devoted to aspects of life other than work.

In the context of academic discussions of the multiple, often compartmentalized roles that most individuals must play in life, "work" is often itemized as one of these major roles. This level of categorization can mask the complexity inherent in this role, which itself entails multiple roles.

At the inception of my research, it was obvious to me that there were three major cultural domains within the organization. One comprised the accounting, audit and tax practices upon which the firm had been founded in the early 1900's. Another was the information technologies consulting practice which was established in the 1950's. Though younger, the information technologies practice was more successful in terms of profitability and growth. The third distinctive cultural domain consisted of the administrative support population (a variant of bureaucracy) which provided common services to both professional practice domains.

All three domains were ultimately overseen by partners. Though all partners had some kind of responsibility for
"support" and authority over administrative personnel, the number of partners devoted exclusively to oversight of these activities within the firm was kept relatively small. There was considerable delegation of authority to specialists who filled administrative roles; however, partners retained ultimate control. It was virtually impossible for anyone to "make partner" through a career in administration. The up-or-out policy was not as strictly applied to lower level support personnel as it was to professionals in the two services domains and to some higher level support professionals. In fact, a lower level support position, such as administrative assistant, clerk, or technical librarian was considered to be highly secure employment.

In addition to the three primary cultural domains comprised of the two business units and administration, it would be possible to approach analysis of the firm from the perspective of rank levels that cross cut the three domains. As mentioned previously, partners were proportionately under-represented in administration. This type of analysis is not as straightforward as it might initially seem. Rank levels that may appear commensurate actually were not because field personnel, who created revenue, de facto outranked administrative personnel who may hold the same formal rank, or even a higher one. Analyses based on rank can also be complicated by factors such as class, race and gender, or nationality. For example, in international situations,
Americans particularly were accorded or assumed higher status when interacting with members of the firm from other countries, particularly if the other country is a less developed nation. The value of a particular rank could also be affected by the individual’s particular practice affiliation. Despite the fact that there were comparatively few official categories of rank for professionals and formal organizational charts exist, the informal ranking system was extremely complex, and would make for an interesting study in and of itself.

Within Consulting Partners, other cultural domains with unique "identities, languages, interpersonal exchanges, ceremonies and ceremonial behavior" (Fiske 1994) included: specialized industry (or government) practice groups, local offices, geographic regions, countries, specialized product and technical practices within the two professional services business units, functional groups providing support services, client project teams, and internal work groups, both those that were permanent and those which were formed temporarily to complete internal projects. Additionally, cliques and the often very extensive informal networks of individuals could provide units of analysis for data collected in this type of organization.

A very important cultural unit of analysis in professional services firms is that of client projects (referred to in Consulting Partners as engagements). These
projects generate a firm's revenue. Each project can be 
investigated and analyzed from a cultural perspective, and the 
cultural context of projects may be extremely complex. 
Projects always represent an intersection between a firm's 
culture and that of the client organization. In some cases, 
more than one client organization is involved when working for 
joint ventures and other types of inter-organizational 
arrangements. Information technology projects also intersect 
with many (in some cases virtually all) rank, occupational, 
functional, or work group subcultural systems within the 
client organization. Also, the presence of cliques and other 
informal networks of relations can have dramatic effect on the 
success or failure of a project.

In the case of Consulting Partners, projects could 
actually become "counter-cultural" systems within a client 
organization inadvertently, or sometimes at the request of the 
client who was seeking assistance with dramatic organizational 
change. On occasion, a client would ask firm management to 
exaggerate the firm's cultural characteristics, rather than 
try to blend in, in an effort to effect changes within their 
organization that would make it more like the firm's. Such 
clients wanted members of the consulting firm to act as role 
models, which their employees were encouraged to emulate. 
Consulting Partners might quite literally be asked to 
"transform us into you" as part of the outcome of a project. 
Consulting Partners management was quite well aware of the
fact that this was unrealistic. They usually made attempts to reduce these kinds of expectations unless the client was willing to pay extra for specialized change management consulting services. Projects often also intersected with other external organizational cultures in addition to that of the client such as the client’s customers, hardware and software vendors, regulating agencies, or other consultants. Since projects involved technology transfer, the cultural effects of new technology might have to be considered. As mentioned earlier, projects are phenomena particularly amenable to anthropological investigation, and have been a focal domain for my research activities.

Projects investigated during my research ranged in value from a few thousand dollars to tens of millions of dollars. Population size ranged from a single individual to hundreds. Duration ranged from a few hours to years. During the 1990’s, projects in the information systems industry routinely reach hundreds of millions or even billion dollar levels. In one case I studied, a project represented an ongoing services arrangement with a client that was worth well over twenty million dollars per year. As long as things were going well, the arrangement was expected to continue indefinitely.

---

3During the 1990’s projects in the information systems industry have burgeoned to hundreds of millions or even billion dollar levels. In one case studied, a project represented an ongoing services arrangement with a client that was worth well over 20 million dollars per year.
Project management is a very distinctive variant of management and is becoming a formal discipline. This includes the creation of specialized degrees in project management in engineering colleges, the existence of specialized associations dedicated exclusively to project management, and a formal certification process modeled on that of other professions such as accountancy and engineering. Since projects were central to economic activities in Consulting Partners, my choice to emphasize them ensured the research would be taken more seriously. Projects are central, particularly to work with information technology systems, in non-consulting organizations as well. However, distinctions can be made between internal organizational projects staffed by employees (possibly augmented by consultants), and consulting projects. These distinctions were even apparent within Consulting Partners. This was highlighted by the practice of referring to client projects as "engagements." An internal project was never an "engagement."

The length of my direct association with Consulting Partners made it possible to observe significant organizational events. This included a major restructuring of the three main divisions of the firm. Also, during my research, a large Asian firm was acquired in order to quickly gain a pervasive presence in that region. Consulting Partners had generally avoided acquisition as an expansion strategy.
However, an exception was made in this case due to the rapid growth of Asia as a significant economic region with potential for new clients. Pressure to expand operations in Asia was also associated with the fact that many existing clients of the firm had rapidly expanded their operations in the area during this period. In the course of my research, it was possible to spend time on site at what had originally been the headquarters of the acquired firm. I was able to observe directly how the acquisition was playing out as a significant organizational event, particularly for members of the firm that had been acquired.

Another significant event involved the initiation of talks about a merger with another large firm. Partners provided very little direct communication to employees about these discussions. They were caught out by the business press on more than one occasion, and had to issue communications to employees addressing or clarifying whatever had been published by the press. This made for a very active period in the organizational grapevine. When it was announced that the two parties had decided not to go forward, there was the official version of the reasons for backing off that were published in the business press. Then there was the supposed "inside story" giving the "real" reasons the talks fell through. The "real" reasons included speculation that management had deemed the two cultural systems to be too incompatible.
The preceding discussion has provided a brief sketch of Consulting Partners that intends to convey some of the main features of the organization. In the following chapter, brief descriptions of Hardware Corporation and Development Software Corporation will be presented.
CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH SITE DESCRIPTION:
HARDWARE CORPORATION AND DEVELOPMENT SOFTWARE CORPORATION

This chapter will provide general descriptions of Hardware Corporation and Development Software Corporation. Discussion of methodological considerations associated with the research conducted in these two organizations will also be provided. Each research site was unique and each situation was different in terms of my approach to collection of data. There is now a fifteen-year span of time between the beginning of association with Consulting Partners and the presentation of this analysis. Description of the research sites is kept relatively brief because the overall focus of this document is on using some of the data to explore James C. Scott’s theoretical framework which is described in Chapter 5. Scott’s concepts are used in Chapters 6 and 7 to analyze data that has been collected irrespective of its organizational source.

Hardware Corporation: A Second Research Site

Providing consulting services to Hardware Corporation gave me an opportunity to study a different sector of the information technology industry: hardware vendors. The company was a mainframe manufacturer so the real core of the
cultural system was engineering and product sales. "Mainframe" refers to large computers rather than those that are termed midrange computers, minicomputers, or microcomputers. My consulting activity was focused on the professional services group within this product-based corporation. This provided a contrast to the research previously collected on the same type of professional services within a professional services partnership (Consulting Partners).

Hardware and software product companies that primarily market to business and government, as opposed to individuals, often evolve a professional services group as they become established. Customers create pressures to include consulting as part of product support because presence of this level of services is often a criterion for purchasing decisions. In Hardware Corporation, providing professional services was considered a "necessary evil" and upper management openly talked about how much they disliked being in the consulting business. The Chief¹ Financial Officer publicly articulated his perception of the higher business risk inherent in professional services and his sentiments were well known. He pinpointed the risk as centering on the fact that professional consulting services entailed an ongoing, often long term, presence of Hardware Corporation personnel at the client site.

¹The persistence of the term "chief" in the upper levels of titling systems in business is notable.
He felt this proximity created the potential for problems with customer relations, and he did have a point in this respect. As the company came under severe financial pressures, talk among senior management of ridding themselves entirely of this troublesome business unit occurred.

Hardware Corporation provided considerable contrast to the research conducted in Consulting Partners where consulting professionals occupied dominant status. At Hardware Corporation, those engaged directly in research and development, manufacturing and sales of hardware products occupied dominant status. In Hardware Corporation, professional services consulting was considered to be "support."

At the time my consulting activity began in Hardware Corporation, a few notable project disasters were "hemorrhaging" millions of dollars. Medical, particularly emergency room, metaphors are common in the industry for discussion of projects that go awry. The primary order of business for the professional services group at that time was to "triage" these projects. Although some projects had been successfully completed, the extremes of project failures had precipitated a change in leadership and the new executive had just taken charge of the business unit. A series of disastrous projects seemed to many in the organization to confirm the "worst fears" of the Chief Financial Officer who opposed offering consulting services. Senior management had
reportedly considered whether to bring in a new executive and keep the unit, or shut it down entirely.

Hardware Corporation was structured as a corporation, not as a partnership. It had less than one-fourth the population of Consulting Partners in the mid to late 1980's when most of my research at Consulting Partners was conducted. Hardware Corporation's global structure was also extensive and included a complex mixture of offices established by the corporation, and a network of distributor relationships. Projects involving the professional services group reached similar size and complexity levels as those of Consulting Partners, and were conducted for high visibility public and private sector clients. However, unlike Consulting Partners, Hardware Corporation was more often positioned as a subcontractor rather than being what is termed the "prime contractor." A prime contractor has ultimate responsibility for a project and may oversee the activity of one or more subcontracting organizations or independent contractors. Hardware Corporation's professional services group did, however, have prime contractor responsibility in some projects and this could put them in a position of oversight of a firm such as Consulting Partners. A prime contractor may be in a position of purely managing a project with no staff other than the project manager assigned to the project.

In the case of Consulting Partners, project staffing could easily encompass the whole of very large projects
peaking at hundreds of personnel. In the case of Hardware Corporation, staffing was more likely to be a small team working with a larger proportion of client personnel, another professional services or product vendor, independent contractors, or some mix of these elements. This made for even more "layers of indirectness," as one executive liked to put it, in project situations. For example, in cases where Hardware Corporation was a subcontractor, professional staff could be contractually barred from ever talking directly to the client, other subcontractors, or vendors and would have to deal with the prime contractor exclusively. Consulting Partners staff rarely found themselves in this type of situation, although it could happen.

It was very useful for extending my understanding of the intricacies of project organization and relations to have access to Hardware Corporation projects. The differences in dynamics mentioned here, including the difference in the organizational context of professional services within Hardware Corporation, made for some additional permutations in project circumstances. Access to Hardware Corporation professionals provided me with views from different perspectives, such as that of individuals who had to manage firms like Consulting Partners in a client environment or who were subjugated to them as subcontractors. It was an executive in Hardware Corporation who referred to Consulting Partners professionals as "steely-eyed killers."
Hardware Corporation also had some very complex projects from an international perspective. For example, one project involved an Eastern European Government, a German company, and an American company in a tri-venture. The project manager was British, the software being installed involved a vendor in the Netherlands, and the project team included individuals from Austria, the United States and other countries. There was also considerable business activity throughout Asia, including some major organizational initiatives and projects in China.

My access to Hardware Corporation was extensive as various consulting activities over the course of three years involved both organizational and project matters. As mentioned earlier, the role of consultant is different than that of formally designated independent researcher. The methods may be similar, but execution and results will be different. For example, activity in Hardware Corporation began with a week at corporate headquarters conducting extensive interviews with the population. My general approach to the interviews was the same as it would have been had I been an independent researcher. I conducted interviews with individuals of every rank level from the receptionist to senior management. Interviews were semi-structured. However, interviews were not taped and the process was affected by my status as an outside consultant working directly for everyone’s new boss. The interview process involved considerable efforts on my part to provide the first
participants with reassurances and clear up misperceptions about my intent. Considering that preconceptions involved rumors that I was being sent in to do an assessment of personnel for purposes of firings or re-assignments, this was no small dilemma. I relied on the quick feedback that occurs among participants in these type of events by going out of my way to explain my objectives and reassure the first participants that my intentions did not include individual personnel assessment.

My purpose in conducting the interview series was to evaluate the business unit from an organizational development perspective, not to assess individuals. I made use of the fact that the first interviewees would discuss their interviews with others. In my experience, once a series of interviews begins, individuals scheduled later in the process often sought out early participants to find out what they could expect. Individuals clearly discussed what transpired over the full course of such an interview series, often in considerable detail. This becomes obvious in the course of an interview series, and I adapt successive interviews accordingly. Interviewees are more prepared in their answers, create opportunities to "reinforce" messages from earlier participants, and even deliver information that earlier participants may have neglected to supply, but realized later and discussed with others. By the second day of interviews, interviewees had enough background from other participants to
seem more comfortable at the outset of the interview and required less reassurance. The third day, a manager who had originally flatly refused to be interviewed when the schedule was being set prior to my visit asked the administrative assistant to be put on the schedule. This seemed a good sign that suspicion had been overcome. However, I do not believe that participants were ever as candid as they might have been if I had been an independent researcher.

Access to people and information in Hardware Corporation was exceptionally good. This was due to the fact that the executive commissioning my consulting services was not only a former employee of Consulting Partners, but was the original sponsoring manager for the research conducted there. The executive was familiar with anthropological field methods and gave me a free reign in the environment.

My activity in Hardware Corporation provided an opportunity to closely observe a leadership transition because the executive commissioning my consulting had just been brought in as worldwide head of this business unit. His predecessor was founder of the business unit and was described as very "charismatic." The predecessor had not vacated his position willingly and the leadership transition was considered by employees to have been handled very clumsily by senior management. Attendance at regularly scheduled meetings of the management team of the consulting services unit and
other organization-wide events provided me with an opportunity to track the leadership change over time.

An important phenomenon occurring over the course of the leadership transition involved the constitution of a core group of individuals all connected to the new leader through previous relationships within Consulting Partners. These professionals, myself among them, were brought in as employees or consultants. Some of these individuals were participants in the local office study forming the first phase of my investigation of Consulting Partners. During his leadership transition, the executive also hired people with whom he had formed relationships at another company he worked for subsequent to leaving Consulting Partners and prior to joining Hardware Corporation. It should be mentioned that this was not done as a strategy of "cleaning house" which is used in some leadership transitions. A very few individuals were fired or forcibly transferred out of the unit during the three years of my association with Hardware Corporation. As is often the case in leadership transitions, several individuals voluntarily left immediately or soon after the new executive assumed his position. Other positions opened due to normal attrition processes.

As mentioned earlier, it was not unusual for individuals who leave Consulting Services to hire the firm, or to hire each other over the course of their careers. Consulting Partners was so conscious of this that professionals who leave
are virtually always treated very well during the exit process whether it be voluntary or involuntary. Former employees were termed "alumni," and many offices even had annual "alumni dinners" to bring these people together with each other and those who were still with the firm.

Hardware Corporation professionals had generally more diverse work histories than those at Consulting Partners. This provided me with an opportunity to compare and contrast two types of information technology consulting professionals: (1) those trained from the inception of their careers as consultants, and (2) those who come to consulting later in their careers with experience in conventional organizational positions in information technology departmental contexts. Some individuals had experience with other professional services partnerships similar to Consulting Partners. Thus, there was an opportunity for me to gain information on similarities and differences in the large partnerships in the industry. It was notable that those of us who had a professional services partnership background seemed generally to perceive a bond on that basis, which was stronger if we had been with the same firm. This was manifested in communications involving specialized language, as well as overt discussions contrasting ourselves with others who had never had this experience.

As a cultural system, Hardware Corporation was mature for the information technologies industry where many companies are
under ten years old and proportionately few are more than twenty. Indeed, the existence of many organizations in this industry is predicated directly on the advent of the personal computer technologies that date back only to the early 1980’s. Some of the professional services partnerships, such as Consulting Partners, are among the oldest organizations in the industry. A few date back more than a century. However, the information technologies practice areas in these partnerships are obviously not that old although they do date to the very early inception of computer technology. Most corporations in the industry, such as Hardware Corporation, are considerably "younger" organizations.

Hardware Corporation entered the mainframe manufacturing market by virtue of engineering innovations. The innovations made their mainframes very distinctive in markets where very large transaction volume capacity and reliability are critical features of the information system requirements. The technological breakthroughs that characterized Hardware Corporation’s computers were admired for the engineering prowess and inventiveness required to achieve them and individuals were very proud to be part of the organization. In its way, Hardware Corporation was also an elite organization, although it did not command the kind of widespread recognition and prestige in the industry accorded Consulting Partners. Hardware Corporation was also reported on regularly in the business press and had received attention
from management scholars. One very well known management "guru" provided extensive description of the organization in cultural terms as an example of a successful business. The book in which the organization is described was published shortly after Hardware Corporation was founded. Employees of Hardware Corporation were very adept at discussing the company's "culture" and perhaps this book had contributed to their high level of awareness and facility with the concepts.

Consulting for Hardware Corporation provided an opportunity for me to explore the use of new communications technologies as tools for gathering information and being able to extend relationships beyond physical constraints. The organization had become deeply involved in electronic mail at a very early stage in the development of this technology, and took pride in its "early adopter" status. Hardware Corporation had built its own system and the Founder/CEO strongly mandated a shift to this medium. Certain communications can only be done via the electronic mail system. Many documents such as employee directories or policy manuals common to businesses no longer existed in paper form.

However, at the time of my consulting, the system was becoming dated from a technical perspective. Much to the consternation of financial managers, many in the professional services group began using outside electronic mail services.

"Guru" is the term often applied to this author by business practitioners. The term has become very commonly used to refer to popular writers of management books and technical experts. Because Hardware Corporation was identified by name, it is not possible to provide a citation here.
such as CompuServe or America Online in addition to having their company mail account. The need to do this was partly based on the fact that they were often outside the office in the course of their activities and the internal system did not have good remote access features. The company's extreme use of the internal electronic mail system created some inconveniences if it could not be readily accessed, especially to me as an outsider. Insiders who were not physically in a company office, such as the professional services personnel I worked with, had regular difficulties getting communications concerning organizational affairs. Information technology professionals, who already had difficulty with isolation from their employing organization due to long-term project assignments, often found their technology-based difficulties to be slightly ironic. However, the level of comfort the population had developed with creating and sustaining relations via this medium made it easier for me to be involved in worldwide activities without the need to travel. On site activities did occur in Europe and Asia and could be augmented by electronic mail technologies. On several occasions, relationships with Hardware Corporation employees were established and maintained over time without my ever meeting the individual face-to-face. While it is not entirely unusual for individuals in large, physically dispersed populations to create and maintain relations without ever meeting face-to-
face using other media, new technologies have dramatically affected this phenomenon.

Despite early success and becoming a respected company within the industry, by the time my activity with Hardware Corporation began, it had peaked and was in a decline. Mainframe manufacturers were generally experiencing intense pressures due to the dramatic changes in their business environment triggered by personal computer technology. Hardware Corporation was in relatively serious trouble.

A series of "downsizing" activities had already occurred before I became involved with the company, and more were feared. The initial set of interviews with the population revealed a preoccupation with these events. The acronym, RIF (Reduction In Force), was commonly used during interviews as a full-fledged noun and verb in discussion of these events. For example, individuals were worried there would be "another rif," or a person "got riffed." The company had been so generous with outplacement or early retirement packages in earlier rifs that people had come to term them "presents." Individuals also described strategies people had begun to employ in attempts to ensure they were included in the next rif. Rather than quit the organization, people who wanted to leave deliberately attempted to get themselves included in a rif in order to get the generous "presents" that were doled out. This behavior was also termed "suicide." During the late 1980's and early 1990's, many organizations were
"downsizing" due to business difficulties, or due to merger and acquisition activity which was surpassing historical records (and continues to do so at this writing). An attempt was made by some in management to characterize these changes as "right sizing" rather than "downsizing." However, this only seemed to make employees who were affected by the events more cynical. Downsizing companies, such as Hardware Corporation, which did not pursue an up-or-out employment policy, but rather were prideful of the degree of job security provided employees and high retention rates, ended up with employees who were deeply shaken. The pessimism and low morale of Hardware Corporation's employees was a frequent topic of conversation. For me, the contrast between Consulting Partners' stability and success and Hardware Corporation's decline was striking, and it was distressing at times to witness these events.

P. Reynolds (1994) has described a similar, though more precipitous and disastrous, business failure in an article based on his experience in a microcomputer manufacturing company. Particularly striking in his description is the shift he noted from ironic and cynical to sardonic humor as conditions worsened. Humor within Hardware Corporation during the three years of my association could certainly be described as both ironic, cynical and sardonic. Examples given by Reynolds are very similar to what I encountered within
Hardware Corporation, with the exception that product quality was never at issue as it was in the organization he describes.

The pressures of recent crises certainly seemed to contribute to the fact that individuals in the group taken over by the executive for whom I was consulting had concocted fantastical notions of what he had been hired to do. It became clear during initial interviews that members of the group had convinced themselves the executive had likely been hired to completely eliminate their organizational unit. Many believed the whole group was about to be riffed. In fact, this was directly contrary to the mandate and intent of the newly instated executive. These fears and suspicions made for a very difficult beginning for the new leader who had to dispel the idea that the group was doomed.

K. Gregory-Huddleston (1994) describes a number of features that I also found in Hardware Corporation in her analysis of career paths in the general Silicon Valley population. She discusses the quick rises and falls of organizations in the computer industry emphasizing the cultural conflicts inherent in these fairly young companies as they transition from start-up to established organizations. Some organizations do not make the transition successfully, or encounter severe environmental changes that lead to quick business failure. The distinction made in these organizations between what Gregory-Huddleston terms "pioneers" and "settlers" were made in Hardware Corporation. Individuals
were very conscious of each other's employee numbers. Because employee numbers were assigned sequentially as people were hired, they distinguished pioneers from settlers just as Gregory-Huddleston describes in other organizations. Pioneers blamed settlers for the organization's problems, and settlers blamed pioneers.

The long-running crisis that embroiled employees of Hardware Corporation made for considerable contrast to Consulting Partners, which was a mature, stable organization characterized by continuous, at times dramatic, growth. Activity at Hardware Corporation also afforded me the opportunity to work directly with Dr. Leonard Sayles, who at the time was Professor Emeritus at Columbia University, having retired several years previously. Again, an unusual collaboration of anthropologists was possible within a business organizational setting.

Consulting for Hardware Corporation for three years was an opportunity to get a close view of the power Wall Street can have over management behavior in corporations. Pressures to resolve business difficulties within unrealistic timeframes escalated as reactionary senior management behavior following quarterly reporting became more extreme with each passing quarter. This did produce the kind of chain of events often described as a "spiral down" when business people discuss failing organizations or projects. Momentum toward a recovery could not seem to be sustained due to these quarterly
"management fits" as people began to call them. Management was preoccupied with how Wall Street analysts and business media would react to financial reports and press releases. These reactions were heavily factored into decisionmaking, or the lack thereof. As a public corporation, Hardware Corporation had no choice but to honor quarterly regulatory reporting requirements.

Even though the professional services consulting group did "triage" the "hemorrhaging" projects and obtained contracts for new work, restoring this division to financial health was not enough in the scheme of things in a product-based company. After years of failing to achieve the financial criteria essentially set by Wall Street, the Chief Executive Officer was pressured to step aside, and eventually did. Chief executives of companies are often "sacrificed" in these situations sometimes more as a symbolic gesture than anything else. People often do refer to personnel changes made to please Wall Street analysts and business media as "sacrifices." An interesting reversal of this tendency occurred recently when the Founder of Apple Computers, Steve Jobs, was reinstated in the chief executive position he had vacated under similar pressures some years ago. Despite high level executive changes, little improvement ensued, and about a year later, Hardware Corporation was acquired by another company. It is now a subsidiary of another hardware vendor.
Development Software Corporation: A Third Research Site

Following the management re-organization in Hardware Corporation as a result of the inability to pull out of its decline, the executive for whom I provided consulting decided to take another position. Voluntary departures of key executives such as in this case are not unusual following a high level re-organization. Also, a pattern of relatively short employment tenure is now very common in the information technology industry (Gregory-Huddleston 1994).

It should also be mentioned that a relatively quick succession of jobs was reported as a pattern for individuals leaving Consulting Partners. Consulting Partners had commissioned research on what happened to professionals after they left employment. Partners reported that the research found it was very common for people to go through a rapid succession of three employment changes.\(^3\) Partners theorized that this was related to the difficulty of transitioning to other types of organizations. Typically, individuals went from the firm's partnership organizational form to a corporate organizational form and had trouble adjusting to the differences. This means making the transition from being a consultant in a prestigious firm to being a functionary in the information technologies department of a corporation.

\(^3\)This type of research was not uncommon and partners would all have received results at least in synopsis form. Although I was not able to directly access the report, more than one individual reported this information, so it is probably reliable. It could be difficult to determine the exact location of information in the firm that might be used to verify statements of this type. In these cases, the source and frequency of reporting was considered.
Information technologies departments of companies generally do not have high intraorganizational status and are often viewed by others throughout the organization with great ambivalence. Individuals experienced considerable loss of status and perquisites in many of these situations, even though they may have entered the new organization at a higher level with a significant pay increase. Though for many these trade-offs were voluntary and worth it in terms of having a less stressful work context, less travel, and more time for areas of life other than work, this was an adjustment nonetheless.

The executive for whom I had provided consulting in Hardware Corporation again requested my services upon assuming his new position at Development Software Corporation. Over time, he also reconstituted "his team" which now included individuals who had also decided to leave Hardware Corporation. At this point, this core group of people had at least about three years, and as much as fifteen years, association with each other, and the executive through whom they were linked. It is not particularly unusual for executives at higher levels to bring in "their own team." According to Gregory-Huddleston (1994:122): "Professionals frequently hear about jobs through the grapevine and get hired through professional connections with a rubber stamp from personnel." Indeed, executives at this level are often hired to some degree for their ability to bring people in with them. The steady arrival over time of professionals having prior
experience with this executive did not go unnoticed by the original population. Employees took to referring to these new arrivals as "FOB's." This was a borrowing of the acronym, "FOB" (Friends of Bill), which was coined to refer to cronies of Bill Clinton, current U.S. President, who were brought into his administration. Since the executive at Development Software Corporation had the same first initial, the acronym was easily appropriated.

Development Software Corporation provided another case of leadership transition that could be observed over time. In contrast to either Consulting Partners or Hardware Corporation, Development Software Corporation was very small. The context was similar to the entrepreneurial start-ups described by Gregory-Huddleston (1994) as common in Silicon Valley. Development Software Corporation was well under one thousand employees in size, and under $100 million in annual revenue. Though small by comparison to my other two research sites, it was also global in nature. Similar to Hardware Corporation, global coverage was achieved through a combination of company-run offices and distributor agreements.

The attraction of professionals to this company was based on the fact that it was still privately held and was positioning to make an initial public offering of stock. For more than a decade, some individuals in the information technology industry have been able to make personal fortunes by means of involvement in start-ups which are bought by
larger companies or during the initial public offering of stock. Stock options are often a significant part of compensation in these companies. Microsoft Corporation is, of course, one of the more prominent examples of this in the industry. Gregory-Huddleston's (1994) research on Silicon Valley careers indicates that professionals frequently work for large companies right out of school. Then, it is common to move to a small company, often taking pay cuts in exchange for an equity position and stock options in the event of a buy-out or public offering. Development Software Corporation was not a new start-up. Having been in existence for approximately fifteen years, the company had entered the phase where the population was a mix of "pioneers" and "settlers," and like Hardware Corporation, the population was very conscious of who was who in these terms. It was well known that the company intended an initial public offering. As events transpired, however, it was purchased by a larger company instead.

The duration of my activity within Development Software Corporation was nearly three years. While my primary contact with Development Software Corporation was through consulting involving the professional services group, it was possible to have a broad range of organizational activity. As is characteristic of smaller organizations, the executive for whom consulting was performed has broad responsibilities. In addition to initial responsibility for professional services,
the executive became responsible for worldwide marketing of both products and services, and North American product sales. The executive was a member of the five-person Management Advisory Committee, consisting of senior management, which aimed to conceive and enact business and operational strategy for the company. This committee, referred to as "the MAC," was composed of all male members. The most senior management group in all three research sites was an exclusively white male domain, and was dominated by Americans.

Association with Development Software Corporation afforded me access to yet another segment of the information technologies industry: software product vendor. Development Software Corporation marketed software development tools. This means the end users of its products were programmers who develop software applications within companies and as independent software vendors (ISV's). Development Software Corporation's products were used to design complex information systems and specific applications within systems, to generate the program code, and to maintain this code and perform system enhancements over time. The products also could generate national language translations in systems that were deployed throughout international companies. Developing such products requires deep technology skills in both hardware and software engineering. The category of professionals in this industry known as "developers" has high status. (This particular term has been made trendy by the high value Microsoft places on
developers.) The term is actually rather vague and many spurious claims are made to this title. The meaning of what it is to be a "developer" in the information technology industry has become so broad and is so heavily used that it is diluted of value as a category. Other terminology used to suggest that an individual has advanced skills and experience includes: system architect, system designer, and software engineer. Development Software Corporation employed the developer's developers, and as such, could be termed elite in its segment of the industry.

Software developed and sold by the company was of great interest from an anthropological standpoint. This software directly used kinship and biological terminology, and the concepts associated with the terms, to describe data and system relationships and to induce particular technical events. For example, terms such as Parent, Child, and Inheritance were basic formal terms that had to be mastered by the novice. Terms borrowed from kinship and biology were employed directly during the actual use of this development software, and professionals were constantly using them as they discussed the technical issues involved in their work. These kinship terms were all part of a specialized language system that is associated with what is called object-oriented programming. It is beyond the scope of this discussion to present more detail about computer languages. However, this
language system is a striking and important feature of the information technologies industry that is of anthropological interest.

The level of customer support required for the complex development software sold by the company also led to the establishment of a professional services group. However, it was somewhat different from that of Consulting Partners or Hardware Corporation. Adoption of a development software product is a big decision in an information technology department. The "tool" metaphor commonly used to describe this software is apt given that it is instrumental to "building" software systems. A decision to use a standard development software tool, in a large information technology department, might involve re-training hundreds of people in the workforce in the use of this software. Adopting a new development software product means committing workers to at least several weeks of basic training, and very likely several months of on-the-job training, before an individual achieves a sufficient mastery to effectively use the software. There is significant technology transfer involved in selling development software.

Metaphorically, adopting a new development tool is the equivalent of an industrial plant with dated technology undergoing a complete re-fitting of machinery that includes the latest robotics. Information technology departments that adopt new software development tools, often prefer to do this
in stages. In a large department, it is common to begin with a small group of programmers working on a particular area of the system, or a specific project in order to test the product before fuller adoption. A complete change over to a new development software "environment" is often a staged event in large departments. In the early stages of adopting Development Software’s products it was very common for the customer to contract for what were called "mentoring" services. A single consultant or a two- or three-man team located at the client site to mentor programmers through adoption of the company’s products was common. However, some Development Software Corporation projects could also involve broad project management responsibilities, larger teams, and several-million-dollar fee levels.

Company credentialing tended to be based on claims of shortened development time attributed to use of their software; number of applications or complete systems developed with the products; number of lines of code generated by products; or, number of lines of code actually in production that were developed with its products. Some of this information could be characterized in scales of millions, even billions, of lines of code. In the development software segment of the industry, company credentialing is also typically based on features relating to the ability of a product, or product set, to transcend as many of the myriad hardware and operating system environments that now exist as
possible. The number of national languages that can be translated by the products is also a selling feature.

Research on the international dimensions of global businesses and projects was augmented substantially during my association with Software Development Corporation. This company had been founded in Europe and, after becoming established, had shifted headquarters to Silicon Valley in an effort to be "where the action and investment money was" in the industry. The company had also shifted from a European Founder/CEO to an American CEO and the five-man Management Advisory Committee came to be dominated by American executives. While it is not unusual for companies to expand operations into other countries, the act of shifting a company's true headquarters to another city or state, much less country, is somewhat unusual. Companies often set up titular headquarters in certain countries, or states, in order to gain tax or regulatory advantages. Few, if any, real operational functions may be performed in such locations. In the case of Development Software Corporation, the move to Silicon Valley was a real shift in headquarters personnel and operations.

Unlike Hardware Corporation or Consulting Partners (in the later stages of activity), Development Software Corporation did not have as extensive or as reliable an electronic mail system in place at the inception of my activity. I attended meetings and established relations with
employees face-to-face. I was heavily reliant on postal services, telephone and voice mail media to maintain those relations and accomplish my tasks. Given that much of my work was conducted in my home and there was no nearby office, this made for some initial difficulties in communications. After about a year, an electronic mail system was fully implemented. However, the population did not have quite the same level of comfort with the technology as was encountered at Hardware Corporation, although it increased over time. As mentioned previously, the potential for using telecommunications that exist within business settings for purposes related to anthropological fieldwork needs to be continuously explored.

My attendance at company functions and meetings was regular and onsite activities for involvement in specific projects was possible. The smaller size of Development Software Corporation made attendance at functions and meetings and involvement in projects very productive from a research perspective. In a smaller company, such events bring together a significant proportion of the total population and a more complete range of ranks. Individuals in Consulting Partners or Hardware Corporation could easily spend their entire working life in those organizations without ever catching much more than a glimpse of the Chief Executive Officer or other senior managers. Individuals in smaller companies are more likely to have a network of relations that extend directly to senior management. Informants in a smaller context also
frequently have a broader and more direct knowledge of the total personnel and workings of the organization than those in large organizations at similar rank levels. I made an effort to compensate for a high level of physical isolation from the company during any onsite activities. I used these opportunities to discuss the history of the company, the workings of the organization, impressions of management, the specifics of consulting projects, and topics I was exploring for my research.

Effect of Researcher Roles on Data Collection:

In Consulting Partners, it was possible for me to occupy the vantage point of participant in the organization through direct employment. I actually held positions in two very different contexts within the organization. First, in a local office doing a variety of projects. Then, a number of years later, after an interval of independent research and consulting in the firm, I was again hired. In the second case, I took the position of anthropologist in the Management Development Group within the company's international training and development center in a different city than the local office I had first studied. My direct employment had some clear benefits in terms of gaining basic knowledge, experiencing the environment as participants experience it, being accepted as an insider, and establishing relations that supported an unusual level of research access. Remaining
solely in this role can have drawbacks, however. As Nadel (1958:18) states:

Whether so complete an absorption into the native life is necessary or of special value is a moot point. Indeed it has its dangers. For absorption in the native society means having a fixed place in it, which, like all social positions, implies limitation of outlook. Detachment thus has its advantages.

Achieving an ideal balance between participation and observation is an abstraction that makes for an absorbing discussion among anthropologists. However, in actuality, each situation is different, judgment must be applied, and tough trade-offs must often be made.

During the independent research phase of my activity in Consulting Partners, it was clear the role of researcher had advantages. Data could be collected very efficiently without the encumbrance of any demands to produce an immediate effect. Systematic methods of data collection could be more readily employed and sustained.

Independence of the organization as a researcher afforded me more detachment and objectivity than can be achieved when livelihood is involved. The only real stipulation made by the organization was that the research not interfere too heavily with participant duties, that it not unleash a negative dynamic that would diminish morale or disrupt relations, and that it not compromise the organization’s responsibility for client confidentiality. Except perhaps for the extended consideration of the organization’s clients, these are basic
requirements for any anthropological research and consideration was given to these issues in the design and execution of the project. Research was conducted in such a way that interviews and focus groups were made engaging and informative and did not deteriorate into "bitch sessions" for participants. During discussions concerning permission to go forward with the research, an executive had stated a concern that such activities could turn into extended "bitch sessions." He wanted reassurance that this would be avoided. He was assured that this would compromise the value of the research and consideration had been given to avoiding this pitfall.

The degree to which research in business settings can be independent is generally problematical. Research is often complicated by financial arrangements involving direct and indirect financial dependency on the entity to be studied. For one thing, organizations commission research, which is then more a variant of consulting. Results in these cases may be owned and controlled entirely by the organization that is studied. Some organizations, General Motors and Xerox, for example, maintain an internal research staff that now includes anthropologists. Sometimes the interdependencies between business organizations and business colleges make for complexities concerning research independence. Difficulties related to maintaining independence are similar to those surrounding biological and physical science research in
academe related to increasing funding of research by businesses with a financial stake in the outcomes.

In Consulting Partners, most people effectively "donated" their time to interviews and focus groups, which were often scheduled outside normal work hours. I use the term "donated" loosely; this was actually more in the category some people termed "mandatory optional." Senior management had requested cooperation with the project. Even though people could technically decline to participate when asked, it was tacitly understood that everyone should make time to participate, even if that meant using time in the evening or on a weekend. My project was made very official by means of it being given a "charge number" to which people could allocate the time they spent on the project. Professional services firms must keep close track of time. This is done by means of elaborate time reporting accounting systems based on account numbers to which time is charged. By assigning a charge number to my research project, management could track the amount of time used by the population for participating in these activities. The significance of charge numbers in the time reporting system will be discussed further in Chapter 6. It might have been more difficult to achieve the high level of cooperation I received had it not been for the fact that individuals knew management would see whether or not they charged time to this project.
Although participants did attempt to make political use of my research activities, the independence of the researcher role allowed this phenomenon to be managed as best it can be during field work. During the interview phase of my project, the competitive nature of Consulting Partners personnel worked to some degree in my favor. After several interviews had been completed, one participant asked at conclusion whether his interview had been longer than others. When I asked him about this question, I found that individuals had been comparing notes after their interviews, and for some, the length of the interview became a "record" to be beaten.

The role of consultant makes for a very different vantage point in terms of access to a population. Consultant was my only major role definition during activity within both Hardware Corporation and Development Software Corporation. This role is often highly politicized, and it can take considerable time and effort to gain credibility in terms of confidentiality and independence with some individuals or segments of a population. Performance pressures, including tight deadlines, did not often afford me the luxury of the kind of thoroughness of exploration of an issue that an anthropologist tends to prefer methodologically. Also, being commissioned by the most senior executive in a population does not guarantee good access to people and information. These difficulties were exacerbated by my being part of a leadership transition for a population. My association as a consultant
to the senior executive who was being brought in to take over a group made for some real barriers to acceptance by the indigenous population. A consultant brought in by a new leader is often particularly suspected of having a hidden agenda of evaluating individuals and potentially recommending personnel changes, even firings.

In both Hardware Corporation and Development Software Corporation, longer timeframes (three years and nearly three years, respectively), and consistency of contact via regular attendance at meetings and involvement in business projects, eventually eroded some of the largely understandable suspicions members of organizations tend to have of consultants in general. While it is certainly possible to gain an understanding of an organization that is consistent with acceptable standards of research in the role of consultant, this should not be conflated with researcher as a distinctive role. Even though a high level of access over a long period of time afforded the opportunity to gather considerable data on both Hardware Corporation and Development Software Corporation, I would not undertake an ethnography of either company without an additional phase of research. However, because of the inclusion of researcher in the roles performed while associated with Consulting Partners, the data on this organization would support undertaking an ethnographic description of the organization.
Advantages of Multiple Research Sites:

Though there are differences in the degree and kind of data I collected at the three research sites described here, it is a great advantage to have a research base comprised of three distinctive organizations within the same industry. While many anthropologists dedicate their entire career to one cultural system, and there are good reasons for encouraging such highly focused research in the study of business, many others engage in field studies in more than one cultural system for a variety of reasons. In management science, it is less common for an academic professional to focus exclusively on one organization, even among those who use anthropological methods. A major reason for studying multiple organizations is the advantage it provides in preserving anonymity of the organizations and individuals who participate in the research.

Studying multiple organizations can also provide more contextual data. For example, it can help determine whether an organizational feature is distinctive or not. It can also help place an organization more accurately in the context of a particular industry or the business community in general. For example, the information technology industry is very broad. I was able to study different segments of it in the course of my activity: a professional services partnership, a hardware product corporation, and a software product corporation. A full explication of the differences between
the software and hardware segments of the computer industry, further contrasted by the distinctions between the service and product segments of the industry, is beyond the scope of this discussion, although my data would support such discussion. Analysis of the data I collected could also proceed along the lines of investigating the contrasts between partnership and corporate organizational forms, or the contrasting scales of the organizations studied. It would also be possible to use the data for analysis of topical areas such as information technologies, projects and project management, leadership transitions, downsizing, or international issues. It has proven quite fortuitous to have access to the three organizations discussed here representing a number of distinctions within the industry, and an array of significant organizational events.

The addition of data from two more field sites has essentially confirmed the conclusions of my earlier analysis of Consulting Partners data (Smith 1991). This thesis discusses the use of metaphor in applied organizational anthropology. The Consulting Partners data suggested that metaphor was methodologically important during investigation and analysis of the organization, and was useful in developing practical applications and communicating effectively with the research population. Examples of metaphor are presented to highlight metaphor’s functionality in transference of
knowledge; cultivation of intimacy; accommodation to new experience; generation of meaningfulness, understanding, knowledge and truth; and, problem solving. I conclude that attention to the use of metaphors can be important to the conduct of business anthropology in both research and applied projects. I also conclude that inclusion of training in the use of metaphor in business communications training programs, especially those emphasizing preparation for international assignments, could improve such programs. Subsequent studies in Hardware Corporation and Development Software Corporation have strengthened those conclusions.

In the chapters that follow I will use my data to explore the implications of James Scott's (1976, 1985, 1990, 1998) theories concerning the existence of a "moral economy," its relationship to the general dynamics of power in human relations, and everyday forms of resistance strategies employed in the negotiation of power in human relations. In Chapter 7, I extend my earlier discussion of the use of metaphor (Smith 1991) to include all types of figurative communication. The following discussion will proceed on the basis of data from the three research sites with designation of the particular site given only when important for clarification. In a few cases, data is used from informants other than those in my three research sites if it provides a better example of a point to be illustrated. As mentioned
previously, one of the advantages of doing research in consulting organizations is that it can provide access to a wide array of informants in client organizations that supplements the data collected.
CHAPTER 5

MORAL ECONOMY, HIDDEN AND PUBLIC TRANSCRIPTS, INFRAPOLOITICS, AND EVERYDAY FORMS OF RESISTANCE TO POWER

James C. Scott (1976, 1985, 1990, 1998) has constructed a useful theoretical framework through which to analyze phenomena related to power in business settings. Though initially a political economist, Scott’s work is informed by anthropology through his direct contact with anthropologists, familiarity with anthropological literature, and use of anthropological field methods involving long-term stays and participant-observation. He is currently the Eugene Meyer Professor of Political Science and Anthropology at Yale University. In this chapter, I will discuss the concepts Scott used to explore the dynamics of power relations. In Chapters 6 and 7, I will apply the theory to analysis of data collected during my fieldwork.

The definition of power is one of the longer entries in dictionaries. As E. Wolf (1990:586) points out, the term "is certainly one of the most loaded and polymorphous words in our repertoire." Power in the sense of possession of control, authority, or influence over others is very much a feature of business settings. M. Weber (1947:152) defines power as "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will
be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests." The basis for power can be personal (charisma), tradition or legality (rules). T. Parsons (1954:391) includes the ability to "prevent undesired interference" in his definition of power. Power in the sense that it is the ability to resist the power of another individual, an organization or institution is the focus of Scott's studies of subordinated individuals and groups.

Central concepts in Scott's body of work pertinent to the analysis here include: the existence of a moral economy, characterization of hidden and public transcripts, infrapolitics, and everyday forms of resistance to power. Scott makes linkages among these concepts; provides a term, "infrapolitics," that gives definition to an ill-defined and somewhat neglected area in the study of political behaviors; and, presents a typology of everyday forms of resistance. Together, these concepts make for a robust theoretical framework particularly useful to analyzing and discussing a wide range of common day-to-day behaviors involving power relations. The concepts themselves are familiar to anthropologists. However, the way Scott has linked and extended them and his provision of a useful typology for everyday forms of resistance behaviors is unique.

Scott began articulating this theoretical framework in 1976 when reporting on his research on the subsistence of
Southeast Asian peasants in a book entitled, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant*. A subsequent two-year, participant-observation study in a Malaysian Village resulted in considerable elaboration on his original analysis (Scott 1985). In this study, he used anthropological field methods and knowledge, based on an extensive study of the literature and association with anthropologists, to gather further data. Of his field experience, Scott (1985:xviii) says, "I was not prepared for the elementary fact that an anthropologist is at work from the moment he opens his eyes in the morning until he closes them at night."

Subsequent to participant observation in Malaysia, Scott extended his initial work, based on studies of Southeast Asian peasants, by doing a largely historical study of groups with very little or no power. This resulted in a book entitled, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (Scott 1990), which includes analysis of American slavery, prisoners of war and concentration camps, caste systems, jail populations, serfs and populations subjugated by colonial powers. His discussion reminds us that neither extreme on the continuum of power really quite exists among humans -- neither absolute power, nor absolute powerlessness. Scott also brings other, less extreme, examples into his discussion, including a number of examples from contemporary business. In this study, he found plenty of evidence that even in the most powerless populations, where a dominant group has power over
life and death, the resistive phenomena he first described on the basis of his research on Southeast Asian peasants were present, and the theories he had developed were useful for analysis.

Using Scott's findings to analyze the data I collected in business settings extends the use of his approach to populations toward the other end of the power spectrum. Relatively high levels of individual power exist within the context of the economic activities of the populations I studied. In theory, each individual ultimately has the power to withdraw his or her labor from these organizations at any time. In actuality, the real degree of this power is affected by such factors as the existence of employment contracts; considerations of income loss during a transition in jobs; current status of the job market in general or for a particular occupation; personality factors and personal relationships that may influence these situations; considerations related to obtaining employer recommendations; or, a need to maintain relations that can affect an individual's success over time. One or more of these factors can make for very strong ties of dependency to an organization making the ideal notion that one can simply leave a job more complicated than it sounds.

Power relations in business settings further illuminate, and are illuminated by, Scott's findings and theories. In his most recent work, Scott (1998) explores how "certain schemes
to improve the human condition have failed" through analysis of a range of cases exemplifying spectacular development project failures. He devotes particular attention to planned cities, Soviet collectivization, compulsory villagization in Tanzania, and scientific farming. Although Scott's most recent book focuses on state projects, his discussion and conclusions also have applicability to business development schemes, which also very often fail.

Development schemes in business are often referred to as "fads." For example, some in management have recently been swept up in a fad called "empowerment" which seeks to give all workers in an organization, down to the lowest levels, more power over day-to-day work activity. "Empowerment" quickly became the subject of derisive joking among workers as actual implementation of programs based on these notions left much to be desired in many cases, though success is reported also. The course run by the empowerment movement was affected by its coincidence with downsizing in many organizations. Some companies introduced these programs while in the process of downsizing or shortly thereafter. Workers who were doing two (or more) jobs to take up the slack created by downsizing reported feeling they were being "empowered" in an effort to mask the additional burden of assuming another person's job.

While empowerment seems a noble idea as did the schemes Scott chooses for discussion, enactment of actual programs is all too human. For one thing, certain kinds of power, such as
personal power, are such that they are not anyone's to bestow upon another. Also, in business settings, perceptions that power is finite are strong and self interest is involved. This often makes it difficult for one group or individual to empower another.

One of the reasons power is perceived as finite in a business context is the finite nature of some of the resources that are used to exercise and measure power. Control of money and formal authority over workers are examples of tangible and finite means of measuring power among managers. Individuals and functional groups that can claim to create revenue or profit, or control expenditures, have claims to power. Individuals who manage personnel have claims to power; however, there is often not a direct correlation between the size of the staff and the amount of power a manager has. For example, the Vice President of Operations in a bank may have a staff of several thousand, but will not have as much power as the Vice President of the Commercial Loan Division, who may have a far smaller staff. Commercial Loans bring in revenue and generate profit. Operations represents overhead. Even though other, less tangible aspects of power are generally acknowledged and would seem not to be finite, tangible manifestations of power heavily influence behavior of management and power relations within business.

Empowerment programs, for all their good intentions, have often failed. The running commentary on this movement within
business quickly became generally derisive and "empowerment" became the subject of cynical, even sardonic, joking at lower levels and among management. The word, empowerment, is often uttered with tonal signals or hand gestures signifying it is in quotations during oral exchanges. It also became the topic of cartoons appearing in various media. In many cases, it was one thing to increase decision-making powers at lower levels, but quite another to re-structure power over such matters as budgets and reporting relationships. Increasing decision-making power made for a rationale of also insisting upon "accountability" for decision-making. Little, if any, consideration was given to whether power over budgets or reporting relations should also be pushed one or more levels down the organizational structure. Workers effected by some attempts to implement empowerment programs received some decision-making power, and with it, plenty of accountability. However, there was little or no re-structure of tangible power over matters of budget. Workers also did not receive power associated with reporting relations, such as whether it might make more sense for them to be located physically in another area or be part of another organizational group.

Power is a dynamical and complex phenomenon made more difficult to study and discuss by a significant degree of intangibility. It is no wonder schemes such as enactment of large-scale "empowerment" programs in business settings have proven complicated and difficult. Scott's framework allows us
to observe more closely, analyze, and discuss the dynamics of power relations more fully. This is useful to understanding how phenomena in business settings such as recent attempts at empowerment play out in actual terms. A fuller discussion of the status of empowerment programs in contemporary business is beyond the scope of this paper, but is illustrative of a topic that could be productively explored using Scott’s theories. In the case of empowerment programs, P. Bourdieu’s (1977, 1998) concept of the euphemization of economic power would also be of interest.

In the information technology industry, which is the focus of my study, the degree of individual power to withdraw from organizations is considerable because of a labor shortage. This degree of freedom may actually enable more use of some of the resistance strategies discussed by Scott, because the consequences to the resistant individual are often less severe. The particular organizations forming the basis of my research include a very large information technology consulting firm and two Silicon Valley corporations. Therefore, the calibre of the technical skills within these populations is such that many individuals are able to readily obtain other jobs by trading on the cachet of these organizations. One executive in a recently acquired Silicon Valley firm described the "negative unemployment" that ensued. Many people who were terminated following the acquisition got
new jobs before their severance period lapsed and were collecting two paychecks.

Also, skills are such that some are capable of committing grand acts of sabotage involving corruption of data, destruction of systems, or causing systems to perform in destructive or bizarre ways. The programmed instructions that execute this type of sabotage is now referred to as "malicious code." Sabotage is one of the everyday forms of resistance included in Scott's typology of these behaviors. Potential for an individual to commit sabotage is further enhanced by the fact that skilled technicians in this industry can commit such acts while physically very removed from the target in terms of either space or time. Association with the organization may have long since terminated and the person need be nowhere near the organization's physical facilities. The most highly skilled may have good reason to believe they can preserve their anonymity. Not surprisingly, one of the fastest growing segments of the information technology industry is security systems that take into account the potential of disgruntled employees to commit sabotage.

The dynamics of power within the information technologies industry that can be investigated through Scott's theoretical framework include the technology itself as a factor in power relations. Scott (1985) focused intensively on the effects of technological changes in his study of a Malaysian village. Professionals in the information technology industry are
preoccupied with issues related to resistance when planning and implementing information technology projects within organizations. Obviating employee resistance strategies, including the everyday forms of resistance described by Scott, is the objective of what is typically referred to as "change management." This has become a specialization dealing with all forms of organizational changes, including those specifically involving information technologies. H.G. Barnett's (1953) work on innovation as the basis of cultural change is very clearly evident in the foundation of current approaches to managing technological change. Consultants offering change management services may also claim to specialize in "culture change" projects.

Both oral traditions and history make clear the extent of human ambivalence toward technology. Even though, or perhaps because, usage and dependency upon information technologies has steadily increased in the business community, ambivalence related to organizational power associated with this emergent technology is evident. For example, some organizations have added the position of Chief Information Officer (CIO) to the pantheon of senior management; however, the position most often carries neither the status, nor the power of the other "chiefs." And, although information technology consulting is one of the fastest growing segments of the professional services industry, it does not command the status of other
professions, such as engineering, medicine, accountancy or law, despite growing fee parity and a proliferation of formal certification programs.

Scott's work initially created considerable debate in his own discipline of political economy. Samuel L. Popkin is principal spokesperson for the alternate view in a book entitled, The Rational Peasant, published in 1979. The similarity of this debate to the Thomas Kuhn and Karl Popper imbroglio is striking, though not so acrimonious. Scott similar to Kuhn is the upstart. Popkin similar to Popper is defender of the faith. As with Kuhn and Popper, "schools" formed around Scott and Popkin as other academics entered the dialogue. Resolving this debate is beyond the scope of my analysis. Like many such debates, while it has intrinsic interest and value, it is more the product of the dichotomous thinking, a long-running dominance of logical positivism, quests for grand theory, and contentious academic traditions as much as having any real basis in fact. Wolf (1990:588) sums this state of affairs up aptly: "As each successive approach carries the ax to its predecessors, anthropology comes to resemble a project in intellectual deforestation."

Though such debates can be stimulating, vigorous, good-natured or acrimonious, the analysis I am presenting here

---

1 For an example of criticism of Scott by an anthropologist, see Susan Gal's article, "Language and the 'Arts of Resistance'" (1995).

2 Popkin (1979:xiii) describes Scott, who provided him with unpublished manuscripts and critical feedback, as "good-natured and helpful" in the course of his reexamination of Scott's work.
falls more in the realm of practice and cannot wait for theoretical debates to be settled. So often they never are, or can be, definitively. Either Scott's framework, or Popkin's alternative, or a combination of both could be employed productively in analysis of my research data to explain a wide range of pervasive phenomena. Scott's framework was chosen because it is more in keeping with anthropological methods and theories. Using Scott's framework is less in keeping with management science, which is generally informed by the same political and formal economic method and theory used by Popkin as the basis for his alternate framework.

Scott demonstrates the importance of participant-observation methodologies for deriving thick description of what actually, rather than ideally or reportedly, occurs over time in the course of complex human relations. By emphasizing everyday forms of resistance to power, the extent of power as well as its limits are revealed, and a ubiquitous set of behaviors encountered in the course of my research can be accounted for and to some degree explained.

Forms of resistance exist as a means of equilibrating or disrupting power relations in the context of any formally or informally organized human activities. Power disparities that underlay resistance can exist in dyadic relations; within small, informal groupings; and, most certainly exist at all levels of formally organized activities of humans. Resistance
is an inherent feature of human activity perhaps because everything from gross injustices to petty impositions occur deliberately and inadvertently in so many situations involving human relations\(^3\). Resistance is even the raison d'\'être for many organized groups which seek to register protest and effect change in the circumstances of their members.

At one end of the continuum, resistance is overt, organized open defiance taking such forms as activist group events, union strikes, organized stockholder challenges, rebellion, and war. While these types of resistance may also have covert operations and agendas, their public nature has caused them to be documented, in some cases, copiously. Their place in the public transcript makes such events more accessible to scholarly research. The effect of this has been to create a bias in disciplines such as political science, political economy, and history toward research and theorizing based largely on acts of open defiance.

Scott establishes "everyday forms of resistance" as the other end of this continuum of behaviors involving power relations. Scott points out that because open defiance is formal, overt, organized and generally focused on achieving de jure changes, it is more readily apparent and amenable to analysis. Therefore, an understandable bias in the dialogue on resistance has occurred in favor of discussion of these

\(^3\)Research in the area of nonhuman primates suggests these dynamics also exist in these species. See for example F. DeWaal (1982, 1987) and G. Schubert and R. Masters (1991).
events. However, as Scott repeatedly demonstrates, everyday forms of resistance, characterized as informal, usually covert and more generally non-coordinated activities aimed at obtaining de facto gains, are a permanent and often extremely potent force in human activities involving power relations. As an ongoing feature of human activities, everyday resistance can be a strong force against the processes of hegemony; can accumulate to the point of acting as a significant counterforce to hegemony that is difficult to confront or stop; or can, under some circumstances, catalyze open defiance resulting in significant change, even overthrowing individuals or groups holding power*. Everyday resistance strategies may be employed either to maintain the status quo or to achieve a change in the status quo.

While it would be of interest to extend the range of investigation of everyday forms of resistance into acephalous societies and even nonhuman primates, that would be beyond the scope of this document. Adding an ethnological dimension to Scott's basic work also has useful potential that has been explored by R. Moore's (1991, 1993) analysis of Japanese rice farmer resistance to governmental policy changes. Also, scholars have applied Scott's theories to data collected in a number of other cultural systems (Scott and Kerkvliet 1986, for example).

---

*Although Scott points out that many who study such events find that, on close analysis, real change in the status quo often does not occur following successful rebellion.
The actual configuration of everyday forms of resistance activities in a given context is often complex. A single instance may combine elements of both everyday resistance and open defiance, and may occur against an historical backdrop which can influence the choice and enactment of a particular strategy in a given circumstance. Scott analyzes a number of single instances in fine detail to provide examples in context. The degree to which the ideological system of a culture may be a factor in strategies and configurations of resistance activities has been explored in Scott's work involving the concept of a moral economy and by R. Moore (1991, 1993). The concept of moral economy will be explored more fully in Chapter 6 in which I discuss the interplay of the moral and the material economy in a business setting.

Scott's extensive ethnographic field experience clearly gave him a deep appreciation for the existence of the hidden transcripts in human interactions, which is so familiar to anthropology. Scott outlines the characteristics of, and contrast between, what he terms public and hidden transcripts in order to explore the everyday forms of resistance central to his work. In his discussion of hidden transcripts, Scott is touching on the issues of emic versus etic perspectives and the difference between what is said, what is done, and what is said about what is done, which surfaced early and are addressed extensively within anthropology. Scott provides a fresh perspective on this familiar terrain. His discussion
even points to a certain imbalance within anthropology which has become so preoccupied with peeking behind "veils" and getting "backstage" to gather hidden transcripts that the public transcript may be at risk of some neglect.

Scott (1990:2) characterizes public transcripts as the open interactions between subordinates and those who dominate in which both parties may "tacitly conspire in misrepresentation." Erving Goffman's (cf. 1956) analysis of impression management directly informs Scott's discussion of public and hidden transcripts. Scott (1990:3) characterizes impression management as a key survival skill of subordinate groups in power-laden situations. It could equally be said to be a key survival skill among dominant groups. Scott points out the degree to which the public transcript may be positively misleading and unlikely to tell the whole story about power relations (among other things). This highlights the importance of discerning the hidden transcript of both the weak and the powerful if such relations are to be more fully understood. Access to the critique of power spoken behind the backs of the dominant, and the practices and claims of the powerful among themselves that cannot be openly avowed, are both important. However, it can be difficult for a researcher to gain access to both hidden transcripts equally. Given these limitations and the fact that "Power relations are not, alas, so straightforward that we can call what is said in power-laden contexts false and what is said offstage true."
(Scott 1990:5), it is no wonder anthropologists have some aversion to addressing the issue of power. Wolf (1972, 1990) is critical of anthropology in this respect and exhorts anthropologists to "face power."

In characterizing hidden transcripts, Scott (1990:14) points out the fact that the "frontier" between public and hidden transcripts is separated by a zone, not a solid wall. One of the examples he gives to illustrate this point is taking advantage of a crowd and safe distance to shout an insult. The message is public, but the messenger is hidden. Scott also points out the inaccessibility of a "total" transcript, because there is the realm he calls "private imagination," which is the most hidden transcript of all. Theoretically, anthropologists attempt to cultivate relations with informants that will cause them to divulge at least some of what is in their private imagination. It should also be mentioned that there are still other difficult to discern areas of the total transcript -- that of the "unconscious transcript" and the "subconscious transcript" which are hidden. However, contents of these transcripts may betray themselves to an observer (we think) through body language, subconscious or unconscious choice of words, through many forms of figurative communication, what we term "knee jerk" reactions in situations, and so forth.

While using the metaphor of "transcript" with public and hidden transcripts establishing points at the ends of a
continuum as a model for description and analysis of ethnographic data is useful, it is by no means easy and like all our models has limits. As Scott (1990:26) points out:

This is decidedly not to assert that the slave’s actions before a harsh master are necessarily sham and pretense while his conduct with his family and close friends is necessarily genuine and true. The reasons we may not leap to this simplifying conclusion is that power relations are ubiquitous.

To simplify matters even less, Scott points out the various means by which hidden transcripts may not be so hidden. Spies and informants reveal hidden transcripts, even though these revelations may not be publicly acknowledged or form the basis for counteraction. In business organizations, eavesdropping technologies, that employees may or may not know exist, are made possible by information technologies and are increasingly routine components of software systems. Unofficial eavesdropping technologies employed surreptitiously by employees have become a common headache to management and systems to detect the presence of such a "lurker" are becoming increasingly sophisticated.

Many of the settings in which the elite "let their hair down" include staff from subordinate populations who become privy to some of the hidden transcript of the elite by means of this presence. In the case of business, secretaries, staff of private clubs, restaurant workers, flight attendants, hotel staff, limousine drivers, caterers, and those who perform janitorial services are among those who may have very direct access to the hidden transcript of executives. In one case,
there existed within a company's training complex a "secret" lounge-type area, including a well-stocked bar, exclusively for senior executive use while at the training center. The door to this area was an unmarked, nondescript, red metal door of the kind that usually marks entrance to a service area in a building. The door had an elaborate combination lock, the combination of which was known only by the inner circle. However, building maintenance, food service and janitorial personnel, for example, would have been in and out of the rooms regularly. All of these workers would certainly be privy to conversation and a certain amount of other evidence as to what was occurring in this secreted inner sanctum created specifically so the company's elite could "let their hair down" in private. Perhaps no discipline can appreciate access to "trash" as much as anthropology. Business people are very conscious of the category of trash comprised of written documents and electronic information. Document shredder companies do a brisk business, and electronic information is regularly, carefully erased. However, a tremendous amount of other "trash" is generated that passes through the hands of lower ranks, and would yield itself to the methods of "garbologists."

In the case of business, hidden and public transcripts exist in the form of what an organization is compelled or chooses to reveal to outsiders as opposed to what it may attempt to conceal. Public documents such as the annual
reports required of publicly held corporations may seem to be public transcripts, but they also often carry some indications of the hidden transcript for those adept at reading between the lines. Upon release of an annual report, there is a frenzy of interpretive activities among outside analysts, customers, competitors, regulators, employees and stockholders that seek to derive any inadvertently betrayed or deliberately obscured meanings from the text, graphics and numbers.

Even though Consulting Partners, as a private partnership, does not have to publish an annual report, a version of one is released each year that discloses some financial information and is otherwise very similar to the reports of public corporations. Until recently, it was not officially called an annual report. Financial information provided is at the discretion of partners, not based on regulatory requirements. Technically, a partnership need not divulge any financial information publicly. Every sentence, graphic and number in this publication is as carefully scrutinized as corporate annual reports for clues concerning the hidden transcript of senior management.

The hidden transcript of an organization may be revealed in very public media such as through reporting in the business press. For example, in one case, a client recovered the internal electronic mail of a consulting team that was dismissed from a project. The volume of this electronic mail is described as "reams" and covers the period of deterioration.
in the relationship between the consulting firm and the client. The messages include strategies devised by the consultants to mitigate their damage as it became clear the situation was not salvageable. The mail was also revealing of the internal relations among the consultants themselves. Co-worker relationships may deteriorate rapidly in this kind of circumstance as individuals attempt to minimize damage to their own careers, or use such an event as an opening to attack an internal competitor. This electronic mail not only formed the basis of evidence in a lawsuit brought by the former client, but was also the subject of an extensive article in a prominent business newspaper. The article included publication of quoted excerpts complete with the names of individuals involved. Ironically, one of the published excerpts was the message sent to the consultants reminding them to remove all electronic documents before vacating the client’s premises. This example also points up implications of electronic mail technologies. The nature of this mail concerning client-consultant power relations is such that, prior to the advent of electronic mail, it would have been very unlikely that the dialogue they contained would have been articulated in anything but oral form. This incident illustrates the degree to which these new electronic media are blurring the lines between oral and written communication.

*A citation is not given because the organization was one of the field sites for this research.*
The collection of electronic mail was very revealing in terms of the dynamics of power that exist in consultant-client relations. The consultants belonged to a more elite firm than the client organization, and the consulting firm management involved in this incident wielded considerable power within their own organization. However, the ultimate power of a client was revealed by the instances of everyday forms of resistance on the part of consultants, as described by Scott, to be found in the mail inadvertently left behind in the hasty departure of a project team. Though clients may suspect that they are the objects of derision and derogatory nicknames among consultants, and that consultants may secretly strategize how to manipulate circumstances in their own favor, this hidden transcript is rarely revealed so extensively and explicitly as it was in this instance. It should be mentioned that this was an extreme case. During the failure of a project, relations between consultants and clients become very strained. At times like this, client personnel, whose jobs may be threatened by a project failure, may begin asserting their power to withhold payment, fire the consulting firm, or bring a lawsuit. Meetings can degenerate into shouting matches in which clients may publicly berate a consulting firm’s management in front of subordinates. It is not uncommon for the hidden transcript of consultants to contain a fair degree of joking, derision, nicknames for client personnel, and other examples of everyday forms of resistance
common to disparate and ambiguous power relations. However, the degree and kind of this behavior differs on a project by project basis.

It should also be mentioned that clients very often engage in the same type of behaviors vis à vis consultants. The dynamics of power and resistance from a client perspective are predicated on the status of consultants as "experts"; the fact that employees of a client may feel their jobs are threatened by the use of consultants; and even resentment that consultants may make considerably more money, have more perquisites, access to senior management, and power than employees of clients who may perceive themselves as just as skilled, experienced, and hardworking. In a situation such as the extreme example given here, it is by no means inconceivable that a similar body of electronic mail may have been exchanged as a hidden transcript among client personnel during this project failure. Disparities and ambiguities in client-consultant relations may be such that consultants do indeed have influence over the careers of client personnel, recommending them for promotions, position changes, even firing. This influence can extend up into senior management levels of client personnel. Consultants are often brought in following downsizing and increased emphasis on using outside resources rather than hiring permanent staff means they represent a real loss of jobs, even specific co-workers, to client personnel with whom they work. One contractor to a
large organization that had undergone downsizing and ordered the use of outside resources reported that consultants were referred to by employees as "John Doe's [the company's CEO] illegitimate sons."

Scott (1990) points out that the plurality of transcripts to be found in many situations can be represented as a continuum running from extremely public to extremely hidden. It is very important that the concept of continuum be at the foundation of Scott's theoretical discussion, and he places considerable emphasis on this point in his latest work, Seeing Like a State (Scott 1998). Scott (1990:26) illustrates a continuum using hypothetical discursive sites, arranged by audience, for the case of slavery. He delineates some example points on this continuum as follows: Harsh master or overseer at the most extreme point on the public transcript end of the continuum; then indulgent master or overseer; then whites having no direct authority. At this point, Scott positions the category, "slaves and free blacks" as the center on the continuum, suggesting this is a transitional and mixed situation. From this point, Scott shifts to the other half of the continuum which is entitled, "hidden transcripts." He indicates the categories of discursive sites of hidden transcripts in his example as follows: those of slaves of the same master; closest slave friends; and, lastly, most hidden, immediate family. Scott attempts to show the difficulty of categorization that can be characteristic of the middle area.
of such a continuum by indicating graphically a gap in the transitional area between public and hidden transcripts. In this area, it can be difficult to place events clearly in either of the two main categories of the continuum: public transcripts or hidden transcripts.

Similarly, a continuum of resistance behaviors could be set with extremes ranging from various forms of open defiance at one end to increasingly benign (seemingly), everyday forms of resistance at the other end. Resistance behavior is a very broad category, which itself may be a point on various continua. For example, in a typological scheme seeking to capture the full range of acts of power, resistance behavior would be a type of act with a place in this scheme. Or, to give another example, a continuum expressing a range of types of acts characterizing the informal as opposed to the formal sphere of activity would place everyday forms of resistance toward the informal end of the continuum.

Though we know typologies can make dynamic information appear deceptively static, are full of pitfalls, and prone to errors, they are nonetheless useful analytical tools. Areas of anthropology involving large material collections, linguistics, and ethnology constantly wrestle with issues of categorization. The ongoing dialogue on this topic sensitizes anthropologists to both the benefits and problems of typological schemes.
There can be some difficulties when encountering anthropological typological schemes used cautiously, not often, even never at all by anthropologists that are borrowed and used boldly by non-anthropologists. For example, the manipulation by non-anthropologists of the multidimensional framework containing a set of continua presented by F. Kluckhohn (1950, 1961) as a possible means to classify cultural systems is common to business literature discussing international business. Its use is often simplistic and formulaic by anthropological standards. Even so, it can be productive, even if crudely employed, as this area of business literature develops. One of the best examples of the use of the Kluckhohn model of culture in discussions of contemporary business is to be found in the book, Organizational Culture and Leadership: A Dynamic View written by Edgar H. Schein (1985). In the Preface, Schein (1985:xi) refers to the work as taking him "back full circle" to his graduate work during the late 1940's and early 1950's in Harvard's Department of Social Relations. Schein (1985:xi) describes this as a time when "anthropology, sociology, social psychology, and clinical psychology were making a concerted effort to enhance each other through the joint educational efforts of superstars." Among the faculty at that time were Clyde and Florence Kluckhohn, Talcott Parsons, Gordon Allport, and Richard Solomon. Schein had a long, well established career in
organizational studies at Massachusetts Institute of Technology before coming full circle back to his graduate training in anthropology.

Two- and four-factor typological schemes are generally popular in business literature and have been employed in attempts to categorize and describe the variation found in business cultures. One day, a particularly bright executive who had developed a strong interest in anthropology came into my office with an article that discussed business cultural systems in terms of four distinctive types. The executive volunteered to tell me the category to which he would assign his organization. By subjective standards, his selection would generally be perceived as the most "desirable" of the categories based on the descriptions given in the article. The incident provided an opportunity for me to demonstrate to him that elements of the large, complex cultural system of which he was a member reflected all the categories given. In this particular case, it was not entirely clear that the one he had selected was indeed dominant. I did this by asking a series of questions as to whether so-and-so sector of the organization fit the category's profile. When his answer was no, he was asked to place it more accurately in the scheme presented in the article, which he did. Events such as these are opportunities to highlight the value of anthropology,
although they are often also cause for concern to anthropologists who may view "their" knowledge as being made perverse in the hands of novices.

Anthropologists, including practitioners, are generally hesitant to use their specialized knowledge to manipulate individuals or groups. Therefore, there is an absence of experimentation in cultural anthropology. A significant dilemma for practicing anthropologists involves the ethical considerations of engaging in experimentation that may inherently come with the responsibilities of practice. The more unbridled application of anthropological knowledge by nonanthropologists in deliberate attempts to effect "cultural" change, manage international relations, or accomplish mergers and acquisitions in business settings may actually be providing experimental data on culture change that could be useful. At this writing, the recent merger of Chrysler, a U.S. corporation, and Daimler-Benz, a German company, is the largest in history. Reports invariably include the topic of how these two companies will "mesh culturally." Merging companies now routinely indicate that "culture" is taken into consideration as a significant factor in these events. Just how that is being done, and by whom, would be interesting to survey and assess.

Anthropology is not a discipline so heavily oriented toward practice as management science wherein analytical tools, even those seeming obviously crude, tentative, or
simplistic, are viewed as better than nothing at all. For people in business, who must make decisions without the luxury of time to study a situation, the nuances important to academic theoreticians can just be so much clutter, and may even be actively avoided. In business, decision-making theory itself often warns against "analysis paralysis" by acknowledging there will always be "fugitive information." Managers often refer to what they perceive as over-analysis as "admiring the problem." It is conventional wisdom in management that sometimes just doing something is better than doing nothing no matter what the "something" is. A bias toward "doing" leads to reductionism and simplifications of academic work, which is made by and for practitioners. Events ensuing from these interpretations of research can actually provide theoretical testing and more grist for the academic mill, if researchers can gain access to study actual events. This is especially important for the social sciences given the restrictions on direct experimentation in research settings.

The potential misuse and abuse of anthropological knowledge by non-anthropologists inherent in anthropological involvement in any area of practice, such as business anthropology, may be a common criticism by academics. Yet, these instances are informative in and of themselves. Anthropologists who argue for a strong practice of anthropology suggest there is a responsibility, even a duty, to participate directly in the business community to help
offset either inadvertent or deliberate misuse or abuse of anthropological knowledge. Improving typologies and models based upon cultural concepts used in business settings is one area with potential for contribution from anthropology.

Typologies are particularly problematical from the standpoint of the potential for the reductionism and oversimplification that concerns academics regarding the application of research by practitioners. Nonetheless, Scott has established a very useful typology for the broad category of behavior he terms "everyday forms of resistance," which he found to be of importance to understanding events in the course of his fieldwork. This typology includes: foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, feigned ignorance, desertion, pilfering, smuggling, poaching, character assassination, slander, sabotage, arson, anonymous threats, and surreptitious assault and murder. Moore (1991, 1993) suggests including "overcompliance" in Scott's typology as an additional form of resistance. Moore's inclusion of overcompliance as a separate type of resistance is based upon his ethnographic study of Japanese rice farmers' resistance strategies against government policies seeking to restrict rice production in order to increase crop diversification. R. Firth (1964:175) gives an account of overcompliance in his discussion of how Tikopia commoners may force an issue of public policy.
[Commoners] ... may seize their chief and raise him from his seat into the air. While he is thus lifted they pay him the greatest signs of respect, pressing their noses to his knee and to the sole of his feet, while they implore him to yield to their request.

Firth describes this practice as complex, embodying both a sense of respect paid the chief and an element of duress (Firth 1964:175):

... a hint that the chief may have to stay in this awkward though honorific position until he yields to the public request. The act then is not just a token of respect, it is also a mode of constraint.

Evidence of overcompliance as a strategy was found in my research in business settings in Japan as well. I also was given an excellent example of such practices in bureaucratic settings. In a discussion of overcompliance as a resistance strategy with an academic administrator in an American university, the person quickly came up with an example from his own experience. He said it was not uncommon to respond to a request for information from superiors by providing such a large volume of information that it required considerable effort to ferret out the specific information requested and future requests would be discouraged. Additionally, my data suggests it may be useful to create a category within the typology that accounts for various forms of humor and joking behaviors employed as resistance strategies. Though these behaviors at times do fit neatly into an existing category within Scott's typology, such as character assassination or gossip, this is not always the case.
When I initially adopted the use of Scott’s typology as an analytical tool for my data, none of the more extreme acts such as surreptitious assault or murder had been directly encountered during my research. However, as research proceeded, such an event did surface. A manager who had to eliminate positions in a group was the victim of a car accident that was very nearly fatal. A long and painful series of operations and physical therapy finally enabled the manager to resume working. At the time of our interview, the individual had only recently been able to walk unassisted, though with noticeable difficulty (a large part of the injuries involved shattered leg and foot bones). The manager was disfigured, could never expect to recover full functionality, and could expect increasing difficulties with age. Police investigating the accident found evidence the car had been sabotaged in such a way that the intent was to cause an accident, not just put the car out of commission to create nuisance and expense. Upon further investigation, police found that the most likely suspects were among the individuals whose jobs had been eliminated by the manager; however, not enough evidence was found to pursue criminal charges.

Ferreting out some of the more extreme types of everyday forms of resistance in business settings can be difficult because the targets of these acts and management often conspire to keep this information out of the public transcript for various reasons. Attempts may be made to severely
restrict knowledge of the occurrence of such events within the organization, as well as to control reporting of such events in public media.

Businesses, especially global businesses, are often the targets of both open defiance and everyday forms of resistance. Such acts may be aimed at the business entity per se, but may also be directed at the larger political spectrum in which the business exists. Obviously, strikes and boycotts are acts of open defiance particular to a business or industry, which often have everyday forms of resistance occurring in tandem. Physical facilities housing information technologies are often considered to be particularly vulnerable areas for a business that may be the target of sabotage or industrial espionage carried out by other businesses and governments. Security is often heavy. In one project case study for my research, the building housing the core information technology of a Fortune Fifty corporation was not identified as such in any overt way. The facility was deliberately not collocated with corporate headquarters partly as a precaution against acts of sabotage directed at the company’s symbolic center, which could then also destroy its information. The extremity of measures taken in this case was related to the fact that this was an oil company. Global political events, especially in the 1970’s when the facility
was built, created concerns that acts of terrorism predicated on international politics could be directed at major oil companies in the United States.

Businesses and business people may also be effected by acts of open defiance or everyday forms of resistance more as innocent bystanders than as direct targets of such activities. For example, the project team of one of the projects used in my research was trapped in offices and hotels for days during a political coup. The strategy for the coup was to focus the event on the business district of the capital city precisely because the jeopardy to expatriates, many of whom were associated with large American business enterprises, would gain media attention. Even though attempts were made not to harm the business people, they were nonetheless hostages and were imprisoned wherever they happened to be when the coup was initiated. Some individuals spent several days in the office, others were held in their hotels, which were in the business district. The American overseers of this project had complained of an unusual degree of everyday forms of resistance during the period just prior to the coup in which I was doing an onsite investigation for my research. Ironically, I had postponed a scheduled trip back to the project or I would have been trapped along with the rest of the project team.

Risks associated with international business assignments are very real and include being the target of everyday forms
of resistance directed at individuals symbolically rather than personally, kidnappings for ransom, and dangers related to political instabilities of all kinds that erupt into open defiance. In a recent example, thousands of American citizens, many of whom were business people, were evacuated due to rioting in Indonesia brought about by severe political-economic destabilization. Business entities and their individual members may be a real contributing cause to political and economic problems, or made scapegoats in the larger context of political-economic events. Also, as in the case of the coup example, employees can be used as hostages. The concept of institutional and individual compartmentalization of spheres of life promoted as characteristic of modern civilization breaks down rapidly when considering international business activities.

Given the extent of lag in educational institutional response to the growing need to support the international activity of business, the extant population of business practitioners is ill-prepared for this dimension of their work. Many now participating in short and long term international business assignments never conceived they would be doing so while they were in school or during early stages of their career. Given that a lag also exists within company training programs, which ostensibly close the gap between academic training and emerging needs of practitioners, many business people enter into these events with little or no
preparation. It has become common to arrange for a formal preparation program of some sort for individuals (and their families) who are given long-term expatriate assignments. However, in the information technology consulting industry forming the basis of my study, it is common for individuals to receive short-term project assignments for which there is no formal preparation, and no lead time to receive it even if it did exist. When determining the true extent of the population currently engaging in international business activities, it should be considered that "hosts" make up a vast segment of this population. Those undertaking the role of "host" are virtually never considered in business training directed at doing international business.

Scott's framework is useful to analyzing the data I collected on international projects staffed with largely ill-prepared, variously experienced individuals representing anywhere from two to well over a dozen nationalities. The complexities of the moral economy forming the backdrop of these events; the plurality of hidden and public transcripts; and, the extent and range of everyday forms of resistance to be found in the infrapolitical sphere of international business require a robust framework such as this to explain a great deal of my ethnographically collected data.

Scott's theories allow for rich assessment of the dynamics of power as it is constantly renegotiated, mediated, mitigated, and obviated day-to-day. Scott (1990:184) has
introduced the term, "infrapolitics," to circumscribe "the cultural and structural underpinning of the more visible political action on which our attention has generally been focused." He uses the analogy of the infrastructure for commerce such as transport, banking, currency, property and contract law to describe the place of infrapolitical behaviors in the scheme of things having to do with power relations.

In an essay delivered as the Distinguished Lecture at an annual meeting of the American Anthropological Society entitled, "Facing Power -- Old Insights, New Questions," Eric Wolf (1990:586) exhorts anthropologists to more directly engage "the problem of power and the issues it poses for anthropology." He argues that anthropologists "actually know a great deal about power, but have been timid in building upon what we know" (Wolf 1990:586). In the case of James Scott's use of what anthropology "knows" on this subject, we have the fresh perspective of a political scientist's view on what is often taken for granted within anthropology. Scott then also builds upon these concepts, creating a useful schema for analyzing and discussing power.

As far back as 1969, Wolf took an interest in how anthropologists have dealt with power in the context of American politics over the course of American history. He characterizes the present (1969 being the date of writing) as a retreat and what response there is to be fraught with

---


180
uncertainties and equivocations about power. In 1990, he apparently felt retreat still to be the case, and concludes by saying "... we must take the further step of understanding the consequences of the exercise of power." (Wolf 1990:594). In 1969, Wolf (1975:304) had characterized the retreat of anthropology from power as "all the more notable when we realize that wholly anthropological ideas have suddenly been taken over and overtaken by other disciplines." The historical relationship of anthropology to American politics parallels its relationship to business, and this quote echoes what is often said within the anthropology of business. Wolf’s 1990 essay on power cites Scott’s work, which would seem to be a case in point of someone in another discipline taking over and overtaking anthropological ideas (and methods) .

Scott specifically employed ethnography of communications techniques in his field studies. He acknowledges extensive incorporation of Erving Goffman’s (1956) approach to observing, describing, and analyzing interaction ritual, especially deference and demeanor. I have analyzed the data collected in my research using an ethnography of communications approach in a Master’s Thesis entitled, "The Use of Metaphor in Applied Organizational Anthropology" (Smith 1991). Applying Scott’s framework here allows me to extend my

---

7Although Scott began as a political scientist he is now effectively also an anthropologist. As mentioned earlier, he is currently Eugene Meyer Professor of Political Science and Anthropology.
preliminary analysis of metaphor to include figurative communication. "Figurative communication" is used as a general term referring to a whole range of oral and written linguistic acts, such as the use of metaphor, as well as a whole range of nonlinguistic communicative behaviors of a figurative nature. Many of the acts in Scott’s typology of everyday forms of resistance may rely on figurative communication to be successful. For example, Scott (1990:v) begins his book with an Ethiopian Proverb: "When the great lord passes the wise peasant bows deeply and silently farts." Humans draw from a vast repertoire of figurative communication in negotiating relations, including power relations. Further discussion of figurative communication will be provided in Chapter 7.

After two years of field study, Scott (1985) analyzes what he terms the hidden transcripts in both the formal and informal communication system of a small population he comes to know very well on a face-to-face basis. Scott derives his conclusions from his study of the internal workings of the political economy of a Malaysian village and the interaction between the village and other levels of political economies such as the state. His analysis outlines the basic features of everyday acts familiar to us all on a much broader scale, and irrespective of time or place. In a review of Scott’s work, R. Berleant-Schiller (1993:14) states:
His range and ability to synthesize are remarkable, and his hand is always light. He is not concerned with rebellion, but with quiet sabotage, gossip, shammed stupidity, the over-dramatized subservient posture that undermines itself, the trickster tale, the hint of irony in the "Yes, master," the mocking eye.

It is notable, that many of the examples listed by Berleant-Schiller either are examples of figurative communication acts, or can be accomplished by using figurative communication among other means.

The kinds of power disparities underlaying everyday forms of resistance can exist between two individuals; within small and informal groupings; and, most certainly exist in formally organized human activities. It would be difficult to conceive the nature of the existence of any individual not subordinated somehow to someone or something. Individual lives are lived within a complex set of power relations involving varying degrees and kinds of formal and informal subordination to many levels and kinds of authority.

In addition to the value Scott adds to the study of power relations, scholars in an emerging area called "biopolitics" are seeking to synthesize political science and findings in other disciplines, including physical anthropology. Biopolitics includes investigation of how the proto-political behaviors of nonhuman primates do and do not differ from political behavior of humans. This may be useful in gaining greater understanding of power relations among humans. The discussions of methods, theory and analysis contained in a
collection of articles exemplifying the work being done in biopolitics (Schubert and Masters 1991) suggest some interesting implications for collection and analysis of data from business settings. Schubert (1991), for example, uses ethological techniques to study human vocalizations in agonistic political encounters. Using the same equipment as ethologists, Schubert collected data from a series of rural, small-town, municipal council meetings in the United States. Analysis was then made to determine the paralinguistic properties of competitive verbal behavior during discussion or debate processes preceding group decision-making.

Scott’s framework provides a means by which a full range of relations involving tensions associated with power differentials can be explored. The everyday forms of resistance to which Scott draws attention are acts rationalized within the moral economy of the setting in which they occur. These acts can either escalate or defuse tension. They also reflect the characteristics of the moral economy and the presence, intensity, and types of tensions between individuals and groups for research purposes.

The clearly illegal acts in Scott’s typology are most likely to be committed by individuals who, unless they intend to become martyrs, may go to great lengths to shield their identity (though others may be good at guessing it). Although the perpetrator may not be known in cases of assault, murder, arson, sabotage or pilfering, the acts themselves are often
discussed and speculated upon at great length. Other categories in the typology which are also often extremely surreptitious include footdragging, dissimulation, feigned ignorance, or false compliance. Such acts can be difficult to detect by a researcher if presence within the population is not maintained for extended periods.

Gossip, slander, or character assassination, although they may be done anonymously, often require the involvement of at least one other individual and as such are often more accessible to observation and analysis. In addition to the forms of resistance categorized by Scott, the category of overcompliance suggested by Moore (1991, 1993) provides a departure from the others. Overcompliance is more likely intended to be very overt, though it may be subtle, and transacted publicly as well as privately if it is to be an effective strategy. Humor and joking behaviors should be mentioned again as a category. These acts most often, though not always, are transacted between at least two people. Collecting and analyzing all the various everyday forms of resistance can pose difficulties for researchers besides their detection and classification. For example, if the population attempts to use the research event itself as a means by which to conduct resistance activities, the researcher must be aware of this and factor it into methods and analysis. Research and
consulting are highly politicized events in business settings and may become a very real factor if the dynamics of power is the topic of investigation.

Each of the categories within Scott's typology of everyday forms of resistance is fraught with its own complexities and may function other than as a form of resistance. For example, Haviland (1977) explores the value of investigating gossip, which is one of Scott's primary categories. He finds that though much gossip is frivolous, much is dead serious and instrumental. In instrumental terms, gossip may be used in the process of rationalizing actions. It may also be a means by which the group figures out how to proceed in unusual circumstances such as when "people act surprisingly in what seem ordinary circumstances" (Haviland 1977:175). Scott cites some instances of acting surprisingly in ordinary circumstances as examples of disruption in the public transcript, which are intended as resistance. Haviland suggests that gossip is implicitly about rules and involves the interpretation of behavior through rules which may only be realized because of a breach. Haviland (1977:165) states, "And here it is not so much that the behavior was bound by rules; gossips find the rule in the behavior (which may be to reconstruct the behavior around the rules -- if only in their violation)." Haviland (1977:5) presents considerable discussion of gossip and ethnography, which might be extended to everyday forms of resistance in this case:

186
I argue that while the study of gossip is certainly a powerful ethnographic tool capable of uncovering otherwise inaccessible facts and phenomena, if we appreciate the native actor's ability to gossip and to understand gossip then we must revise our notions of what constitutes ethnography. We must expand our view of the "cultural competence" of native actors and alter our conception of what it is to understand ethnographic phenomena.

Gossip is clearly not exclusively performed as an act of resistance, and this is also the case with other everyday forms of resistance.

Gossip, along with many of the other acts in Scott's typology, exists in the informal or backstage realm of human activity which so fascinates anthropologists who see their task as one of "piercing the veil." Trying to document and understand what people really think, really do, and really feel in contrast to what they are supposed to think, do, and feel is no easy task. To complicate matters further, we know that often what people say if we ask them about thoughts, actions, and feelings is incomplete or unreliable. A major challenge of ethnography has always been to find means to get at as much unconscious, subconscious or unself-conscious information as possible. This is done by using analytical techniques such as semiotics and psychoanalysis, and by using methods intended to make the researcher "blend in with the woodwork" so that individuals drop self-conscious masks and go about their activities naturally.

In this chapter, I have set forth a broad outline of Scott's theoretical framework and highlighted some of the
benefits, as well as the difficulties, involved in using it. The following chapters will explore aspects of the ethnographic data collected in my research using Scott’s framework as an analytical tool. Chapter 6 will begin by looking more closely at the interplay of the moral economy and the material economy that exists within business organizations. I describe how the moral economy rationalizes everyday forms of resistance that are commonplace in business settings.
CHAPTER 6

THE INTERPLAY OF THE MORAL ECONOMY AND THE MATERIAL ECONOMY IN BUSINESS SETTINGS

Scott (1976:3) broadly defines moral economy as a people's "notion of economic justice and their working definition of exploitation." I use the term in the same sense here. Examples in the following discussion involve instances where formal policies, procedures and accounting systems associated with the material economy of an organization are circumvented or subverted. The focus of this chapter is on expense and time reporting because all professionals in the organizations I studied use these segments of the accounting system extensively. These formal reporting systems are often used as a means to resist real or perceived injustice or exploitation. The cases provided here illustrate how the moral economy informs and rationalizes, enables and constrains the behaviors described in this chapter.

The English language reflects the degree to which economic terminology is linked to the moral sphere in everyday terms; for example, trust is earned, respect is due. And, in the wake of "downsizing" and reorganization that has reached record proportions since the 1980's, the business press regularly raises the issue of whether or not management has so
egregiously violated the "social contract" that it must consider its "losses" in worker loyalty. Among the possible consequences of this are increased frequency of everyday forms of resistance such as pilfering and sabotage.

In the American cultural system, business ethics are to some extent formally established, governed, and sanctioned through a system of laws and regulations. For example, at this writing, the United States Justice Department's prosecution of Microsoft for anti-trust law violations involving unfair trade practices is a particularly visible example. However, in addition to formal mechanisms such as prosecution, the day-to-day negotiation of economic relations is also governed informally by a calculus of variations differentiated at the individual, group, and organizational level, unique to specific situations, and changing over time. In the case of Microsoft being scrutinized by the formal justice system of the United States government, there has been an informal backlash, which particularly took Microsoft by surprise. Backlash came in the form of a negative customer reaction to the company which is sanctioning in its effect. Upon detecting this loss of goodwill, Microsoft quickly took counteractions and devoted resources to regaining the value of this asset. Yet, the company has not, at this point, effectively been sanctioned by the formal system in any significant way.
Although the "rule of law" characterizing American business is imperfect, it is a distinctive feature, which was highlighted during my activity in international projects. A popular joke told repeatedly by individuals from an economically distressed country was to the effect that "Sure, they knew what 'copyright' meant." This statement was followed by, "When we get something, we copy right, we copy left." The meaning of this was clearly that they confirmed flagrant violation of copyright laws recognized in the United States with impunity in their country.

The term "moral economy" is not currently part of the business practitioner lexicon. It will not likely be encountered in business discussions or literature. However, when I introduced the term and associated it with the other major components of Scott's framework, informants quickly understood the concept and could relate it to their own context. Individuals could readily elaborate on the ideas and usually volunteered examples from their own experiences.

In one case, a manager given an overview of the concept of moral economy and Scott's typology of everyday forms of resistance immediately provided a detailed example. He described how three managers had each used a different strategy to resist a new reporting requirement implemented by senior management. The first used footdragging and only submitted the report after repeated reminders. The second falsely complied by providing a document that looked correct,
but was incomplete and inaccurate. The third flatly refused to ever turn in the report. My informant explained how this resistance was rationalized by a sense of injustice. The managers had not been consulted during development of the new report and believed it was not an improvement on current systems. They felt the reporting form was poorly designed and the task was an unnecessary imposition on their time. At every opportunity for the past five years, I have introduced the major concepts interrelated by Scott's framework in discussion with informants, with results similar to this example.

The exploration of unfamiliar terminology with informants, such as "moral economy," should be discussed briefly before proceeding because it highlights some of the issues related to fieldwork in business settings. Using participant-observation methods in settings within the anthropologist's own cultural system, such as has been largely the case in my research, has both advantages and disadvantages. While difficulties exist, and in many ways contemporary business anthropology may not be the same as traditional fieldwork in very alien settings, compensations productive for research can be found. It is both an advantage and a disadvantage as research data are being gathered and analyzed to share a common language, common education -- in short, common culture -- with participants. This is a disadvantage because the researcher must guard against
overlooking important details. However, it is an advantage in
terms of easier communication and the ability of the
researcher to use their own insider knowledge to probe areas
with informants.

Once use of Scott's framework was considered for analysis
of the data from Consulting Partners, it became central to
discussions with informants during my association with
Hardware Corporation and Development Software Corporation.
Probing alien concepts with no lexical existence in the
research population is often reported as one of the more
difficult aspects of ethnographic field methods. It is often
difficult to very briefly, yet aptly, explain a complex set of
terms and concepts in order to pursue a topic with informants.
However, this is certainly made easier by common culture and
language in fieldwork settings.

All three organizations in my study are currently
headquartered in the United States, and English is their
common language. More generally, English is the language of
commerce. However, I found this does not mean that absolutely
everyone in an international business speaks English. During
my work with international projects, it was not uncommon to
require translators for communicating with senior management
in particular. Also, there is considerable variation in the
level of English-speaking skills. Communication can be very
difficult when one party in a conversation is using a
secondary language, even if their skill level is high. In
some cases, both parties were communicating in a secondary language, and it was not necessarily English. I use the term "secondary language" here to refer to any alternate language because a number of individuals encountered during my fieldwork spoke more than two languages.

The projects I studied involved as many as a dozen or more nationalities, and the dynamics of interlingual communication were quite intricate. Disparities in language skills can disrupt power relations. In these situations, individuals with stronger English-language skills often acquire ad hoc roles as translators. This means the actual language translation that occurs is of more highly variable quality than when professional translators are employed for this role. For example, a young staff person may be used as a translator, thus becoming privy to the hidden transcripts of superiors. This may disrupt relations both with superiors who become dependent upon them and with co-workers who may feel the individual is unfairly privileged by means of unusual access to senior management. The difficulties are exacerbated when a young staff person is acting as translator for an immediate supervisor’s superiors. Individuals often reported additional stress during international projects associated with being cast into the role of translator. In some cases, translation of oral and written communications is formal. A document is issued in more than one language or an orally delivered message is translated as it occurs. In other cases,
informal processes are relied upon to clarify messages. This, of course, assumes that workers will realize they do not understand something and will seek translation or clarification.

In addition to a somewhat shared common national language, professionals in the firms I studied are characterized by having college educations, including advanced degrees. This increases the likelihood and degree of English-language training, especially among younger members of the organizations. Also, these firms are all involved in information systems technology, so there is the factor of a shared technical language in these populations. However, it should be mentioned that information technology projects require extensive communication with the lower ranks in organizations. It is necessary to gather information about work processes from lower levels in order to design information systems. These individuals most often do not have advanced educations, and English-speaking ability varies widely from country to country depending on whether national educational policies emphasize learning English in lower grade levels.

Advanced education can to some degree be a homogenizing factor in international business settings. Many countries have patterned business and information technology programs on the American system. Currently, there are two schools of thought concerning whether organizations are becoming more
similar (convergence) or are maintaining their culturally based dissimilarity (divergence)" (Adler, Doktor and Redding 1986:300). The diffusion of technology, including management science, is considered to be a primary factor in trends toward convergence. Proponents of divergence, however, contend that organizations are culture-bound, not culture-free, and cultural distinctions will persist. Even though many of the professionals in my study were trained in the United States or in educational programs patterned on the American System, I found this did not entirely mitigate cultural differences in business settings. I also found that expatriates often had little understanding of the educational processes in the countries in which they worked. In one country, several American expatriate managers complained that new staff was exceptionally immature. They had not quite appreciated the fact that the educational system of the country in which they worked was structured such that individuals were often age 20, rather than 22 or 23, when they entered the workforce. At this stage of development, one or two years can account for some of the noticeable difference in maturity they were observing. Even though advanced education was very directly patterned on the American system and courses were conducted in English, the structural difference that yielded younger graduates had to be considered. In this case, other cultural features such as childrearing practices, mass media, and the status of elders were also clearly factors in the differences.
between new staff in this country and those in the United States. A number of informants who were natives of the country in question were able to offer insights on this issue, especially if they were educated or had worked in the United States.

Even with a standard of English and a technology-based context, assumptions that this makes communication in international business settings very much easier, especially given all the non-technical communication that must occur, should be considered carefully. Miscommunication and culturally-based misunderstandings that caused delays in projects and human relations problems often occurred in the course of the international projects I studied. Introducing a new term such as "moral economy" often required that I adapt the discussion to a particular cultural context.

In the course of my research, it has been common to introduce elements of the anthropological lexicon and uniquely anthropological concepts in order to do my job as well as to collect ethnographic data effectively. Participant-observation methods require a tremendous amount of two-way communication with the population under investigation. Even when an attempt is made to minimize it, knowledge transfer from the anthropologist to the research population is part of the process. In the case of my fieldwork in business settings, this type of knowledge transfer was an enlarged aspect of the process. In part, this was due to the nature of
my consulting and employment assignment requirements which directly involved providing education. It was also partly because participants became more fully engaged as informants if they were finding out something new in the course of our interaction. Anthropology in the sense that it is observing and attempting to understand human activity is an exceedingly natural thing for people to do. Often, the only difference between myself and an informant was that I had some specialized language and explanatory theories to offer in our discussion. Business people, especially managers and consultants, are often very keen observers who are practicing a form of participant observation themselves.

As I was considering using Scott's framework for analyzing the data, it was discussed with business practitioners. The fact that business people were unfamiliar with Scott's theories, yet readily grasped the concepts and easily provided examples, was considered a good reason to use this approach in my analysis. Another reason was that informants indicated they thought there was value to exploring application of this knowledge, or reported they had found it useful in some way subsequent to our discussion.

Business practitioners are schooled primarily in formal economics. The rapidity and degree to which concepts in a field such as political science are likely to be taken up by business training programs appears related to the degree to which the concepts are congruent with formal economics. In
contrast, the moral economy approach used by Scott focuses on relations between economic and social institutions and falls more within the domain of informal economics. Thus, it is slow to make its way to business practitioners.

The following discussion of the interplay of the moral and material economy also highlights the interplay of the formal and informal economy in businesses. As with everything classified as "informal" (informal communications, informal relations, informal organization, informal power, informal leadership), the existence of an informal economy is acknowledged by business practitioners as being as extensive and as important a factor in the conduct of human economic activities as that which is encompassed by the term, "formal economy." However, the informal sphere is given short shrift by educational programs seeking to train business people. The formal sphere is more amenable to giving an appearance of relevancy because it generally encompasses that which is more tangible, hence measurable; therefore, assumed to be more manipulatable.

Since the 1970's, the informal sector of economies has received increased attention from scholars in fields related to economic development. These efforts illuminated "how extensive is the informal sector and how truly vast is the amount of resources flowing through it" (Smith 1990:15). As this awareness has increased, governments and the development industry have begun to incorporate this knowledge, including
attempts at measurements, into economic programming. In the business sector, despite the occasional call for more complete accounting of "intangibles" (Carey 1997), less has been done with the growing body of knowledge about informal economic activities. The nature of the subject matter is such that "researchers have often found the concept hopelessly imprecise and confused" (Roberts 1990:23); it "remains an exceedingly fuzzy concept" (Despres 1990:98); and has become a "catch-all" to refer to the diverse ways marginal populations obtain the material resources to survive (Greenfield and Prust 1990:124).

The informal sector of the economy is often defined as "activities that are characterized by ease of entry, reliance on indigenous resources, family ownership and labor, small-scale operations, labor-intensive technology, and unregulated markets" (Murphy et al. 1990:149). For the most part, these are economic activities that are overlooked, ignored, mismeasured, outlawed or discouraged by governmental reports, taxation systems, regulations or policies.

In the discussion that follows many of the examples I use to highlight the interplay of the moral economy and the material economy in business settings involve informal economic practices. The economic practices described in my examples are similarly overlooked, ignored, mismeasured, outlawed or discouraged by formal policies and business accounting systems. However, as will be seen, in some cases, this can also include economic activity that is informally
encouraged or tacitly expected such as social activities intended to cultivate business relations, or not entering all of the actual time worked in a time reporting system. Many of these practices rely on tacit knowledge that is acquired and disseminated through the informal communications processes of an organization. It should also be mentioned that some of the informal economic activity within businesses may occur for the purpose of circumventing or subverting governmental regulations, such as tax or labor laws. A conclusion drawn from my observation of the workings of business economic systems is similar to that of R. Hunt's (1990:301) finding that the "informal part of the economy can be deeply integrated into the center of a major institution." Hunt (1990:308) found there was a "vast system of informal exchange going on.... These informal exchanges are integrated with the formal exchanges..." and may occur simultaneously.

Scott's framework, including the moral economy, hidden (informal) and public (formal) transcripts, infrapolitics, and the counterforces of everyday forms of resistance, accounts for why many business development schemes based solely on consideration of formal elements, tend to fail. Business development efforts can incorporate a wide range of programs with intentions such as improving financial performance, safety, human relations, community or government relations, communications and information systems. Scott's most recent work, Seeing Like a State (1998), based on analysis of large-
scale development schemes initiated by states that have failed spectacularly, is particularly pertinent to the analysis of development program failures in business settings. Scott highlights how the informal spectrum of human activities that was not accounted for by planners contributed to the failures he uses as examples. He also describes the extent to which informal processes can mediate the flaws and negative effects inherent in many grand schemes. For example, Scott discusses the ways in which the unplanned aspects of a modern, planned city such as Brasilia actually make it possible for the city to function, despite the deep, crippling flaws in the plan and its execution. Scott points out, with a sense of irony, how often the informal activities of individuals that mitigate rapid and unequivocal failure may be to the detriment of participants. Because of this, a situation can be made viable enough that pressure to change does not build to critical mass, or builds more slowly than it might otherwise.

The moral economy within American business settings is a distinctive phenomenon that is generally revealed in a variety of ways. This includes popular slogans that may be perverse versions of maxims found in larger ideological system, such as "do unto others before they do unto you" or "look out for number one" or "winning isn't everything, it's the only thing." The extent to which these altered sayings are used suggests that individuals must find mechanisms for reconciling the moral economy in business settings with the ideals
espoused within religious and other cultural institutions, even if this means making complete reversals of moral codes. By no means does everyone involved in business subscribe to the complete lack of moral constraint suggested by the maxims I have given as examples. Some people may even take the invocation of these sayings as a cue to avoid economic dealings with an individual or company that appears to subscribe seriously to this degree of being excepted from larger moral principles.

The United States officially separates religion and the state, and by extension separates religion from the economic sector of society. However, this formal separation does not negate by any means entirely the degree to which the moral economy of business is influenced by religious institutions. It is not uncommon to find business relations that are determined largely by religious affiliations. For example, there are clearly companies that discriminate against certain religious groups, such as Jews; companies that may be characterized as Jewish, Catholic, or WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant); and companies founded by fundamentalists and cults on overtly religious principles and staffed largely, even exclusively, by fellow members. Or, segments within organizations such as departments or local offices may be characterized in religious terms. In one organization I studied, the New York office was referred to as "the Jewish part of the company." It should also be mentioned that
industries or occupations may also be characterized as dominated by members of certain religions, whether current numbers would actually bear that out or not. For example, many associate the retail or financial industry with Jews, and there is a frequent association of Mormons with the security industry. Private businessmen’s clubs, country clubs, and civic organizations may have a strong element of bias toward or against a particular religious affiliation without risk of legal sanctions being imposed for exclusionary practices.

It is not uncommon to find instances where company resources are used for church work, with or without permission from management. In some cases, this activity might technically come under Scott’s heading of pilfering, and may even be an everyday form of resistance. More often, if within acceptable limits and kept discreet, it is tacitly approved, and sometimes overtly encouraged, or even expected, and need not be covert.

In one instance during my research, a senior manager was encountered who had aggressively recruited fellow church members, and was in a position to influence hiring decisions in other sectors of the organization. Over time, this individual had effectively created a parallel organization within the larger system based on these relations. When this activity reached noticeable proportions, members of this manager’s group who were not church members began to comment on favoritism. Whether or not favoritism was actually
practiced is a moot issue, the perception became very strong and contributed to dissatisfaction in the group. Discussions about favoritism were part of the hidden transcript of the subordinates of this manager who were not members of the same religious sect.

Before the occurrence of further formal separation of church and state in recent decades that bars employers from officially asking, religious affiliation was a routine element of a business resume. Even after this period of stricture, religious affiliation is still often included voluntarily on resumes or offered during interviews. By the same token, it is often not offered or discussed because applicants may feel it will adversely effect their likelihood of being hired. The restrictions placed on information an employer can explicitly request, such as religious affiliation, has led to elaboration of techniques used by people engaged in hiring to falsely comply with these restrictions. Business practitioners openly discuss methods for eliciting taboo information, yet still comply with the strict letter of the law. These practices are often rationalized as being necessary to be fair to both the applicant and the business entity. For example, even though a candidate currently cannot be asked questions about family, this may be an important consideration to the employer if a job involves extensive travel or relocation. An inexperienced applicant may not fully realize what such requirements will entail and recruiters feel they should be able to reject
candidates if their familial circumstances are such that travel or relocation is unrealistic. Since businesses such as the ones I studied may invest heavily in training new employees, employers think they should have the right to protect this investment by means of selection processes. Recruiters are expected to assess both the ability of the candidate to do the job and their ability to "fit" into the organization. It is common to hear prospective employees characterized as being a good or bad "fit." Gender or race, and some disabilities, can be directly perceived, and citizenship status is required information for employment, so false compliance practices concerning these factors are not so openly discussed. However, details of family circumstances, ethnicity, religious affiliation or sexual orientation may not be so obvious. Employers may make assumptions based on clues they are able to obtain or by using techniques that indirectly encourage divulgence of information during interviewing. Assumptions about religious affiliation may be based on last names, or the physical appearance of a candidate.

In one organization, a book profiling all senior management, which is made available to employees and clients, sometimes includes church affiliation. The book contains a picture, contact information, and a brief narrative profile of the individual that intends to divulge a certain amount of personal, as well as professional information. Managers provide their own profile information according to guidelines
that allow for considerable individual leeway. Many of them
cite their church memberships.

In that same organization, a group wishing to hold a
weekly Bible study session, prior to work hours at the office,
was granted permission to use a conference room on a regularly
scheduled basis. The glass wall of the conference room made
it easy to see this group at prayer, occasionally holding
hands as they did so. Since these sessions were always
concluded by prayer, others coming into the office would see
this very obvious activity as they made their way to their
work areas.

Additionally, there is an expensively bound book that is
a collection of articles and addresses given by the founder,
which is distributed to all senior management and housed in
the company’s library collections. These writings contain
frequent references to his own, obviously deeply held,
personal religious principles. Historic business documents,
such as this collection of articles and addresses from the
early 19th Century, commonly make overt reference to religion.
In this case, the individual had a wide-ranging command of
many subjects, and one article even includes an extended
discussion of archaeology. At least according to the contents
of the founder’s papers, it would seem he made no separation
between his religious and business morals.

Also in this organization, as with many businesses, there
is a document referred to metaphorically as "The Bible." In
this case, "The Bible" is an extensive codified project management methodology, and the metaphor was elaborated by some into an extensive analogy based on Catholicism. Elements of the analogy include a pope, cardinals, priests, ecumenical councils. Other religious concepts informing the analogy include: laymen, neophytes, converts, zealots or fundamentalists, and heretics.

One international project manager attributed part of his success in a project situation to his recognition that religion and business are not so separated in other countries. This American manager enhanced himself in the eyes of his foreign subordinates while working in a predominantly Catholic country by prominently placing the church's alms box in the office. It was maintained by the local priest who, therefore, was in and out of the office regularly and was highly visible. As the manager gave his account of this experience, it was clear that he had derived some personal satisfaction from being able to incorporate this element of religion into the office environment. He had contributed personally to the alms box, liked having this reminder of one's social obligations beyond business in the office, and enjoyed the regular visits of the priest. In countries that do not emphasize or mandate a separation of religious and economic institutions, the moral economy of business settings can draw more readily and openly from religion. For Americans, one of the very few contexts in which religion will be overtly addressed is in training.
programs preparing individuals for this aspect of international assignments. Gender is often factored into decisions concerning assignments to Islamic countries, although it may not be acknowledged overtly due to legal constraints.

The moral economy of a business setting may be comprised of elements other than those that are directly and obviously religious. Even though such elements may be themselves rooted in religion, they are secular in nature. The moral economy of American business is informed by a number of different secular sources. Perhaps because there is a type of void created by increasingly not being able to directly invoke religion, and given the absence of an overarching secular substitute such as Confucianism, American business is a sometimes odd mix of elements.

Systems of ethics are devised to provide moral principles as guidance in conduct and are often cited as the secular version of religion in American business. Business colleges routinely require a business ethics course as part of the curriculum. Many professionals, such as lawyers, engineers, and accountants, have a code of ethics and oaths to it are taken. Companies may publish a code of ethics, or now more commonly with the popularization of cultural concepts, a set of values is disseminated with the same intent. Also, in the wake of the extreme abuses of the 1980's (now commonly labelled, the "decade of greed"), many company training
programs began including ethics as a management development topic.

Individuals in the business settings I researched often gave "ethical differences" with management as a reason for leaving a company or project, although this would rarely be formally stated. Ethical differences could involve the employee's objection to making false promises to clients, misleading clients in reporting, requiring people to work overtime but not report it, or deceiving employees or management. Information technology professionals do not have a code of ethics similar to that of other, more mature professions. Many occupations do not have codes of ethics, and many businesses do not formally establish an ethical code or set of values, or do not enforce them if they do. However, individuals often have personal codes of ethics which they use to measure themselves and those around them, and will remove themselves from situations in which their standards are violated.

For many of the older generation of Americans, the military code and war experience informs the moral economy of business. Here, there is another interesting reversal of a maxim. "Take no prisoners" is not an uncommon slogan in business settings, yet it is against the military code of ethics to do this in war. The terms "traitor" or "deserter" and are commonly used to brand individuals who go into competition or are otherwise perceived as disloyal to a
particular manager, work group, or project. Individuals who left Consulting Partners under these circumstances did not become "alumni." If actions were considered particularly egregious, the person is excluded from alumni events. In one of the organizations I researched, it was common to use the phrase, "going to war," to indicate an all out, no-holds-barred attack by the organization against a perceived threat.

The moral economy of American business also draws heavily from the moral economy of sports and games. Loyalty to "the team," "playing by the rules," and "how the game is played," are just a few indications of the degree to which sports and games metaphors are employed to create and manipulate the moral economy in these settings. This took quite a turn some decades ago when Vince Lombardi, the popular coach of a commercial football team (Green Bay Packers), altered the statement "Winning isn’t everything." that was commonly used to encourage good sportsmanship as it was often followed by the statement, "It’s how you play the game that matters." Lombardi coined the slogan: "Winning isn’t everything. It’s the only thing." This perversion was immediately absorbed by business, and Lombardi, being a colorful figure, gifted at coinage such as this, became a popular "inspirational" or "motivational" speaker on the business speaking circuit. Videotapes of his speeches, with this slogan as the central theme, became popular substitutes for his presence at training, team building, awards dinners, and other events.
This is not to say that all of management joined what came to be known derisively by some as the Vince Lombardi school of management. However, it is interesting to note the speed and degree of uptake of this slogan as a means to rationalize business behavior that may make some people uncomfortable from a larger moral perspective. It is also interesting to note that a recent television advertisement for the Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) more than once used the statement, "It’s not just a game." If basketball is "not just a game," then what is it? Ironically, some would say, "It’s a business."

As can be seen by some of these examples, the moral economy of a given American business enterprise is an amalgam of elements, some of which are identified above, that may be variously constituted in particular cases. This moral economy may also be defined as much by what is left out, or apparently left out, as by what is included. As can also be seen, especially by examples of maxims that are reversed, the moral economy of business has mechanisms by which to circumvent, subvert and adjust the larger moral system of the society when conflicts arise. Conversely, as will be seen in further examples involving cases of everyday forms of resistance, the larger moral system is often used to judge, circumvent, subvert, or adjust the moral economy of a business setting.

The degree to which an individual’s personal moral system is a significant factor is highlighted in Scott’s second work,
Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance, based on his field study in Malaysia. The village in which he lived with his family for two years was small enough so that individual actors were well known to Scott. He is, therefore, able to provide rich descriptions of the specific actors participating in the events used as examples in his discussion. He thus gives the reader a full appreciation for the role of individuals in events. This particular work by Scott is an example of the kind of thick description (Geertz 1973) that can be derived from ethnographic methods.

Such thick description of events often leads to an appreciation of the fact that first of all, no matter how many levels of abstractions we may remove ourselves to for research and analysis purposes, individuals are engaged in dynamic processes. Secondly, people throughout the world are people - often as much similar as different. For example, Scott's book was used for a book report presentation assignment by a participant in a business training course. The participant began the report by re-casting individual characters in his personal experience as substitutes for those in Scott's book. For example, a manager was likened to Haji Broom, a landlord in the Malaysian village described by Scott. He then compared the similarities in an event portrayed by Scott with an incident he experienced in a previous job. The training participant's report clearly indicated that he had comprehended the fact that these people in a remote Malaysian
village are like himself and people he knows who are part of large urban populations who get a living by means of work in international organizations in the West.

The examples that will be presented in this discussion will not be afforded the very thick description provided of individual villagers in Scott's book. Such an approach could be taken with some of the data I collected since I got to know many individuals very well over the course of long periods of time, but it would not be appropriate. The kind of thick description of a small population exemplified by Scott (1985) is a problematical undertaking when dealing with ethnographic data from business settings because it puts informants at risk of being identified. Great care must be used in relating any direct quotations from informants¹, because an individual can often easily be identified by co-workers through characteristics of their speech. This applies to the conduct of the fieldwork itself as well as to presenting analysis of data. The topics discussed here involving the moral economy, hidden transcripts, and instances of everyday forms of resistance are extremely sensitive, so the individual level of description cannot be made too "thick" and personal.

¹This has become a common reporting technique used by some researchers and consultants. I have reviewed quite a number of reports produced by consultants and academics doing part-time consulting or research which used material from participant interviews directly. These reports are essentially a litany of direct quotations from participants, with a small amount of analysis here and there. It is notable that text-based information technologies such as those specialized to ethnographic data may make it hard to resist the temptation to take short cuts that allow for quick turn around of data. While it can be powerful to have participants speak "in their own voices," this can also have serious consequences that make it important to avoid the approach in many situations.
The material economy of a business enterprise includes time and information as well as money and physical assets. Its real scope is only imperfectly captured by formal systems of accounting. For example, an individual hosting a business dinner intended to establish relationships that will lead to profitable exchanges may document this expense for reimbursement, but generally does not document the time spent on this activity and is often not compensated directly for this time. The value of this time belongs in the informal sphere of economic relations and may ultimately have to be understood on a highly individual basis.

Some individuals may consider this a perquisite. The company pays for a portion, or perhaps even all, of their social activity. This can often include their "significant others," spouses, and occasionally, other family members. Others may consider the time spent on these social activities to be a personal investment in their own career. After all, they may often get to "keep" the relationships even if they leave the organization. The relations established through these social activities form the basis for elaborate reciprocity systems. Even so, some may consider the expectation of social activity outside the hours of work an inappropriate imposition on personal time. The largely undocumented and uncompensated nature of time spent in these activities make it easier for some to rationalize taking all or some of it back by coming into the office late, leaving
early, or performing personal activities during normal business hours. Or, in some cases, a strategy of false compliance with expectations of social event attendance may be employed. Individuals attend an event, but leave very early. People who see these activities as an intrusion and falsely comply would tend to be those who do compartmentalize work and other aspects of life more completely.

Consulting business activities particularly highlight how information is an aspect of the material economy of a business. Consulting in its simplest terms is the sale of knowledge and experience packaged in increments of time. These transactions are the basis of the formal accounting systems of consulting firms. However, considerable quantities of consulting time and advice are often dispensed free of charge in efforts to establish credibility with potential clients and to maintain relations with existing clients. While a pharmaceutical company, for example, may be able to take tax deductions for the cost of free samples, there is no such mechanism for the consulting industry's equivalent of this practice.

Volunteerism and philanthropy in many forms that are expected of employees are other areas that relate to the material as well as moral economy of the business sector, and are intended particularly to boost that always nebulous asset, goodwill. When businesses refer to being "good corporate citizens," they often cite the amount of direct donations and
fund raising participation for various charities and the arts as proof. Businesses can less often cite the full scope of employee time dedicated to community activities because it is difficult to capture such information. However, tacit expectations on the part of the employer may be very clear to employees and meeting such expectations will effect gaining promotions. Most organizations do not formally establish policies making these requirements explicit or include accounting mechanisms for tracking these activities. A closer accounting of this time in reporting systems may not be desirable because it could potentially create problems relating to labor laws or form the basis of requests for compensation increases. Professional services firms such as Consulting Partners are an exception to this generality to some degree. Some, but not all, of the time spent on such activities is in fact captured in the time reporting system.

Business meals and entertainment are particularly useful activities through which to glimpse the interplay of the material and the moral economy of contemporary business. Such meals and entertainment fall both within the formal sector of economic activity as it is documented for expense and tax purposes, and within the informal sector such as in cases where it is abused for personal aggrandizement. In the professional consulting industry, business meals and entertainment can be very extensive and proceed according to formal policy guidelines as well as informal codes of conduct.
Informal codes are particularly highlighted by the unwitting transgressions of newcomers.

Power relations are clearly associated with "picking up the check." Virtually all meal and entertainment situations initiated by employees involving individuals outside the enterprise call for the employee of the consulting organization to pay, or at least make a serious attempt to pay. Although the complex social rounds of the business community certainly cause many situations in which individuals are guests of others, there is a concerted effort to maintain asymmetrical reciprocity relations, with more resource expenditure on the part of firm members, which is deliberately calculated to trigger reciprocations in the form of being recommended, hired, or at least favored for consulting engagements. Reciprocity for meals and entertainment can also be achieved on the part of recipients by means of providing important introductions and entre that might lead to obtaining work. One way of guaranteeing the ability to pick up the check for client or prospect meals is to invite the person into a club environment where only the member can pay. This avoids any awkwardness involved in vying for payment. Also, practices such as providing prepaid tickets to events and hosting events such as golf outings avoid unseemly attention to the direct monetary value involved in these forms of gift giving. In some cases, these exchanges are governed by strict formal rules that may preclude accepting any gifts or
hospitality or may set limits to the value of such activity. Often, however, the propriety of these activities is mediated by the moral economy of the situation and actors informally, and formal rules can be easily circumvented. For example, a purchasing agent may be restricted from accepting meals and gifts from prospective vendors. However, such policies may not specifically define every potential situation clearly, so a vendor may plan a golf outing or some similar event that is often not explicitly included in the rules.

Responsibility for paying for meals and entertainment involving only members of the firm operates on the basis of hierarchy. The highest ranking individual picks up the check. Sometimes protracted negotiations occur between closely ranked individuals which might be resolved by the fact that someone's credit card balances have been particularly hard hit so they should be let off the hook. Often negotiation among equals has a competitive element because individuals want to pay the check so their time and expense reports will reflect their "greater" commitment to the enterprise. Being the one to turn in the expense makes presence at such events more visible and also reflects a willingness to "carry" the organization's expenses.

However, it is also a competitive matter to claim exemption from paying the check because inordinate sums are being carried on personal credit. International travelers and people on long-term, out-of-town assignments can run up as
much as ten or twenty thousand dollars in expenses that are outstanding for reimbursement. Not all companies provide corporate credit cards so individuals are using their personal lines of credit for these purposes. These situations provide opportunities for individuals to claim "bragging rights" to large expenses among each other and in front of subordinates. When a bill arrives, one person might ask another person to pay by saying something like, "My Visa bill was $8,000 last month." The other person might say, "Well, mine was $12,000. I paid for the last training meeting, the project kick-off dinner, plus I was in Tokyo last week." These exchanges are also used to informally instruct subordinates on what might be expected in terms of levels of personal credit needed and the kinds of expenses they will pay as they advance up the organizational ladder. Professionals who attempt to avoid responsibility for expenses risk becoming the brunt of joking and others may conspire to ensure that such an individual does pay a fair share.

It is always assumed that lower level support personnel (nonprofessional staff) are exempt from any obligation to pay meal or entertainment expenses on occasions when they are included in such activities. In addition to meals in restaurants, it is common to include catered food for business meetings held in the office or a local hotel. Lower ranks, who may not be attending the meeting, are occasionally invited to partake in the meals as they occur, or more often, are
given any leftovers after the meal is over. Also, it is a common practice to encourage individuals in lower ranks to take the leftovers from events home, with exception of liquor, which would more commonly be divvied up by superiors or lower level professional staff. The moral economy informs these sorts of practices in terms of who can most fairly afford to pay, what constitutes fair competition within the organization, what levels of personal financial obligations on behalf of the organization are fairly undertaken, or what is the fair share of distribution of entertainment resources to lower ranks.

It is not unusual in many cases involving payment for meals and entertainment to have individuals refer to the fact that the organization is paying the "tab." For example, "Let's have Acme get the tab." In one company, a variant on this involved personalization of an unusual sort. When check payment was about to occur, individuals commonly referred to the long-dead founder of the firm by first name, often saying, "Let's have Uncle [founder's first name] get this." This personalization of the enterprise was often used in cases where an outsider is hesitant to allow the check to be paid, and to explain practices to newcomers. With newcomers this inculcated a sense of belonging, and with outsiders, it could defuse awkwardness about who is to pay by laying it off somewhat jokingly to a dead person. Members of the organization would refer to the founder as their "rich uncle"
thus imbuing situations with a sense of the fairness of a well-to-do family member's obligations to those less fortunate.

Particularly expensive meals (and copious quantities of drinks) are often associated with difficult projects requiring long hours, having unusually bad working conditions, or involving the tensions of very high-stakes gambles on the part of the consulting organization or the client. Such social events may or may not include client members of a project team. A senior manager might initiate such events or tell a lower level manager or senior staff person to initiate a dinner or after-work drinks gathering in order to reward the team for accomplishing milestones or ease tension. To some extent these activities could be initiated by lower ranks and included an element of resistance behavior rationalized by the moral economy.

Meals and entertainment are at times "extracted" from the firm as a form of compensation in situations where individuals or groups feel overworked or otherwise exploited by the organization. Also, this kind of activity is even used to get back at difficult clients since expenses are passed through the billing process either directly or indirectly. Occasionally, meal and entertainment expense for a project team is openly negotiated with the client and included in a project budget. It then becomes a budget item that can be re-negotiated later. Indirect means of re-capturing expenses
would include raising billing rates if a project becomes seriously enough affected by expenses. Also, projects are often contracted for in phases, so the beginning of each phase provides an opportunity to adjust financial arrangements. For some of the client personnel involved in these events, this is often a way to get more meals and entertainment than would be the norm in their position or organization. For clients, it is also a means to adjust discrepancy (real or perceived) between their compensation and that of consultants that might be brought in for projects. Client personnel may be very overt about expectations to be included in meals and entertainment activity, and it is common for them to refer to the fact that their organization is ultimately paying for such activities.

Travel is another area of business expense activity that highlights both formal and informal processes and the moral economy of an enterprise. The professional consulting organizations I studied are characterized by an exceptionally complex travel expense situation due to the frequency of travel, the international nature of activities, and the fact that individuals are often sent on extended out-of-town assignments that can last weeks, months, and even years. People who work under these conditions often incur additional expenses that slip through the cracks of formal expense reimbursement systems. Such expenses could include everything from paying premium dry cleaning prices when out of town to
absorbing the cost of more than the allotted "fly backs." The term, "fly backs," refers to the frequency with which the organization pays for travel expenses to return home for weekends and holidays. The number of "fly backs" is generally restricted in lower ranks and depends on the length of the assignment, the profitability of the project, and the literal costs involved such as airline ticket prices. Upper ranks have considerable or complete personal discretion in this area. Uncompensated personal expenses incurred due to work are often part of the rationalization for some of the travel expense padding that occurs in business.

Individuals also rationalize expense padding on the basis of uncompensated time because the reality of a 24-hour-day in a travel situation is such that individuals are inconvenienced by not being home in many ways. For example, caretaking, pet sitting and other services may be required, and personal activities, such as attending children’s school events, are missed. It is also not uncommon for organizations to expect individuals to travel on weekends or holidays. For example, journeys to and from out-of-town projects or meetings may be expected to occur on Sunday in order to be at work on time Monday morning. People are also often not expected leave before quitting time on Friday, thus cutting short weekends. The degree of ambivalence associated with travel is highly idiosyncratic so perceptions of inconveniences are variable and often situationally specific dependent on where
individuals are sent, how long the stay, and what must be done while there. Also, in the case of longer-term projects, apartments are arranged and lower ranking staff must often share living accommodations with strangers from other offices or with individuals they may or may not like.

Extravagance in travel expenses or abuses tantamount to fraud can be a form of resistance in situations where individuals feel put upon. If a project drags out beyond the period promised by management, if a project runs into difficulties and becomes stressful, if the individual has had too many out-of-town assignments in a row, if the physical distresses of frequent jet-lag are involved, or if the individual dislikes project management or the client, travel expense extravagances can be a means to "settle the score." One individual who became fed up with the ongoing nuisance of paperwork involved in turning in expenses, let it all pile up for a year, and then turned in a request for reimbursement. He did this to provoke accounting and succeeded in doing so. A new policy restricting the amount of time in which to submit expense reimbursement requests was immediately issued by the Chief Financial Officer.

During the course of my research, equipment expense became another example of the interplay of the formal and informal economy and the moral economy. Before the advent of personal computers, project expenses rarely included any significant equipment purchases, so abuses were petty and
practically nonexistent. One organizational legend highlighted the issue of business equipment expense in an interesting way. As the tale went, in the 1920's and 1930's, professionals hired by the organization were expected to wear a brown hat. A newly hired professional purchased the requisite brown hat and promptly submitted its cost on his expense report. The expense was denied. Next time he turned in his expense report stating challengingly, "Find the hat." He was overtly signaling his intent to "bury" the hat in his expense report. "Bury" is the common vernacular for this behavior.

The introduction of personal computer technologies in the early 1980's had quite a dramatic effect on the informal economy of information technology consultancies in particular. It quickly became common to "bury" thousands of dollars worth of personal computer hardware and software in project expenses and keep the equipment for personal use by preventing its appearance on either the client or the company's inventory. Loopholes were quickly found that took advantage of the client's and the company's inadequate formal systems for tracking such items, which could make ownership nebulous once the purchase was made. Personal computer theft represented a dramatic escalation in equipment expense abuses in many public and private organizations. However, information systems consultants could particularly rationalize that these computers were essential equipment. Also, project accounting
systems in consulting firms at that time made it somewhat easier to perform the maneuvers required to make the equipment "disappear."

How did white-collar professionals rationalize a shift from petty thievery ("burying" a hat) to grand larceny? Here again, there was often an element of resistance in the behavior that could be rationalized by means of the moral economy. Individuals rationalized absconding with personal computer systems on the basis of the fact that they often did work at home and these new systems would allow them to do this more effectively. Having a computer at home could minimize their often long hours in the office; if nothing else, saving them uncompensated travel time to and from the office on weekends, for example. Professionals quickly reasoned that this type of equipment should be standard issue. It gradually became much more common to issue personal computers to employees for use at home, but initially access to these resources was restricted to upper ranks or had to be checked in and out of an equipment pool. Even when it became more common to give personal computers to all levels of professionals, issues arose concerning upgrading the equipment and peripherals such as modems and printers, so "burying" continued.

The practice of unofficially obtaining personal computer equipment often did not stop with one system. In some cases, managers accumulated a store of such equipment in order to
more fully equip a project team. Managers engaged in this behavior as resistance to the organizational restraints in these purchases which they perceived as putting them in a career bind, especially in a highly competitive up-or-out organization. If their projects did not succeed and show profit, they could not succeed. Once some of this equipment was extracted from the formal system, a manager could look good by requiring minimal expenditure for equipment in the project budget. Managers could also gain loyalty and a reputation for being a "good provider" among staff who benefitted by being issued off-the-record equipment. They, thus, were able to attract a higher caliber of staff willing to work on their projects. This helped managers resist the constraints of the "staffing game" which could be infuriating if they found themselves being assigned too many inexperienced or undesirable staff. Emotions can run high among both managers and lower ranks. Project staffing is a very elaborate process within consulting organizations involving complex formal and informal processes. Managers could gain a good reputation among staff by being competent and respected, and also by providing perquisites of various kinds, including good equipment. Staff would request assignments with desirable managers and attempt to resist assignments with managers known to be incompetent or exploit staff.

Often elaborate efforts were undertaken by the organization to discourage this behavior and gain better
control over equipment inventory, which had become a notable financial item. Efforts were made to sanction the behavior in individual cases, although this never involved legal prosecution or dismissal as far as this is shown by the data collected. These attempts to bring personal computer equipment totally into the formal system were largely to no avail. There remains an informal economy of personal computer equipment the extent of which is often considerable, yet difficult to accurately estimate. While working at the international training and development center of Consulting Partners, I discussed the problems of theft experienced there with a long-time executive. In addition to small scale theft, there was occasionally a large scale raid on equipment. The executive indicated that many of these cases appeared to be "inside jobs." The level of employee theft among professionals escalated notably in many enterprises with the advent of personal computers. Yet, it seems it is possible to rationalize this behavior both on the part of the enterprise, which tolerates it by not prosecuting, and on the part of individuals, who prior to the 1980's, would not likely have ever dreamed they would be purloining thousands of dollars worth of equipment.

Time reporting and internal cost accounting systems constitute another area that highlights the interplay of the moral and material economy, and resistance behaviors in contemporary businesses. As in previous discussion, examples
will include cases where members of the organization are resisting exploitation or unfair policies based on often very personal estimations of what is just and reasonable. People in business also resist complying with requests and requirements if they perceive them as being ill considered. In the earlier example of managers who resisted completing a new report, noncompliance was rationalized largely by their belief that the report was poorly designed. A common complaint at lower levels is that management does not provide "the big picture." By this, they mean they are not given, and cannot discern, a reason for doing or not doing something, or doing things in specific ways. In consulting firms, resistance can extend to client requests and requirements.

Elaboration of time reporting and internal cost accounting systems is tied directly to information technology improvements. At times, these systems seem to have run amok with accounting technology being employed more for its own sake than toward any substantial improvements in the management of organizations. For example, many organizations now use accounting mechanisms that cause the company's internal support functions to behave as "quasi-businesses." Departments that traditionally provided for the basic needs of the organizations now "sell" these services to other departments. All of this is done by means of an abstraction of the material economy that many refer to as "funny money." Through a system of accounting, departments charge "fees" for
the time employees spend providing services. Expenses incurred by the department for materials or equipment might also be "charged" to "clients." It is not uncommon for the rates charged for employee time to include a "profit factor." For example, while I worked within a training and development center my time could be charged to other departments at a rate that was three times my actual salary. This internal rate was the same as what the firm charged clients for my time on projects.

These trends in internal cost accounting often produce curious consequences. For example, in one case a local office hired a graphic artist for its small, but growing, marketing department. After a few weeks on the job, I noticed the artist was sitting on the floor to do his work. When I asked why he didn't have a drafting table, he explained that the additional equipment needs of a graphic artist had not been factored into the marketing department's budget along with the salary for the new position. I pointed out to a senior manager that it seemed odd that the local office had plenty of resources to outfit the artist properly, yet he was having to work on the floor. The manager took action to circumvent the constraints of the internal cost accounting system, and the artist quickly got his drafting table and other supplies. As the artist became established as an available resource, it also became interesting to follow how his services were used. Departments or projects could request graphic art only if they
had the means to pay via internal accounting transactions. This meant that newer practice groups, smaller projects, or projects not showing good profits were severely resource constrained. Conversely, managers of well established practice groups and profitable projects could avail themselves of this resource freely. In one case, a large project requested that caricatures be made of client managers for a project ceremonial event. The caricatures were expensively framed and were handed out at a dinner. The project paid for several days of time and expense involved in creating this series of caricatures. Meanwhile, a newly established practice group was struggling with a tight budget to obtain the marketing support, including graphic arts, that was required to develop new business. When they found out about an apparently frivolous use of graphic art resources on the part of a project, they complained bitterly. These internal cost accounting systems also regularly create situations in which individuals are literally not doing anything, but are put in positions where they have to decline doing work if a department cannot pay for the service.

Linked to technological improvement in accounting systems is the steady ascendancy of accountancy as a profession to the extent that Chief Financial Officers often wield great power within organizations. Professionals establishing their career in this area can realistically entertain ambitions to become the President or Chief Executive Officer of a company.
Finance departments in companies can seem tyrannical, and are particularly likely to establish a kind of "martial law" when things are going badly for a company. Moratoriums on hiring, raises, and expenditures may be imposed in times of crisis. Discretionary spending at even the most senior levels may all but disappear as power over resources becomes concentrated in the Finance Department. American management proclivities to invest these functionaries with considerable power are distinctive. Statements made by individuals from other countries, who consider this an American trait, are typified by Tomoko Hamada's (1991:148) report of a comment made by a Japanese manager: "Japanese management are 'free from the tyranny of accountants'..." In one case, an individual described the situation in a company that was experiencing difficulties by stating, "The finance-types have put on the black robes." He was referring to the fact that those in Finance had assumed power, expenditure requests would meet with an inquisition, a hiring freeze was initiated, and workers might be eliminated. In another case, a very senior executive, who had nonetheless been overridden on an expenditure by the financial executive, when informing a subordinate of the bad news ended by saying forlornly, "You see what I have to live with."

In the consulting industry, the elaboration of accounting related to time is influenced by the fact that time quite literally is money. Firms sell services in increments of
professional time. There is a limit to how much time each employee can work and it cannot be stockpiled to be sold later. Therefore, there is a direct correlation between the number of employees and how much "product" is readily available. Large firms such as Consulting Partners can afford to maintain a "surplus" as mentioned earlier when the World Headquarters and large office staff "warehouses" were described. Smaller consulting organizations often do not have this luxury and may have to "staff to contracts," which means no staff can be hired unless a project contract will cover the expense. This can make selling work difficult because prospective clients often want to see the resumes of the individuals a consulting firm plans to use on the project before entering into a contract.

Time is also a particularly interesting topic in the information technology industry given the strong relationship between technological performance and time. For example, in just the past few years, communication technology throughput speeds have risen from gigabits (a billion bits per second); to terabits (a trillion bits per second); to petabits (a quadrillion bits per second). On one particular project, a low level staff person became a "hero" by devising a technical means by which each transaction's time could be reduced by about a nanosecond (a billionth of a second). Because the volume of transactions executed by the computer was so
immense, the aggregate effect of his innovation significantly improved the system's performance.

Clearly, there is considerable anthropological literature on the topic of time that would make for the basis of further general discussion of time. However, a full examination is beyond the scope here. In the following discussion examples are selected to highlight the interplay of the moral economy and time in the sense that it is a material resource of consulting firms.

Methods used to keep track of chargeable (or, billable) time are subject to considerable informal variation at the individual level. Formal time reporting in the organizations I studied was done weekly or bi-monthly. Systems able to capture such information on a daily basis, even moment to moment, are now often used at the project level. However, the accounting systems that create a firm's billings usually do not "collect" this information that frequently. Some individuals keep careful records of their time for the purpose of doing this reporting. Others do not really have a system and make up or "cook" the information on "time report day," which is the term for the day on which this occurs. People remind each other that it is "time report day" and may receive phone calls from administrative staff reminding them of this fact. Professionals who are out of the office must find the means to transmit the information or make arrangements for
someone in the office to produce and submit the required report for them.

At Consulting Partners, Time Management was one of the first training courses in the curriculum for recruits, and individuals may attend more than one course or management seminar on this topic in the course of their career. Often people try various personal time management systems, and a walk down the isles in any office supply store will attest to the array of calendrical schemes and software now on the market for these purposes. A considerable amount of informal information is circulated within organizations concerning the usefulness of various types of diaries, software, or techniques. At times this can even take on an evangelical overtone as individuals will try to convert others if they think they have found the ultimate system. Cult-like approaches, such as S. Covey's, Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (1990), exhort people to extend time management techniques into all aspects of life.

Informal communication related to time reporting is also replete with tips on getting around the system, using it to improve one's image, or exploiting the system for overtime and overtime meal allowances. Informal codes exist that define ideals such as what proportions of time usage should be. Particularly, for professional staff, the proportion of

---

2 This is a particularly interesting example. Covey is a Mormon and his time management system, which I have reviewed, is clearly informed by his religious values. He has followed up with this very popular management book with another book directed at promoting "highly effective families."
chargeable time individuals should have at certain stages of their career, or what amount constitutes a record for number of chargeable hours in a time period or year, is known informally though often not formally stated. For individuals, their "chargeability" is equated with job security, status and prestige, pay increases, bonuses, and promotability.

Tracking nonbillable time is always a significant issue for consulting organizations. As mentioned previously, a great deal of time spent on social and volunteer activities is not formally captured in time reporting systems though it is expected and is crucial to successful conduct of business. Although overtime is tracked closely for nonprofessional support staff who are always compensated for this time, it may not be very well documented for professionals who are paid salaries. Even in the case of a consulting firm where lower level professional staff may be eligible for overtime, individuals may "eat" this time. Time may not be entered if a person feels personally responsible for a mistake and works to correct it. It may also not be entered if a person wants to keep their "personal numbers" up in the sense of showing a high proportion of billable time, thus making themselves more profitable employees in the eyes of management. Time may also not be reported if a person knows it will not be billable and its appearance in reporting systems will lower the calculated profitability (success) for the project to which they are assigned. This time may or may not be volunteered by the
individual. Some managers will apply direct and indirect pressure not to report time, especially time that must be compensated, but cannot be billed, due to its effect of lowering their project's profitability. Individuals will often try to avoid working for managers who gain a reputation for this practice. Given the fact that this information quickly circulates among staff, it is difficult to conceive that senior management does not become aware of these practices. In some firms, this practice may be tacitly encouraged by senior management and becomes widespread, thus unavoidable for staff. Incentives to under-report time are related to increased profitability, but also can create project accounting records that make the firm look good in terms of completing projects within budgets. Claims made on the basis of this information are incorporated into the sales rhetoric.

It is common for individuals to refer to time not compensated, or expenses not reimbursed, as being "eaten." At the organizational level, a firm might "eat" time and expenses related to projects if they go over the contracted deadlines. Firms may not be able to charge fees for consultant time and may even have to absorb the expenses involved in an out-of-town project. If the organization plans at the outset to "eat" time and expenses for investment purposes, this is calculated at the inception of the project as what is known as "planned write-off." The technical term for overages that are
not planned is "unplanned write-off," but it is common to refer to it as "eating."

In the case of one consulting group, the senior manager made his personal rule of thumb for apportioning time known to subordinates. This was referred to as "The Eight for Ten Rule." The senior manager suggested to subordinates that any professional should apportion their time in such a way that eight hours were devoted to billable work. Then, another two should regularly be allotted to investing in self-improvement by acquiring new skills, knowledge and experiences. Particularly among professionals who worked for managers who expected large quantities of time to be "eaten," the "Eight for Ten Rule" became a sardonic joke among lower level staff. Information systems projects get off track fairly readily and in many cases involve at least a stage in which individuals will have to put in very long hours for sometimes extended periods. An extreme crisis may involve the project team in 12 to 18-hour days, six or seven days a week, for weeks, even months. People who have been through tough project experiences talk in terms of giving up a summer or a year of their lives to the project. Physical and psychological breakdowns may occur in these situations as the strain of such events accumulates. As mentioned before, at times like this, meals and entertainment can become more lavish. Lower level staff redefined the manager's rule to the effect that it really meant they "ate" 20% of their time -- working a ten or
more hour day, but only reporting eight. For some, there was barely enough time to get a minimum of sleep, much less consider the luxury of self-improvement activities.

When individuals are asked to perform nonbillable activities, they may wish to avoid it. Footdragging and dissimulation capitalizing on the much higher value placed on chargeable time are common resistance strategies in these cases. Individuals can justify footdragging by saying they did not have time for something because they were chargeable and to some extent get away with it. Individuals can also dissimulate a refusal of a request by claiming they are, or will be, too busy with chargeable work.

Individuals can also invoke chargeability to overcome potential resistance of others. In particular, because there is considerable ambivalence in the power relations between low level professional staff and support personnel, low level staff learn quickly to tie their requests of support personnel to chargeable projects, or couch requests in terms that make them messengers of a senior manager. Low level staff are given no formal authority over support personnel. This gives support personnel a certain amount of power over newly hired professionals. For example, support personnel can sometimes refuse requests outright, and may even be in a position of supervising new professional staff who may be assigned to help them with an internal project. These tasks can include anything from improving a work system to moving furniture.
New staff must learn to manipulate support resources to their advantage without this authority. This is actually good practice because consultants often do not have formal authority over client personnel on whom they must depend for cooperation and work if a project is to be successful.

Time reporting systems are also important "burial sites." The dilemmas of what to do with nonbillable time often involve "burying" akin to that used in expense reporting. It is often difficult to compartmentalize work activities in such a way that increments of time are clearly chargeable or nonchargeable. While some law firm time reporting systems may collect time in increments as small as a tenth of an hour (six-minute increments), and accountants often use quarter-hour increments (fifteen minutes), this becomes very cumbersome. In most cases of information systems consulting, the standard increment for a professional is a half hour or an hour. In the case of Consulting Partners, those involved in the traditional practice areas used quarter-hour increments; whereas, those involved in information systems consulting used hour increments. During one focus group with information systems consultants, they speculated that this had an effect on social behavior in the work environment. Professionals who had to account for time in quarter-hour increments were less likely to stop and have a non-work-related conversation with co-workers. Information systems consultants speculated that this effected their ability to develop better relations across
practice area boundaries. It was even considered a reason why they had "better parties" than those in the other division.

When time reporting standards involve larger increments, individuals often have to employ a fair amount of judgment about their categorization of time. For example, an individual working on a project full time is often expected to charge forty or more hours a week to the client. Clearly, the individual still has the demands of his or her own organization to be satisfied; completing time reports, for one thing. Individuals may also have to participate in other reporting, may get phone calls and mail from the office for a variety of reasons, and may have responsibilities associated with internal organizational projects. There is also the matter of nonwork-related conversations that inevitably occur in offices either with co-workers or clients, and are important to establishing and maintaining relations. Clients may initiate these activities as often as not and may be offended if they are avoided or cut short. Even though conversations not directly related to the client project may only involve a few minutes, this activity can add up. Some individuals attempt to be very scrupulous about this kind of stray time, others may not bother too much about making adjustments for it. Clients often watch the activities of consultants very, very closely. Constant scrutiny by clients can be a very real pressure in consulting work, and it can escalate dramatically if a project experiences difficulties.
and relations become strained. It is often difficult for consultants to meet the demands of their own organization and yet ensure that the client will not challenge reports of chargeable time. Consultants quickly learn to be circumspect, at times even surreptitious, about any activity not obviously related to the client's project. I have found that consultants probably err more often toward under-reporting than over-reporting time charged to clients. Nonetheless, clients tend to be suspicious.

Considerable "burying" may be required in cases where an individual, for a variety of reasons, comes up short in accounting for time. It is not unusual to have to do something even though the individual making the request does not have a charge number to give for the task at the time it is performed. It can be easy to forget to document something, and there are a number of tacitly unacceptable ways to account for time. Also, even the most elaborate of time reporting systems may not provide what is known as a "charge number" for every eventuality. For one thing, no time reporting system I have ever encountered accounted specifically for the time spent on time reporting, even though the time involved in completing time reports can be very considerable. It can include obtaining a current list of charge numbers, looking up charge numbers, and performing the calculations required. Also, the need often arises to ask for information from others in order to complete the report. It may take considerable
time to track down a particular individual, or even determine who the appropriate individual might be, for resolving a reporting dilemma. Time spent on time reporting is usually considered as part of the general category of "Administration." Professionals are especially discouraged from charging anything but a very minimal amount of their time to administration.

One of the organizations I studied initiated a major change in the procedure for time reporting by lower level support staff. The changes were part of an effort to begin billing clients directly for expenses such as xeroxing, and the time of support personnel, such as secretaries, graphic artists, or researchers, who did work related to client projects. Attempts to include the right to bill for support personnel time in contracts often meet with considerable client resistance. For one thing, these individuals are not onsite and therefore, cannot be monitored. Even though managers knew the firm could not often pass these costs directly through billing, they rationalized that the information would allow them to calculate more closely the actual profitability of a client. Previous to the new procedures, support personnel time reporting was very easy because all of their time was charged to one charge number entitled, "Administration." The new procedures aimed at refining cost accounting had a dramatic effect on these individuals and presented them with many dilemmas. Support
personnel were now expected to account for time in very small increments (tenth of an hour). Even this was problematical because so many activities such as making a copy, making very minor edits and reprinting a short document, or handling a phone call might often take less than six minutes. Support personnel kept a time report form handy and had to constantly stop and make entries to it in order to complete their time reports with any degree of accuracy. Their work often resulted in several pages of these forms and finalizing a time report required considerable calculations to be made. Lower level support personnel time reporting had suddenly became more complex than that of even the busiest consultants, and required all the techniques for circumvention used by professionals. When the new procedures were introduced, some secretaries already knew the techniques used by professionals because one of their duties might include doing management time reports. Their successful performance of this task had entailed being able to fill in the "gaps" and maximizing the system to the boss's benefit with as little direction from their superior as possible. It was, in fact, something of a status symbol among secretaries to be entrusted with this responsibility.

Shifting to a complete accounting of support activities in the organization changed the dynamics of power relations considerably. Support personnel could demand a charge number before proceeding to comply with requests made of them.
Unintended consequences of these new practices also included imposing additional constraints on internal projects or business development. These activities are usually resource constrained in the first place and became further hampered by increased difficulties in using internal support personnel. Oddly enough, those involved in business development that was theoretically expected to cause growth could often not afford the internal support required to accomplish their goals effectively. In contrast, well-established practice areas or large, profitable projects could occasionally make use of such resources in even frivolous ways, such as the example given previously in which caricatures of clients had been commissioned by a project manager.

Professionals have to avoid putting too much time toward administration or they risk looking bad to superiors. "Burying" such undesirable time can require considerable knowledge of the internal workings of the organization. This can include knowing what kind of time is more highly valued by superiors and who does not pay very close attention to time charged to their budgets. It also entails knowing when it is difficult to verify or challenge a realistic claim of time. For example, an individual may be asked to perform an activity that would realistically take three hours, but may in fact complete the task in one hour. The person has thus created
two hours of slack for themselves, which they can use, if necessary, for "burying" administrative or other undesirable time.

Like expense reporting, time reporting may be manipulated as a means of resistance when individuals are feeling overworked, underpaid, or otherwise put upon. Padding can generate overtime and overtime meal allowance payments, which can cause a project to go over its budget. Padding may also be a means of recouping expenses that cannot be submitted in the expense system. For example, an individual may feel pressured to purchase tickets for events sponsored by charitable or community organizations in which their superiors are involved. Some of these tickets are very expensive and can be the equivalent of several hours of a person's wages. In many cases, padding is not technically a matter of adding a fictitious amount of time to reports, but is rather more like a work-to-rule resistance strategy wherein individuals will refuse to "eat" time. This strategy may be directed at one's own organization. It may also be a means of resisting clients who are insisting on services other than those the firm prefers to provide; clients who are perceived as too critical of the work produced and request a lot of nuisance changes; and, clients who are sticklers about expenses insisting on detailed reporting or challenging charges (similar to "find the hat" mentioned earlier). It is hard to determine the extent to which real padding, which is fraud and
is legally actionable, occurs. It is difficult to imagine that, especially in large organizations, there are no unscrupulous managers or staff. Marginal or outright dishonesty on the part of a manager may cause real moral dilemmas for staff, which may become the topic of discussion among themselves or with others in management. Also, staff would have some difficulties escaping detection by management if they engage in any excesses of this type.

Time reporting can be so cumbersome and time consuming that individuals resist full compliance by simplifying these systems as much as possible. As anyone who has ever worked in an organization with an elaborate time reporting system knows, this is often the subject of considerable sarcastic joking among those who must cope with these systems. Metaphors such as "burying" and "eating" time are common, and tips and techniques for simplifying, working around, and even subverting such systems circulate informally throughout the workforce.

The examples discussed above were chosen because systems for time and expense reporting in consulting organizations represent the formal efforts made to document and manipulate the material aspects of the economy. In these types of organizations, meals, entertainment and travel expenses are of proportions that would be associated with capital expenditures for plants and machinery in factory settings. The need to account for time, which is essentially the "product," makes
for unusual emphasis on time reporting in professional services contexts. Given these characteristics, the interplay of the formal and informal economy in these organizations is quite elaborate and the workings of the moral economy are complex. All of the formal systems highlighted in the above discussion are regularly circumvented or subverted using various types of everyday forms of resistance when employees perceive a situation to be unfair or feel they are being exploited. The power of organizations to impose control by means of such formal systems is regularly mitigated by individuals at all levels of the organization, the most senior as well as the lowest. Various strategies included in Scott’s typology of everyday forms of resistance, such as pilfering, false compliance, and dissimulation have been highlighted in this chapter’s discussion. In the following chapter, forms of resistance specifically involving figurative communications will be the central theme.
Scott (1985) characterizes acts of everyday resistance as requiring little or no coordination or planning, making use of implicit understandings and informal networks, and typically stopping short of direct confrontation with authority. These acts are often forms of individual self-help such as shown in many examples in the chapter discussing expense and time reporting. In this chapter, I explore the extent to which everyday forms of resistance in business settings are accomplished by means of figurative communication.

"Figurative language" or "figures of speech" are common terms referring to nonliteral expression such as metaphor. In the following discussion, a broader term, "figurative communication," will be used to include language usage as well as other behaviors. The term can include nonverbal communication accomplished by graphics, silence, proxemtics, or what is commonly called "body language." Figurative communication behaviors may involve the use of objects, such as a cigar, which will be discussed in one of the examples that follow. The staging or setting of a communication event may also contribute to its figurative quality.
Scott (1991:14) describes each hidden transcript as being "elaborated among a restricted 'public' that excludes -- that is hidden from -- certain specified others." He also characterizes hidden transcripts as not only containing speech acts but a whole range of practices and is careful to point out that the boundary between "public" and "hidden" transcripts is often very unclear. In business settings, hidden transcripts exist within work groups, rank levels, functional departments, and divisions of organizations. Cliques form around personal affinities and commonalities such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion. In my research, hidden transcripts also exist in the form of the hidden transcripts of clients with respect to consultants and consultants with respect to clients. Hidden transcripts are rife with figurative communication involving power relations. Rude metaphorical nicknames for superiors, inferiors, co-workers, projects, machines, clients, competitors, or consultants are obvious examples. Various types of graffiti and items such as cartoons, news articles, pictures or jokes that appear in individual work spaces, lunch rooms, and on public bulletin boards or walls can often be characterized as figurative. Because figurative communication is indirect, it lends itself to resistive expressions and activities that reveal some of what is in the hidden transcripts in business settings. Also, there is often a joking quality to this type of communication which can provide
a degree of safety or anonymity to individuals expressing frustration with superiors, clients, and organizational policies or procedures relatively openly. The following figure is an example of a type of item commonly posted in the work space of administrative support staff such as secretaries:

![Stress](image)

Figure 7.1: "Stress"

Figure 7.1 makes use of scatological metaphors commonly associated with frustration and anger. The border and overall visual presentation suggests cross-stitched placards with sayings such as "Home Sweet Home." Because these items are most commonly associated with women, there is a touch of irony in the figurative suggestion of home crafts; rather than being
at home creating sweet, homey placards, women are in the workplace contending with computers and procrastinating bosses. Additionally, the lettering for the word, "stress," has a figurative quality that adds emphasis to the meaning of the term. The humorous quality of the item makes it safe for display where superiors are bound to see it. Often this type of item is symbolically posted directly over an "in box" where work is submitted.

I found that such postings were associated with situations where an individual performed work for more than one superior, or might appear in a lunch room or xerox room mostly frequented by lower ranking administrative staff. Apparently, if an individual has only one boss, this type of display would be too direct and personal. There is more than one version of this particular example and they are invariably associated with lower ranked administrative personnel. The currently very popular "Dilbert" cartoons found in many newspapers are a similar type of communicative device employed by lower ranking professional staff. Scott Adams, creator of the comic strip, was referred to recently as "spokesman for downtrodden cubicle-dwellers everywhere" (Kaufman and McCormick 1998:38).

In an investigation of the use of metaphor in applied anthropology and business (Smith 1991), I discuss philosophical debates involving metaphor, etymology of the term, cognitive processes involved in making metaphor,
functions of metaphorical usage, and the application of knowledge about metaphor to anthropological methods and in business settings. The points in my analysis of metaphor can largely be extended to the broader topic of figurative communication. This term will subsume metaphor, simile, synecdoche, metonymy and analogy produced by behavior and imagery, as well as linguistically.

One important function of figurative communication is its use by either a teacher or student as a powerful pedagogical technique or learning strategy. The learning process can be dramatically shortened and greatly enhanced by these techniques. There can also be cognitive results beyond the acquisition of new information or knowledge that are produced by the synergistic effects of the process on both the source and the target domains. For example, R. Nisbet (1969:6) states that what are considered "revolutions" in thought are "quite often no more than the mutational replacement, at certain critical points in history, of one foundation-metaphor by another in man's contemplations of universe, society, and self." The dynamism and synergistic effects of these processes is discussed by M. Black (1962) and V. Turner (1974). Turner (1974:29) points out that the two thoughts of these processes are "active together, they 'engender' thought in their coactivity." Black (1962) discusses how, in the use
of metaphor, the components of one system enter into dynamic relations with the other, and can provoke a "rethinking" of either or both.

The focus of this chapter is on the use of figurative communication in resistive behavior. Figurative communication is a common means by which individuals teach and learn the content of both the hidden and public transcripts of power relations, including the history of resistance, and techniques of resistance in business settings. It is even a means by which higher ranking individuals resist the resistance of lower ranks.

For example, senior managers in one organization I studied often use the simile, "our organization is like a battleship," for instructive purposes when dealing with frustrated lower ranking staff. The slowness of decision-making and change processes in large organizations is often a source of irritation at all rank levels. Individuals who are experiencing what they may consider to be difficult, unfair or exploitative work conditions, and may know there are solutions to their difficulties become impatient and frustrated when change is slow to be formulated and implemented. These situations certainly make for the conditions serving as backdrop for everyday forms of resistance. Sometimes, the slow pace of change is actually footdragging, or stonewalling, on the part of senior management. The figurative term, stonewalling, is more often applied to intentional delay on
the part of upper levels. Suspicions along such lines may be circulated through the hidden transcript of lower ranks. Other times, slow reaction is a genuinely intractable by-product of bureaucracy. Senior managers use the battleship simile to instruct lower ranks on the realities of their membership in a very large organization as well as to calm them and ask for patience. "Our organization is like a battleship" is followed by explication that once a directional change is initiated, a battleship travels about seventeen miles before the beginning of the new course direction is achieved. Senior managers stress that they have stated "the beginning" to make sure the full effect of the simile is achieved. Communications such as this are meant to be instructive, and may be an attempt on the part of superiors to stem or stave off resistance behaviors on the part of others. This simile may also be a response to an overtly rebellious statement or act such as an individual flatly stating, "I won't [do this, go there, deal with so-and-so] anymore."

For these pedagogical reasons, and because of its affective potential, figurative communication is a powerful rhetorical technique. It is often used in situations that require evoking inspiration or persuasion, such as when a leader must exhort followers to action, in political speeches and campaigning, or in advertising (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Sapir and Crocker 1977, Weibel-Orlando 1990). The production and spread of both hidden and public transcripts -- all
communication -- relies heavily on the power of figurative communication to instruct as well as convey emotional states and provoke emotional responses. In my discussion here, the emphasis is on its use in often emotional situations involving disparate power relations in business settings. As will be seen by examples that follow, figurative usage often heightens the affective potential of communication by invoking symbology.

Symbolism used in figurative communications may be specific to a context, such as business, government, or academe, or to a particular organization such as government agency symbols and corporate logos. Defacing a corporate logo would be an example of an act of resistance using figurative communication. A verbal variant of this occurred recently in a large company that was forced into divestiture by the United States Justice Department. The company newly created to comply with Court orders commissioned an agency to develop a corporate logo. When the logo was presented to employees in one of the company-wide meetings held to "personally" introduce each and every employee to the new symbol of the organization's identity, many had a negative reaction. It was reported that very long term employees at corporate headquarters cried. Remarks made following one such meeting included people saying the logo reminded them of a coffee cup.

\footnote{For extensive analysis of what transpires before, during and after meetings in the way of informal communication such as this example, see H. B. Schwartzman (1989) or Schwartzman and Berman (1994).}
stain, the inside of a clogged artery, a fruit loop, a LifeSaver candy. It reminded someone of a zero. The "zero" metaphor was elaborated into a fanciful speculation that the company was being set up for a Japanese takeover at which time the zero would be filled in to resemble the Japanese flag. All of these comments were "topped" when someone quipped, "No, it's more like a big, red asshole." An internet search was quickly conducted by an individual who found that a Japanese company making toilet paper had a nearly identical logo. The communicative value of this finding was certainly heightened by the fact that the company made toilet paper, and this tidbit quickly circulated far and wide among employees.

The negative and trivializing nature of the figurative expressions about the new logo, itself a figurative expression, was a collective outpouring of a complex emotional nature. At the conclusion of one of the large-scale employee meetings, there was a long "deafening" silence, then employees filed quietly out. How disconcerting this lack of cheers, buzzing conversation, or show of any kind of energy indicating excitement might have been to the producers of the event can only be imagined. The after-meeting communication among employees recounted here occurred once well out of their earshot, and was within the realm of the hidden transcript of lower organizational levels, departments, or work groups. Most of these expressions were generated face-to-face among members of a small work group as they made their way back to
their cubicles and settled back into working. Other figurative interpretations were added over a period of days by means of face-to-face and telecommunications among co-workers who had the kind of personal relations that form the basis for participating in this type of hidden transcript.

At the time of the new logo announcement, emotions related to the divestiture, and the downsizing that was part of it, were running high. Employees were still very disturbed and suspected further downsizing would occur. Also, becoming part of the new company formed by the divestiture was unsettling because employees were accustomed to association with the rather illustrious history and reputation of the original organization. Since the organization in my example had pursued long-term employment strategies yielding very low employee turnover rates, many individuals had never worked elsewhere and a high proportion had been with the company over a decade. The task of developing the new company identity was given to outside consultants who dealt primarily with very senior management during the process. The project was even somewhat secretive with the new logo and advertising campaign being presented by management in a type of unveiling ceremony. Company-wide meetings did not precede, but rather coincided with, public announcements and the commencement of the advertising campaign. Lower level employees were also partly reacting to the top-down nature of the event.
In the late 1990’s, employees might take an even more personal interest than before in a company’s logo because they wear it so often. Many companies now have catalogs, even company stores, that sell many items of clothing and a whole range of paraphernalia emblazoned with the logo. Organizational events very often involve the distribution of clothing, satchels, notebooks, pens, cups and other items with the logo. I have often been to company meetings lasting a day or more where, among other things, a shirt with the logo was distributed at the beginning of the meeting. Some people returned from lunch wearing the items, or even donned them on the spot. If an event lasts two days, often a majority of the group will arrive wearing the clothing for the second day. Higher ranking individuals are tacitly expected to take the lead in wearing this attire. Items of this type are raffled off and awarded at company events, and given to prospects and customers. One company manager even recently bragged in an internal memo about how much company merchandise had been purchased by prospects and customers, rather than given away, at a recent sales event.

Most organizations attempt to exercise strict control over this use of the logo by enforcing standards. In one case, a manager distributed shirts outside the boundaries of the company standards and they quickly became a kind of "collector’s item." This violation was inadvertent. The offending manager, not realizing denim shirts were a standard,
ordered white oxford. After the fact, the manager was informed of and asked to comply with the standard in the future. Thinking the requirement unnecessarily rigid, the manager recounted this incident with her superiors to many others, at all rank levels within the organization, in terms of ridicule. Wearing the shirt provided her with frequent opportunities to recount the story. These shirts became valued not only because they identified an individual as part of a particular project within the company, but also because of their symbolic effectiveness as an act of general resistance against rigid company standards. People went out of their way to wear these nonstandard shirts at other company events which tacitly required the conformity of wearing company-logo clothing. The association with resistance gave some extra value to these shirts within the trading and reciprocity systems involving these items that spring up among employees.

There is actually quite a large and growing system of exchange involving these material goods that would make for a study beyond the scope of this discussion. It was common to attend meetings during which gift giving and trading acts involving items with the company logo were negotiated. There is even some extension of this beyond a particular company to include the merchandise of other companies. For example, in the information systems industry, it is fashionable to have items displaying the Microsoft or IBM logo even though an
individual doesn't work for either company. People who had been at the end of a distribution and received the wrong size would trade later, perhaps at a subsequent event, for a better fitting item. Or, people would trade for variations on the shirts in order to get as many different ones as possible. Individuals who controlled supplies or had been given (or taken) extras offered goods to people articulating a desire to obtain items. During my activity with a marketing project, one employee visited the department repeatedly in an effort to obtain a satchel that had been distributed at an event. He explained he had given his away to a customer, so thought it fair he should get a replacement. During these frequent visits, the individual would wander around the environment looking for evidence of the item he was seeking, and ask around after it until he had managed to ask everyone in the department. Several times he was told they still had not been unpacked, but he was finally successful. In one organization, an employee who quit angrily made a grand gesture by dumping boxes of these materials in a senior manager's office before leaving.

In the case of the divested organization, items were given to employees during the announcement meetings and the company store was stocked with merchandise containing the new logo. Apparently, the appeal of the logo in these terms was not immediate for some employees. The shared first impressions concerning all the negative and trivializing
connotations of the logo mentioned above included comment from one individual to the effect that he was not eager to begin wearing the logo-emblazoned clothing that was bound to follow. Over the course of time, the negative reaction to the new company logo dissipated as downsizing abated and the company’s stock prices continually rose (many employees held stock). Also, the ad campaign was effective and the performance and potential of the new company generated positive press coverage. Therefore, employees came to be reassured that they still belonged to a widely recognizable, reputable company that retained association with its pre-divestiture history. The types of figurative comments on the logo cited above are no longer made.

In another example of organizational symbolism associated with acts of resistance, there were ongoing problems with vandalism directed at a company’s Culture Center. The Culture Center, as it was named, was an area within a building housing a museum-like display of some of the organization’s historical artifacts. This included historic pictures and documents, as well as historic equipment and some effects of the founder, such as the water pitcher from his office. In a discussion with a senior manager, he mentioned that the Culture Center was often the target of vandalism. Most items were protected by heavy glass casings so there was rarely any serious damage to artifacts. However, defacement on the glass could occur and this was a popular site for destruction of the building by
using a knife to scrape, carve, or take chips out of the woodwork.

The senior manager mentioned that damage to the woodwork throughout the facility was a particular problem. This was interesting because the building prominently featured very extensive, exceptionally fine woodwork. This striking architectural element was often spontaneously remarked upon by newcomers, or was pointed out to them if it appeared they failed to notice. The woodwork was equated with the organization's strive for quality and also symbolized the level of the its success in material terms. Even the most rudimentary knowledge of building costs yields an appreciation for the enormous expense involved in commissioning such woodwork. In a general discussion with a senior manager about vandalism and theft, he remarked that the defacement of woodwork was a particularly vexing problem. It may be that some of these wood chips serve as a type of souvenir taken for sentimental reasons that are actually complimentary. This would be similar to vandalism for purposes of gaining a souvenir that is experienced at many historic sites. However, some of these acts may be everyday forms of resistance performed by angry employees directed at what is known to be symbolic to the organization.

In addition to the manipulation of specific symbols of business or an organization in figurative communication, there is the use of symbols general to a cultural system that are
easily recognized by many. An example of this would be the figurative term used by members of the organization to refer to the book containing pictures and profiles of all senior management described in Chapter 5. It is referred to as the "pig book." The pejorative symbology of the pig in American culture makes this a decidedly unflattering reference to senior management.

The examples from my ethnographic data discussed in this chapter have been selected to highlight the use of figurative communication as the means of performing everyday forms of resistance in business settings. Scott's typology of everyday forms of resistance includes: foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, feigned ignorance, desertion, pilfering, smuggling, poaching, gossip and slander, sabotage, arson, anonymous threats, and surreptitious assault and murder. Scott does not present this listing as definitively complete in his discussion. The listing has, however, been given the status of a typology largely through its use in secondary literature discussing Scott's theories. While the list is certainly comprehensive and provides for a very wide range of behaviors to be found in the broad category of "everyday forms of resistance," it may not be complete.

For example, Moore (1991, 1993) has suggested including overcompliance as an additional form of resistance. My research suggests it might also be useful to give special consideration to joking behaviors occurring in both hidden and
public transcripts that serve the same resistive purposes as other types of behavior in the list. As can be seen by some of the examples throughout my discussion, acts of resistance can be categorized as joking behavior in the broad sense of the term as it is used in anthropology. Anthropologists have studied the role of joking in the negotiation of power relations such as those among males and between in-laws (for example, Radcliffe-Brown 1940, 1949). Joking in business settings is interesting to consider in these terms as well.

Joking may be involved in and used to accomplish some of the acts in the Scott typology. Slowing or stopping work in order to joke is a form of footdragging. Joking may be the means through which acts such as character assassination and slander of individuals, groups, and organizations occur. Joking defacement of property occurs, such as some graffiti or adding a moustache to a public portrait. In a company which had just completed and furnished a new office building, a new policy was instituted that prohibited display of any unframed art or other items. Corporate interior decorators had placed a fair number of framed pictures throughout the offices. Very quickly, some workers taped their own items over the top of the corporate art. The worker who was pointing this out to me fairly beamed as he explained the practice, "See, it's framed." Workers who did this had defaced the corporation's art, although permanent damage was not done by these practices. They had also managed a form of false compliance.
with the new policy. And, at the same time enjoyed the joke. In another case, a company moved workers to a new location. All old furnishings were disposed of and professionals were brought in to decorate the new offices. The day of the move, workers received a policy statement to the effect that no personal art, framed or otherwise, or items of any kind were to be placed on the walls. People found ways to resist compliance with this policy by leaning items up against the wall, putting items on surfaces not technically "a wall," and compensated by having more items that could be placed on the desk, file or table surfaces in their work areas. One manager pointed out several baseball hats he had on display and explained, with a laugh, that he kept them out because it irritated the decorators. He told me I should look closely at items in the office because a number of other people had done something similar. It turned out quite a number of people were in on this joke. Many of the examples used in the following discussion will have a joking quality inherent to them. However, clearly not all joking behavior is resistive in nature.

Various acts of resistance may be figurative in nature. For example, arson involving a symbolic structure or object is an act of figurative communication. Assault or murder of a public official because the individual symbolizes the state is figurative communication. Anonymous threats may be veiled by being conveyed figuratively, by means of a joke, for example.
Acts of sabotage may be figurative more than literal. For example, there are cases where computer saboteurs present their victims with a figurative graphic on the computer screen, such as a bomb exploding, or joking taunt, such as "Gotcha!," as warnings that they have the power to commit more destructive acts of sabotage, should they so choose. The figurative term, "virus," defines a whole category of sabotage carried out by means of computer technologies.

Figurative communication can create symbols, such as the example in Chapter 6 of the phrase, "Find the hat." which has endured well over fifty years as a symbol for circumventing expense systems. Anecdotes about specific events similarly become synecdochical. For example, the anecdote presented earlier in this discussion concerning a manager's violation of standards for company shirts was not just about the shirts. It was also more generally symbolic of organizational policies, procedures and standards that employees consider unreasonable or unfair. Ironically, many acts judged irrational are committed as a means to bring attention to or resist what the actors consider to be irrational or irrationally applied policies, procedures, regulations, and standards promulgated by management or government. For example, the manager who violated the shirt standard was certainly taking what might be perceived as an irrational risk where her self-interest was concerned by wearing the shirt in front of her superiors at every opportunity. The point of her
storytelling about the shirt and wearing it, however, had to do with her perception of the organizational standard as being irrational. Her personal risk was negligible since she was of relatively high rank and had been with the company since its founding (was a "pioneer"). The often seemingly minor risks incurred and ubiquitous nature of such small acts of resistance can cause us to overlook their import and cumulative effects. In the case of the nonstandard shirts, the manager was possibly garnering "capital" within the moral economy. Subordinates could see this as a sign that the manager would challenge authority and might take risks on their behalf, which can be a very desirable quality in a superior. Lateral relations might also be enhanced if the person is seen as "sending a message" from middle management to senior management with which they concur. Such potential gains could conceivably be achieved at very little cost to the manager. There was overall little risk in making the shirt a symbol that really provoked superiors who might overlook the act entirely, consider it to be trivial, or may even agree that the standard made and enforced by peers in the marketing department was too rigid. Even though this particular act was futile in the sense of effecting any change in the shirt standard, sometimes such acts do have the effect of de facto or de jure changes. Such effects may be to the advantage of those who are resisting, or can back-fire in the form of even more strict controls and enforcement. In this case, the shirt
incident actually highlighted existence of the standard and made it less likely that future infractions of the same sort would occur because ignorance was no longer an excuse. This was beside the point, however, as the shirts themselves were not the only issue.

One of the most interesting examples of figurative communication in my data involves the use of cigars in one business setting. Part of senior management of a local office of Consulting Partners took up smoking cigars. At the time this began in the 1970’s, the total population of the office was well under 100 individuals. The practice began prior to the beginning of sanctioning of cigarette smoking and persisted well into the early stages of smoking restriction in business environments. When the practice began, cigarette smoking was more acceptable than cigar or pipe smoking in public places and offices. The cigar in American culture has always been strongly associated with power and virility. Cigars are commonly associated with critical depictions of tycoons and politicians, as in caricatures or movies. One manager who was a European immigrant with whom I discussed the phenomenon said that when he arrived in the office, "cheap" cigars were in use. He claimed to have changed this practice significantly by introducing people to finer cigars. By the early 1980’s, management was very knowledgeable about cigars and smoked only the finest. Some people had acquired expensive accoutrements of the habit, such as humidors for
their offices and ostentatious cigar clippers. Lower level professionals emulated the behavior of their superiors, particularly in front of them. One client manager remarked that he always knew when senior managers of Consulting Partners were scheduled for a visit to the project site, which was in his department. Staff members were ready with their cigars and would display and smoke them conspicuously on those days. He said otherwise cigars were not smoked or displayed by project personnel. As this habit became established, information was exchanged within the population about cigars and where to buy them. Considerable tacit knowledge was also necessary to make proper use of them and extensive exchange of cigars occurred within the group and extending to outsiders (often clients and prospects).

Observing the use of cigars at senior management levels led me to conclude that some of this behavior was a type of resistance to the power held by clients. A very senior partner or manager in Consulting Partners could be upbraided by a lower ranking member of a client organization. Such an incident might occur in front of an individual's subordinates and sometimes such a scene could become humiliating. On the one hand, subordinates had to learn to remain calm in the face of a client's ire and handle such situations with a "customer is always right" attitude. On the other hand, the power structure within Consulting Partners and the aura of power that surrounded obtaining high rank had to be preserved. Some
of the cigar smoking in front of clients seemed to have a quality of resistance about it having to do with the complex dynamics of power involving client relations.

Use of cigars among lower ranks might also involve an element of resistance behavior. Sometimes during after-work gatherings for drinks or private social events among coworkers, cheap cheroots were smoked. Getting these out and offering them around was often accompanied by comments and jokes about doing so. The cheroot has a strong association with the image of a cowboy, which in turn is associated with independence. For individuals under heavy pressures to conform to smoking fine cigars, these events were an example of false compliance. The hidden transcript of lower ranks contained the use of cheap cheroots. There is some similarity here to the case mentioned previously where people wear their nonstandard shirts at events that require wearing company clothing as a type of false compliance.

The cigar was central to an incident involving gender relations and power in the mid-1980's. Cigar smoking was a well-established practice by 1983 when a woman was first promoted to manager rank. About two years later, she became pregnant with her first child. As mentioned earlier, Consulting Partners is a very age-graded organization. People of similar rank are usually experiencing significant life events around the same time, such as marrying, having children, having children enter college, and children leaving
home. It is very common for individuals to have a child within the first or second year of being a manager. Many of the men in the first woman manager’s cohort were having children at about the same time she became pregnant, and there was considerable discussion of these events among these coworkers.

The managers all attended a weekly meeting scheduled to occur in a conference room of their local office. During an interview with me, the woman manager graphically described the cigar smoking during these meetings as an example of how much her presence in the management ranks was resisted. She said when the meetings began, many of the men would light up their cigars in the relatively confined space of the conference room even though they knew full well she was pregnant. She said the room would fill with smoke and she would become nauseated. When asked why she didn’t speak up or leave, she replied she felt pressure to not acknowledge her discomfort because it would be a sign of weakness. This woman said she generally felt a sense of responsibility associated with being the first woman in her rank and was constantly being "tested" in this kind of way. Even though the woman said nothing, it is hard to imagine all these men were oblivious to signals that she was uncomfortable and the fact that pregnant women (their wives, for example) are often highly sensitive to smells such
as cigar smoke. This incident occurred long before cigar smoking became vogue among both male and female young professionals as it did in the later 1990's.

Although the many nuances of cigar smoking in the local office I studied could be discussed in more detail, I have attempted to restrict the discussion to aspects of the behavior that illustrate resistance in power relations. In the following two examples, I will present instances where the figurative communication of management is turned back on itself by employees.

Quite some years ago it became popular for managers to say they were just giving, or just wanted, "the view from 30,000 feet." This meant a very condensed, high level view of a topic containing only the most salient points and without details. One manager had told a project team (once again) that he just wanted the "30,000-foot view" of their project. One harried project team member to whom this was related, quipped to his cohorts, "Yeah, but there's no oxygen up there." The response of the project team was uproarious laughter, and the joke was recounted to numerous others outside their group. The individual making this joke has also found ways to use it again in varied circumstances with the same effect.

There is a resemblance between the spontaneously produced joke about the "30,000 foot view" and a popular joke about management. Recently, it has become very common to refer to
management synecdochically as "suits." For example, people will say things like, "I talked to two suits." or "The suits said we have to do it this way." The term is used very broadly and can refer to anyone whose job requires wearing a business suit, but most particularly it refers to management. Not all professionals are "suits." Computer programmers or engineers, for example, would not consider themselves to be "suits" and they, along with women, are prone to use this term in referring to others. The joke that can follow reference to a "suit" is that their "ties cut off oxygen to the brain." Both examples suggest that mental faculties of managers are impaired by oxygen deprivation. Jokes like this suggest that workers consider management to be out of touch with reality, and there may be something to this. As management has become a specialization, and those among the first waves out of MBA programs take their places at increasingly higher levels of organizations, workers are articulating their impression of what this phenomenon had produced. That is, a class of managers who have little or no direct experience of that which they manage. The effects of steadily increasing rationalization of management has yielded results that many lower ranking workers perceive as irrational.

A second example of lower ranks turning management analogies back on themselves involves a kind of "dueling analogy" strategy employed by a lower ranking individual when communicating with his superior. An individual who worked for
a manager who constantly made analogies, which were often nonsensical, inappropriate or manipulative, began countering analogies made by his superior with one of his own. The subordinate’s analogies were deliberately outrageous and were meant to ridicule the manager’s communication. For example, if the manager would say, "It’s like hanging the doors on a car assembly line." The subordinate would counter with, "No. It’s like when you go down a water slide when there’s no water on it." Or, the manager might say, "It’s like building a car." The subordinate would counter with, "No, it’s like raising chickens." The manager never seemed to become aware of the ridicule involved in these exchanges. However, the subordinate’s co-workers did, and they waited eagerly for these exchanges as a means of amusement. Co-workers would try and help the individual think up evermore ridiculous responses to the manager’s analogies. For example, a series of exchanges across cubicles was started when an employee piped up, "It’s like building a car." This was a favorite metaphor of the manager and was meant to mimic him. Another person responded, "No, it’s like running a race." A third joined in with, "No, it’s like meeting the President." A fourth said, "No, it’s like sticking your hand under a lawn mower before it’s completely turned off." This type of playful exchange became an ongoing element of the work group’s hidden transcript.
The example of "dueling analogies" highlights the contagion that can be involved in everyday forms of resistance behaviors as well as larger scale open defiance. Particularly apt, appealing or amusing figurative communication may be highly contagious and spreads quickly. In the example here, the manager’s use of analogies excited a similar response in his subordinate. Making analogies can be a very appealing activity in terms of its creative and entertainment potentials, as well as for its heuristic value. The subordinate initially enacted the response of making a competing analogy for his own amusement and purposes. He succeeded in amusing himself in the course of also accomplishing a minor act of resistance. In his first use of a counter-analogy he managed to ridicule his superior directly to his face, in front of co-workers, apparently without the boss’s realization that he had been made the object of ridicule in a communications event.

The success of the subordinate’s manipulation of figurative communication, and the amusing quality of the event made it contagious. After the first successful instance, co-workers enjoyed joking sessions that involved rehashing that event and the others that followed. An ever-widening circle of employees shared the joke, which became part of the transcript hidden from the manager. Anecdotes such as this often spread beyond the immediate work group and across rank levels. There can even be considerable spread outside the
organization as individuals tell family members, other professional contacts, or even the media, about the initial incident. The original actors and details of the circumstances can be unknown or made anonymous to those being told the tale. As we know, the details of tales such as this can change with telling. Knowledge of the successfully enacted, amusing initial incident can precipitate repetition of the behavior by others attempting to emulate the instigator. In joking sessions that became part of this phenomenon, those not so skilled at making up analogies on the spot that they could attempt to use the technique themselves; nonetheless, made efforts to contribute to the store of possible analogies that could be made ready for an opportunity to be used in future communications. These sessions also involved the elaboration of the actual analogy that was used in an event, or the production of alternative analogies that could have been used in the situation.

Using figurative communication as a counterforce to figurative communication is a common technique for resistance. The two examples given above as well as others presented in this chapter, such as the generation of alternative interpretations of the logo for a newly created company, demonstrate the frequency and efficacy of such strategies. The fact that these strategies produce amusement and require some creativity is also notable. Apparently, there is no reason to assume that something as serious sounding as "human
resistance behavior" must constantly be a grim, mighty struggle of titanic proportions filled with rage. As Scott points out, resistance is an everyday activity and perhaps the most human side of it all is the fact that humor can be found and amusement can be made in what might otherwise be a difficult or trying circumstance.

The effectiveness of this type of resistance behavior can occur on many levels. The actual time taken from work to engage in joking and merrymaking obviates some of the power an organization has over workers at all rank levels. As a means of resistance, these behaviors may indeed have the effect of stemming hubris at higher rank levels; communicating disapproval, displeasure, or limits set by the less powerful; or highlighting problems that need attention. The issues raised by such activities do at times get addressed. Some of the tensions of power relations may be relieved, or may be escalated.

P. Reynolds (1994) points out qualitative changes in these behaviors as the organization he studied descended deeper into crisis. Figurative communications in the form of joking shifted noticeably from being cynical in early stages of the crisis to being strikingly sardonic according to Reynolds. My data indicates a progression of qualitative shifts such as this is not unusual. Reynolds' long term presence with the status of employee, not researcher, in the company he studied made it possible for him to note this
qualitative change over time. Management may be very aware of any such shifts. In the past few decades, humor in organizations has become the topic of books, seminars and speaking engagements in business settings as a means of coping more effectively with organizational situations and for relieving stress. Even though proportionately few members of organizations may have actually read the books, participated in the seminars or heard these speakers, a large number have some additional awareness of the phenomena because of the increased presence of specialists and celebrities highlighting organizational humor.

Humorous figurative communication that is resistive may be cloaked heavily within the hidden transcripts in organizations, or may be made very transparent. The situational variability of these phenomena is considerable. Presence of skilled jokesters and tricksters in a group, or the acuity of superiors in perceiving nuances in communications, can make for considerable differences in the degree, kind, and effect of these behaviors. For example, the manager at whom the "dueling analogy" strategy is directed might remain forever oblivious to what is actually occurring; another individual might have quickly noted the undercurrent

---

Audiotapes, videotapes, and now, internet technologies are also media used to disseminate these ideas in organizations. For example, John Cleese, a well-known British comedian, was part of an effort to produce a humorous series of audiotapes and videotapes on management topics. The series is available in many libraries and was purchased by organizations for circulation among employees.
of ridicule. In yet another case, an individual might be aware of the ridicule, but pretend not to notice.

The degree of creativity involved in some of the expressions of resistance I found in business settings is worth comment. Figures 7.2 through 7.9 are a few examples from my data. They are all figurative, creative, resistive and intend to be humorous. Figure 7.2, 7.5 and 7.7 are definitely original creations of employees within the firm's I studied. Figure 7.8 is definitely an item from the vast store of such humorous items that circulates throughout organizations. I found Figure 7.8 in more than one organization. Figures 7.3, 7.4, 7.6 and 7.9 may also be items that have circulated far and wide within the business community, but I encountered them in only one organization. Their origins were unknown, so I cannot be sure how common they are.

Figure 7.2 was found in a self-study training manual used by lower ranking staff to prepare for attending a company training course.

Figure 7.2: "The Hatchet"
The drawing of the hatchet and its accompanying handwritten definition was found at the bottom of a page in a training manual. It was produced in such a way as to be similar to the training material printed on the page. This page of the manual contained a series of similarly drawn graphics with accompanying definitions. Since the manual was intended to be reused by others preparing for training, drawing or writing in it would be considered an act of defacement. Trainees were asked to keep the materials free of any markings as a courtesy to those who subsequently used it.

The staff person who added "The Hatchet" to the training materials would have been with the organization between two and three years. At this point, pressures on staff to pursue industry, functional and technical specializations are intensified by management. Staff is encouraged to become specialized in all three areas in order to become well-rounded consultants. To some extent, employees have some freedom of choice in determining the details of the career path they follow. Individuals with strong preferences can to some degree influence the training and assignments they receive in pursuit of their individual goals, if they are aggressive about it. However, individuals who do not doggedly pursue their own interests may be channeled by management into areas that meet the current or projected needs of the organization. The topic of career paths is a subject of considerable cynical
joking among staff. They quickly learn there is a gap between the official recruiting rhetoric describing the ability of individuals to control their own destiny and the degree to which the organization may in fact have ultimate control. Apparently, the staff person making this entry was having some struggles of this type and was resisting the pressures of conformity that can be applied by management. The use of hatchet imagery puts this particular example in the category of sardonic humor.

Figure 7-3, on the following page, exemplifies common attitudes of members of organizations toward professional development programs. The document mimics the form used to register for seminars in the organization in which it was circulated. Fictive seminar titles in Figure 7.3 are making fun of professional development curricula in organizations. Employees commonly mock development programs initiated by internal training departments or provided by outside vendors. These programs are generally lumped together under the term, "soft skills," or, more derisively, are called, "the touchy-feely stuff." A clear distinction is made among employees in the organizations I studied between technical training and developmental programs. Technical training is highly valued and taken more seriously. Some people find value in developmental programs and will apply what is learned in them readily. However, for others, there is considerable ambivalence about the value of these activities, and for some
there is downright dislike. Dislike is often associated with an expressed discomfort with the psychological instrumentation often used in development activities. Professional employees who do not like developmental seminars, or see little value in them, resist meeting these requirements of an organization’s curriculum. Footdragging in the form of claiming not to have time to attend when they are scheduled is often used by individuals wishing to avoid professional development activities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G100</td>
<td>Creative Suffering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G101</td>
<td>Overcoming Peace of Mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G102</td>
<td>You and Your Birthmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G103</td>
<td>Guilt Without Sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G104</td>
<td>The Primal Shrug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G105</td>
<td>Ego Gratification Through Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G106</td>
<td>Molding Your Child's Behavior Through Guilt and Fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G107</td>
<td>Dealing With Post-Realization Depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G108</td>
<td>Whine Your Way to Alienation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G109</td>
<td>How to Overcome Self-Doubt Through Pretence &amp; Ostentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1100</td>
<td>&quot;I Made $100 In Real Estate&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1101</td>
<td>Money Can Make You Rich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1102</td>
<td>Packaging and Selling Your Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1103</td>
<td>Career Opportunities in El Salvador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1104</td>
<td>How to Profit from Your Own Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1105</td>
<td>The Underachiever's Guide to Very Small Business Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1106</td>
<td>Tax Shelters for the Indigent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1107</td>
<td>Looter's Guide to America's Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1108</td>
<td>How You Can Convert Your Room into a Garage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1109</td>
<td>Burglarproof Your Home - With Concrete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-006</td>
<td>1000 Other Uses for Vacuum Cleaners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-007</td>
<td>How to Convert a Wheelchair into a Dune Buggy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-202</td>
<td>Creative Tooth Decay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-204</td>
<td>Excorism and Acne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-205</td>
<td>High Fiber Sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-208</td>
<td>Suicide and Your Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-220</td>
<td>Biofeedback and How to Stop It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-406</td>
<td>Understanding Nudity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-408</td>
<td>Tapdance Your Way to Social Ridicule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-410</td>
<td>Optional Body Functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-101</td>
<td>Self-Actualization Through Macrame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-102</td>
<td>Needlecraft for Junkies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-103</td>
<td>How to Draw Genitalla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-104</td>
<td>Cuticle Crafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-105</td>
<td>Gifts for the Senile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-106</td>
<td>Bonsai Your Pet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-101</td>
<td>Cultivating Virus in Your Refrigerator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-102</td>
<td>Sinus Drainage at Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-103</td>
<td>Basic Kitchen Taxidermy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-104</td>
<td>The Repair &amp; Maintenance of Your Virginity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-101</td>
<td>Christianity and the Art of RV Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J-102</td>
<td>The Joys of Hypochondria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Professional Growth Enrollment Form**

Name: ___________________ Job Title: ___________________
Address: ___________________ Seminar # and Title: ___________________

Figure 7.3: "Professional Growth Seminars"
Figure 7.4 that follows is another example of an item circulated in one of the organizations I studied. Training, bosses, and organizations in general are made fun of in this example. The use of terms such as, "supervisors," which were not common to the organization, and failure to use specialized terminology of the firm in which this item was encountered, makes me suspect it was not originally created by an employee. However, even if this is the case, before circulation, the text was typed in the style and distinctive font of the organization, thus making it look like ordinarily distributed memoranda. Though in questionable taste, the document is certainly creative. Besides cynically mocking training, bosses, and organizations, it cleverly makes fun of the propensity to use acronyms in business communication. Nontechnical employees often express irritation with the impenetrability of technical jargon used by information technology specialists, and particularly cite the extensive use of acronyms as an impediment to communication. Clients of Consulting Partners also noted the extent to which specialized organizational acronyms, in addition to those common to technical specialists, were used. A certain amount of this kind of "coding" of their communications is functionally important to a consulting firm. Consultants must often convey private communications among themselves in front of outsiders. Acronyms, other types of abbreviation and special terms facilitates this.
MEMORANDUM

To: All Employees

Re: SPECIAL HIGH INTENSITY TRAINING

In order to assure that we continue to produce the highest quality work possible, it will be our policy to keep all employees well trained through our program of Special High Intensity Training (S.H.I.T.). We are giving our employees more S.H.I.T. than any other company in town.

If you feel you do not receive your share of S.H.I.T. on the job, please see your supervisor. You will then be placed at the top of the S.H.I.T. list for special attention.

All of our supervisors are particularly qualified to see that you get all the S.H.I.T. you can handle at your own speed.

If you consider yourself to be trained enough already, you may be interested in helping us train others. We can add to your Basic Understanding Lecture List--Special Intensity Training (B.U.L.L. S.H.I.T.) Program.

If you have any further questions, please address them to our Head of Training, Special High Intensity Training (H.O.T. S.H.I.T.) Program.

Thank you,
Boss in General
Special High Intensity Training
(S.I.G. S.H.I.T.)

P.S. With the personality some of you display around here, you could easily become the Director of Intensity Programming, Special High Intensity Training (D.I.P. S.H.I.T.)

Figure 7.4: "Special High Intensity Training"
Figure 7.5 is a drawing that has been reduced somewhat from full size. I found it taped to the front of a copier in headquarters offices. It is an accurate depiction of a particularly troublesome copier that I had my own share of problems with. Someone with good drawing skills had created and anonymously posted this item on the machine. The original includes the brand name of the copier in question, which I have blotted out for reproduction here.

It is not unusual for people to anthropomorphize or demonize equipment. They regularly talk to technological devices, give them names, curse them, attack them physically, and tape items with sentiments similar to those in Figure 7.5 to them. Computer technologies are certainly the target of such behavior as much as cars or golf clubs. Shortcomings of technology are often generalized to management if employees believe they should have been consulted before a purchasing decision was made. In this case of Figure 7.5, an employee had become frustrated with management's slowness to replace this particularly unreliable copier. It should be mentioned that the phrase, "copier from hell" was very characteristic of communication at the time of this incident. Lower level staff had taken to referring to everything that was problematical as "the [project, manager, client, etc.] from hell" during that time period.
Figure 7.5: "The Copier from Hell"
Figure 7.6 is also related to technology. It is a parody of the book, *Real Men Don’t Eat Quiche*, (Feirstein 1982). A condensed version is presented here to demonstrate the basic themes in the item. Power relations within the technical community, and between programmers and users, supervisors and management are general themes in the document. Within the technical community, resistance to changes in technology is not uncommon. In 1984, when the document was being circulated, some programmers were feeling threatened by a proliferation of new programming languages. It is written from the viewpoint of system programmers who use a language known as Assembler and makes fun of all others.

Figure 7.6 highlights the status hierarchy that exists within the information systems community which is based on the particulars of the programming language and various other specializations of individuals. The very first item in the document reveals the antagonism between technicians and users. The second reveals the hatred many programmers express concerning commenting their code. "Commenting code" is required as an attempt to document tacit knowledge of how a system was coded by means of special notes on anything someone who subsequently needs to alter the code should know. Thorough commenting is a constant sore point between programmers and their supervisors.
REAL PROGRAMMERS

Real Programmers don't write specs - Users should consider themselves lucky to get any programs at all and take what they get.

Real Programmers don't comment their code. If it was hard to write, it should be hard to understand.

Real Programmers don't write application programs. They program right down on the bare metal.

Application programming is for feebs who can't do system programming.

Real Programmers never work 9 to 5. If any Real Programmers are around at 9 AM, it is because they were up all night.

Real Programmers don't write in Basic. Actually, no programmers write in Basic after the age of 12.

Real Programmers explain their work (if ever) to their managers in baby-talk so they will understand it.

Real Programmers don't draw flowcharts. Cavemen drew flowcharts and look how much good it did them.

Real Programmers don't write in Lisp. Only faggot programs contain more parentheses than actual code.

Real Programmers have no use for managers. Managers are a necessary evil. They exist only to deal with personnel bozos, bean counters, senior planners, and other mental defectives.

Real Programmers don't believe in schedules. Planners make up schedules. Managers firm up schedules. Frightened coders strive to meet schedules. Real Programmers ignore schedules.

Real Programmers disdain structured programming. Structured programming is for compulsive neurotics who were prematurely toilet-trained. They wear neckties and carefully line up sharp pencils on an otherwise clear desk.

Real Programmers don't write in Cobol. Cobol is for wimpy application programmers.

Real Programmers' programs never work right the first time. But if you throw them on the machine, they can be patched into working in "only a few" 30 hour debugging sessions.

Figure 7.6: "Real Programmers"
Negative attitudes toward management are also revealed in Figure 7.6. However, they are characterized as a "necessary evil" to buffer technicians from the even more odious "personnel bozos, bean counters, senior planners, and other mental defectives." "Bean counters" is an extremely common expression referring to those who work in finance departments that intends to be unflattering.

Figure 7.7 is an original item created by a Shift Supervisor in the Operations Center of a large data facility. The first of three pages is presented here as representative of the entire document. Like Figure 7.6, it contains a good deal of information about the dynamics of power in the organization and sources of frustration of the author. Figure 7.7 is exceptional because it reveals much that is in the usually hidden transcript of the supervisory level of its author by openly poking fun at his subordinates. It is very unusual to find something of this nature that openly criticizes lower ranks getting wide circulation in an office.
A TYPICAL DAY IN DATA CENTER LAND

06:50 Jones shows up with breakfast in hand.
06:51 Black shows up with newspaper in hand.
06:53 Doe shows up with bag of doughnuts. Anderson follows with nose twitching.
06:55 Snead arrives with hangover.
06:57 Jefferson arrives all smiles.
06:58 Wilson arrives goes to any work area but his.
06:59 Johnson arrives with greenhouse blueprints.
07:00 Timmons shows up with mining degree.
07:01 O’Leary shows up proud to be here so early.
07:08 Jones finishes breakfast. Checks everything out. Doesn’t notice “A” system is down.
07:11 O’Leary’s eyes begin to clear. Baily has first snack. O’Neil speaks for first
time in a week. Wilson tries to remember location of his work area. Johnson
changes machines because chemical change is due. Snead thinks of lie to tell
girlfriend. Black and Jefferson resign. Anderson and Doe eat doughnuts and
sack. Timmons delivers reports to right floor, wrong building.
07:30 Stevens arrives. Is assured by everyone that everything is normal.
07:32 Stevens tells lie about his car.
07:53 Biddle arrives with plan to save Data Center, but can’t explain it to anyone.
07:58 Kemp and Hayes show up with new list of rumors.
08:02 First new reorganizations rumor of the day goes through Data Center.
08:04 Rex calls to see why his tube isn’t working.
08:15 Jones finds out “A” system is down.
08:17 Stevens finds out everything isn’t all right.
08:18 Shift managers find out everything isn’t all right.
08:34 Everything back to normal. Everything blamed on midnight shift.
08:47 Rex calls to see why his tube is working.
08:52 Rex decides to reorganize on quarterly basis.
08:59 Findley calls Smythe to pump for reorg info and kiss up
09:04 Scheduling calls console with problems. Help Desk calls console with problems.
Shift Supervisor calls console needing information. Kemp calls console with
question. Console operator cries.
09:16 Kline goes to cafeteria in search of new jokes.
09:23 Findley goes to Smythe’s office for private suck up and pump session.
09:27 Second new reorg rumor of the day goes through Data Center.
09:42 Kline returns from cafeteria with fresh bad material.
09:54 Wilson circumvents security, uses tube to discover everything that has
occurred in the company today.
10:04 Stevens hears 27th short joke of the day.
10:17 Third reorg rumor goes through. Along with the aberrations of the first
2 rumors, there are now approximately 89 reorg rumors floating around.
10:31 Biddle hears 13th bald joke since arriving.
10:46 Kaufman, Biddle and Kline sift through 89 reorg rumors to create a master rumor.
10:49 Higgins arrives. Signs in at 10:00.
10:52 Workman arrives. Signs in at 10:00.

Figure 7.7: "A Typical Day in Data Center Land"
In Figure 7.7, lower ranks are characterized as being slackers, lying on time sheets, taking extended breaks and lunches, being uninterested in work and incompetent. I have changed all the names used in the original because the supervisor who wrote the document did use everyone's real name. It was interesting that the only person referred to by his first name, "Rex," was the most senior manager in the data center, and he is characterized as being buffoonish. It is also notable that joking behavior is referred to frequently in the document with a particular individual being singled out by frequent references to him as the group's "jokester." The author also makes a number of cynical references to management's penchant for reorganizing.

Figure 7.8 is an item I found in more than one organization. This make-believe memo mocks the early retirement strategies which are often a part of downsizing programs. The memo indicates it was issued from "Personnel." Like Finance, Personnel is a functional area of organizations that employees in other areas are often suspicious of and ambivalent toward. People in personnel are often distrusted and viewed as the lackeys of senior management. In some organizations, Personnel has considerable power in the hiring, review, promotion, benefits and compensation policymaking that effects everyone and enforces many of the company's rules. In contrast, to Finance, however, Personnel usually has a low status position within senior management.
MEMORANDUM

TO: All Management Staff
FROM: Personnel
SUBJECT: Retirement Plan

As part of our cost reduction effort we are going to reduce our number of employees by means of a new retirement plan. Managers are being mailed a package containing all the details. The highlights are presented here.

Under this plan, older employees will go on early retirement, thus permitting us to retain the younger people who represent our future.

The program will be placed into effect immediately, will phase out all of the older personnel by the end of the current fiscal year. The program shall be known as "RAPE" (Retire Aged Personnel Early).

Employees who are being RAPEd will be given the opportunity to seek other jobs within the company, provided that while they are being RAPEd, they request a review of their employment records before actual retirement takes place. This phase of the plan is called "SCREW" (Survey of Capabilities of Retired Early Workers).

All employees who are being RAPEd or SCREWed are eligible for a trial review by the higher management. This is called "SHAFT" (Study by Higher Authority Following Termination).

The provisions of the plan dictate that employees may be RAPEd once, SCREWed twice, but may get the SHAFT as many times as the company deems appropriate.

Employees fulfilling the above requirements of the plan are entitled to get "HERPES" (Half Earnings of Retired Persons Employment Service). HERPES is considered a bonus plan, since employees who have HERPES will no longer be RAPEd or SCREWed by the company.

However, if management is not satisfied with performance after an employee has been SCREWed or given the SHAFT, that employee will be put on "AIDS" (Active Immediate Dismissal Status). If an employee is put on AIDS, he or she will not be entitled to HERPES.

It is now, and always has been, the policy of the company to insure that employees are well trained. To accomplish this a new program called "SHIT" (Special High Intensity Training) will be put into effect. With this program, we will now be able to give our employees more SHIT than any other company. If an employee feels he or she is not getting enough SHIT on the job, or that he or she could advance to another position by taking more SHIT, consult with one of the supervisors.

Our managerial staff is especially trained to see to it that any employee will get all the SHIT that he or she can stand.

Figure 7.8: "Retirement Plan Memo"
Figure 7.9 makes a mockery of management attempts to eliminate employee "dilly-dallying." Efforts to circumscribe employee movements by restricting time away from work stations to officially designated "breaks" are often met with rancor among employees.

Restroom privileges which are made the subject of Figure 7.9 are one of the last bastions of freedom among some lower ranking employees. Trips to the restroom may be one of the few ways in which people can circumscribe rules concerning freedom of movement. People working under these circumstances will claim to have to go to the restroom in order to leave their work station to make personal phone calls, visit quickly with a friend in another area, or get an extra "break." It would be very difficult or awkward for a supervisor to deny a subordinate's request to go to the restroom and may be the only ploy available to workers in highly restrictive environments.
MEMORANDUM

TO: All Employees
FROM: Management
DATE: Effective immediately
SUBJECT: Restroom Privileges

In the past, employees have been permitted to make trips to the restroom under informal guidelines. Effective upon receipt of this memo, a Restroom Trip Policy (RTP) will be established to provide a consistent method of accounting for each employee's restroom time.

Under this policy, a "Restroom Trip Bank" (RTB) will be established for each employee. The first day of each month, employees will be given a Restroom Trip Credit (RTB) of 20. RTBs can be accumulated from month to month.

Within two weeks, the entrances to all restrooms will be equipped with personnel identification stations and computer-linked voice print recognition devices. Before the end of this month, each employee must provide two copies of voice prints (one normal and one under stress) to Data Automation. The voice print recognition will be operational, but not restrictive, for this month; employees should acquaint themselves with the stations during that period.

If an employee's RTB balance reaches zero, the doors to the restroom will not unlock for that employee's voice until the first of the following month. In addition, all restroom stalls are being equipped with timed paper roll retractors. If the stall is occupied for more than three minutes, an alarm will sound. Thirty seconds after the alarm sounds, the roll of paper in the stall will retract, the toilet will flush, and the stall door will open. If the stall remains occupied for sixty seconds after the door opens, the occupant's picture will be taken.

That picture will then be posted on the main floor bulletin board. This is being done to eliminate dilly-dallying in the restrooms. Anyone whose picture shows up three times will be terminated immediately.

If you have any questions about the new policy, please ask your supervisor.

Figure 7.9: "Restroom Privileges"
Figures 7.1 through 7.9 have been presented to demonstrate how humor is used to register protest against management practices workers consider unfair and exploitive, or just nonsensical. Items such as these can reveal a considerable amount of information about power relations within organizations. They may be posted in public places either openly or surreptitiously so that management will see them, or may be part of the hidden transcripts of subordinates. Even though hidden from management, these items may get very wide circulation using organizational communications resources (copying equipment, mail facilities, etc.) to accomplish distribution. Now, this is readily done by using electronic mail systems, which make it easier and faster to disseminate information of this type more widely within and across organizations. The time and resources invested in creating, distributing and reading this type of material can be categorized as pilfering and footdragging. In addition, character assassination and slander occur in these materials. They illustrate how several everyday forms of resistance can be accomplished at once in some cases.

The aim in this chapter has been to present a wide range of examples of figurative communication that is associated with everyday forms of resistance. The intent here is to suggest that a sociolinguistic approach to collection and analysis of data related to everyday forms of resistance in business settings may be productive for research purposes.
This approach may also be productive from an applied perspective.

In a recent consulting project, I attended carefully to figurative communications expressing anger and frustration, and therefore, potential for resistance to implementation of the program the project team was designing. I also explained the need for other project team members to be alert to this type of communication in the course of their activities. If a figurative expression was used for purposes of expressing anger and frustration during interviews, the topic was probed, especially if the expression was used more than once, and by more than one individual. Following are three examples of what this approach produced in the way of information on which to base applied activity.

European buyers of the firm’s software products expressed that they "were made to feel like criminals." The context of this expression involved a financial security mechanism built into the software that would cause it to stop functioning within a set number of days. The mechanism was intended to protect the vendor firm against the effect of payments that might not clear banking systems. A certain number of days after installing the software, the customer called the vendor to obtain a code that would be entered, which would bypass the coding that would cause the software to stop running. The code was released upon verification by the vendor that payment had cleared. The number of days used by the vendor was based
on American banking systems. Europeans said it needed to be longer to account for widespread differences in bank transaction clearance times outside the United States. Everyone involved knew that changing the setting for number of days in the security system was an extremely small matter technically. European distributors of the product indicated they had brought the matter to senior management attention and were frustrated by the apparent resistance to making this change on behalf of their customers. This issue had taken on cross cultural overtones in the sense that this had clearly come to be viewed as an example of irrational American hegemony.

During the same project, employees in a European office used the failure of the American headquarters of the firm to accommodate the international differences in standard paper size as a symbol of American hegemony. It was pointed out that the American standard of eight and one-half by eleven inches is not used elsewhere in the world. The difference in size caused the Europeans no end of aggravation in terms of distributing information, especially marketing materials, issued from the American corporate headquarters. Again, in this instance, individuals were clearly intending a broader interpretation of their paper problem.

In a third example from the same project, consulting services professionals in one office frequently expressed their frustration with not being provided with company parking
places; whereas, their counterparts in product sales were all given spaces. They repeatedly used the statement, "It makes us feel like second-class citizens." Individuals would elaborate on this statement along the lines that they brought in as much, sometimes more, revenue and profit as the product side of the business so should have equivalent perquisites.

From a senior management perspective, all three of these instances were useful to highlighting organizational issues having to do with customers, distributors, employees, and international relations within, as well as outside, the firm. In all three cases, the symbolic expressions used by employees could actually be converted into symbolic expressions of management’s intent to listen to concerns and willingness make changes appropriately. All management had to do to capitalize on this opportunity to make quick and symbolic organizational improvements was to change a number in a software program; adopt the use of international standard-sized paper at corporate headquarters; and, buy a few parking places, which though not cheap, was cheap in the scheme of things. These points were presented as part of my reporting on the project with the caveat that if only these symbolic acts were undertaken with no other follow-up, the benefits of improved relations would be short-lived. There was clearly a host of other issues of the same type as the ones highlighted figuratively in each of the examples that needed to be surfaced and possibly attended to by management.
In this chapter, I have presented a wide range of examples to demonstrate the usefulness of focusing on figurative communications when studying everyday forms of resistance. Very often, this type of communication can provide a researcher with a hint of the hidden transcripts that exist within the population being studied. Following up on such signals as they arise can provide a means to greatly augment data collection. L. Kemnitzer (1973) presents similar data conclusions in his article entitled, "Language Learning and Socialization on the Railroad." Although Kemnitzer does not focus on everyday forms of resistance as I have here, many examples in his discussion are resistive in the same sense as those presented here. J. Slosar, Jr. (1973) also takes a similar approach, with considerable emphasis on resistance behaviors, in his discussion of city bus drivers in an article entitled, "The Society of Bandits: The Culture of an Urban Work Group." In the following chapter, I will present further conclusions concerning the use of James Scott’s theoretical framework with an emphasis on figurative communication.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

This dissertation discusses the involvement of anthropologists in contemporary business and presents extensive background on methodology. Unusually long periods of participant-observation in three different business settings produced an exceptional quantity of qualitative data. When data are this extensive, they can be described and analyzed at different levels using a number of theoretical perspectives. For example, a variant of the life history approach could be used because I have now followed one individual’s career for over fifteen years, beginning with the person’s first professional position. An in-depth analysis of one individual would necessarily touch on the characteristics of the industry and organizations in which the person works. Placing an individual in context is often an excellent technique for explicating features of cultural systems. Or, work groups, projects, or a local office could be described ethnographically and analyzed through a number of theoretical frameworks. It would also be productive to confine analysis to certain events such as leadership transitions, major restructuring or acquisitions on which I was able to collect
data. However, I have deferred this level of analysis to later work. I have also not highlighted the international data in this discussion because they would require considerable presentation of information related to the context of these events if it is to be dealt with adequately.

In this dissertation, a very broad range of behaviors that are ubiquitous in all three of the businesses I studied are analyzed. Indeed, the class of behaviors emphasized here are general to human activities no matter what cultural institution might be selected for an investigation. A broad theoretical framework is required to organize and explain very widespread, common behaviors such as "everyday forms of resistance." The central concepts used by James C. Scott (1976, 1985, 1990, 1998) to describe and discuss these behaviors are applied here to data collected in international organizations headquartered in the United States. This preliminary investigation suggests that the approach is productive and could be explored further.

Even though my topic is broad, by limiting the focus to the class of behaviors termed by Scott (1985, 1990) as "everyday forms of resistance," the scope of the discussion has been restricted. "Everyday forms of compliance" could also be the subject of a discussion. The nature of this behavior is such that my examples often do not show people, either those resisting or those being resisted, in their best light. As this discussion drew to a conclusion, I found
myself thinking of all the examples of fair decisions, sensible policies, altruistic behaviors, mutual aid and cooperation that are also contained in my data. However, my interest in practical application is often best served by examining data for indications of what frustrates and demoralizes people and disrupts or compromises work processes. Toward these ends, I have found Scott's framework useful and present a brief example of application in an actual organizational project at the end of Chapter 7.

In Chapter 6, the moral economy and informal processes of business settings are highlighted. People in organizations do have notions of what is fair and what is exploitation and employ various means of self help to make a situation more fair and prevent or reduce exploitation. Individuals are also often confronted with situations in which management has established poorly conceived, even nonsensical, policies and procedures. In these situations, employees will circumvent, or ignore altogether, policies and procedures that make no sense or impede their work. A policy or procedure may in fact have a good reason though it may present a problem for employees; however, if this is not communicated, management risks noncompliance. In some cases, management may not realize that noncompliance is occurring or that employees have found a way to work around work process impedimenta.

Understanding power relations within business settings is a considerable undertaking. Scott's concept of moral economy
has proven particularly useful to my research and practice in organizations so is highlighted in Chapter 6. From a management perspective, probing incidents of everyday forms of resistance to gain a better understanding of the moral economy that informs and rationalizes these behaviors makes it easier to assess whether or how to form counteractions. This, of course, assumes that the behavior is detected. Scott’s typology has proven useful for collecting and categorizing data for this class of behaviors. For collecting, because it has raised my awareness of extent and range of these activities and improved my ability to realize the indications of having encountered the edge of a hidden transcript which should be probed further. For categorizing, because once the data were assessed from the perspective of Scott’s framework, the typology facilitated identification and analysis of such a wide range of common behaviors.

Figurative communication is emphasized in Chapter 7 because my use of Scott’s theories suggests that attending to figurative communication is a very useful technique for research and practice. In earlier work, I analyzed the use of metaphor in business settings (Smith 1991). Here, I expand the discussion to include all forms of figurative communication and restrict the focus to its use in everyday forms of resistance. Figurative communication is often the form in which veiled messages illuminate hidden transcripts. As such, it is useful to conceive of figurative communication
as providing cues of what should be probed further for purposes of either research or practice. For example, the first time an individual used the phrase, "find the hat," in a discussion about expense reporting, I asked that it be explained. Once I knew about the phrase, I often asked people if something that they did was a case of, "find the hat." If the person did not know about the phrase, I explained it as it had been explained to me (thus becoming a "carrier"). The humorous nature of the story behind the phrase defuses some of the tension associated with asking a sensitive question. By asking if something was a case of "find the hat," I was essentially asking someone if they had lied or been misleading in expense reporting. Probing the use of the phrase the first time it surfaced, then using it as a means to identify further incidents of the behavior, and further using it in the discussion in Chapter 7, is an example of how productive figurative communication can be from the standpoint of techniques.

There are significant caveats to making use of Scott's theoretical framework. Qualitative methods and theories always require the exercise of judgment and inherent difficulties related to distortion and subjectivity are constants.

Everyday forms of resistance are often intentionally covert so this adds to the difficulty of gathering and analyzing data of this type. Further, attempts to discern the
elements and operation of a moral economy are open to risks of misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Determining whether the moral economy has informed an act or is being used to rationalize it after the fact can be important, but hard to do. Assessing whether an act of resistance is predicated on legitimate notions of fairness and exploitation or if the moral economy is just being manipulated for purposes of self interest often requires a very extensive knowledge of the context of events.

By emphasizing the moral economy in business settings I have gained a greater appreciation for the fact that theories characterizing modern societies as having tendencies toward secularization and compartmentalization must be used carefully. While it is useful to know these characteristics have some basis in reality for research and analytical purposes, and this helps to make the complexities of society more manageable, there is a danger of stretching these notions too thin. Institutional and organization structures may encourage such perceptions, yet the day-to-day activities of individuals and small groups in particular, reveal a more complex reality absent of consistently neat compartmentalization. Social scientists can often make too much of these abstractions and forget that is what they are. For example, to conceive of American business settings as a-religious, and thus assume religion is not an important factor in understanding behavior in these settings, beyond the
obvious international implications, can be a mistake. Using the concept of moral economy in this discussion allowed me to explore the degree to which people actually do not compartmentalize religion and business.

Problems and pitfalls of using figurative communication as data, as part of data collection and analysis methods, and in reporting must also be constantly considered. This type of communication can be used to intentionally highlight, downplay or hide aspects of a message. In some cases, figurative communication may do all three of these things. For example, using the phrase, "find the hat," downplays the fact that an individual is committing a form of theft. At the same time, the story behind it highlights the irrationalities in expense systems from an employee perspective. And, the phrase functions to hide the meaning of a message that may be communicated in front of outsiders to the organization. Using this type of communication in research and practice requires discerning what is highlighted, downplayed, or hidden. It is also important to keep in mind that figurative communication may be deceptively suggesting stronger or weaker emotions than are actually the case. Figurative communication is very appealing. A clever turn of phrase may be used and proliferate simply because it is a clever turn of phrase. Such phrasing may be distorting, however, suggesting stronger or weaker emotional content than is actually present or exaggerating a phenomenon beyond what is warranted by actual
events. For example, "Winning isn’t everything, it’s the only thing" was given as an example in Chapter 6. People may use this figurative coinage but not actually believe it or act on the basis of what it is suggesting morally. Or, if someone says something has made them feel like an "orphan" or "stepchild" in an organizational setting, this may greatly exaggerate the real degree of emotional discomfort an event causes.

J. Crocker (1977:63) aptly describes the potential for superficial use of figurative communication in analysis of phenomena:

But even the most expressive identification is eminently situation bound, to the extent that it is difficult to find any one, or even a logically integrated set of them, that is consistently employed through all social contexts to express (and persuade) what "we" might be. The analyst, however, may find it convenient to forget this, and to focus instead on some central trope, or series of "key metaphors," that are either indigenous or imported for the occasion, and that can be offered up as constituting in themselves a summary of the "total truth" for the society he is investigating.

It is possible to make too much of figurative communication. It may stand out during analysis seeming to be more than it is for the reasons just discussed. An analyst may also read too much into this type of communication and may interpret the meaning intended by the individual who used it incorrectly. For example, to an anthropologist, the phrase given in an earlier example where those in the finance department were described as "putting on the black robes" may be full of connotations and denotations of meaning outside the awareness
of the informant who used it. Taken out of context, this figurative phrase may suggest more dire circumstances than the informant intended to convey. For some people in organizations, everything done by the finance department may seem like they are "putting on the black robes" when in fact these may simply be sound improvements in financial practices.

W. G. Scott (1978:284) makes an important point about figurative communication in his discussion of analogies used by organizational theorists:

> Considerable danger, however, lies in poorly founded analogies. Superficial similarities between simpler system forms and social systems are apparent everywhere. ... Thus, care should be taken that analogies used to bridge system levels are not mere devices for literary enrichment. For analogies to have usefulness and validity, they must exhibit inherent structural similarities or implicitly identical operations principles.

Figurative communication as data must be assessed in terms of whether it is poorly founded and thus does not accurately represent a situation. It must also be considered from the standpoint of reporting on data. A poorly founded analogy can compromise the value of a report by misrepresenting or oversimplifying data. It is also important to keep in mind that figurative communication is not literal, so it is as important to perceive the dissimilarities as the similarities in order to know when an analogy begins to break down.

A number of areas that merit further research have been mentioned throughout my discussion. In several cases, I have circumscribed a topic that is raised as description and
illustration has proceeded as beyond the scope of this work. For example, the topic of time is raised in my discussion of time reporting practices in Chapter 6. To fully explore time would require too much of a digression here; however, it would be worthwhile to address more fully in another work. For example, in Chapter 6, I discuss the suggestion made by informants that differences in the increments of time used in reporting can affect social relations in the workplace and this would make for a potentially productive line of research.

In order to restrict the scope of my discussion, I have not digressed into full deconstructions of the figurative communication examples reported here. For example terms and phrases such as "eating," "burying," or "putting on black robes" could be analyzed more closely.

There are also a number of theoretical issues raised in Scott’s work and by literature in the areas of linguistics touched upon here that warrant further research. Scott addresses a number of theoretical issues in all of his works, and I think makes a compelling case for his viewpoints on matters related to the nature of power and political-economic behavior that I do not present here. I also have not reiterated my earlier discussion of literature and theory related to the use of metaphor which also applies to the more generalized category of figurative communication that I explore here (Smith 1991). It is not my aim here to resolve theoretical debates in the many disciplines that intersect in
Scott's framework. My aim has been to perform a preliminary exploration of the use of key elements of the framework in research and practice related to contemporary business. My findings suggest that further work that would incorporate more theoretical discussion can be productively pursued. In particular, the behaviors involving joking would benefit from further research into the anthropological literature and theories on this topic and play behavior in general. It would also be interesting to extend this investigation further to include the findings of primatologists relating to political behaviors in nonhuman primates that suggests the presence of everyday forms of resistance in other species.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, S.

Adler, N. J., R. Doktor and S. G. Redding

Baba, M. L.

Baba, M. L. and B. P. Zeigler


Baba, M. L., B. P. Zeigler and R. G. Reynolds

Barnett, H.G.
Benedict, R.


Bennett, J. W. and M. M. Tumin

Berleant-Schiller, R.

Birdsell, J.

Birnbach, L.

Bishop, R. J. and P. Amoss, General Editors

Black, M.

Blackford, M. G. and K. A. Kerr

Boas, F.

Bourdieu, P.

Briody, E. K. and M. L. Baba

Burgelman, R. and L. Sayles

Carey, A.

Chapple, E. D.

Chapple, E. and L. Sayles

Cleland, D. I. and R. Gareis, Eds.

Coleman, S.

Covey, S. R.

Crocker, J. C.

David, K.

De Waal, F. B. M.

Deal, T. E. and A. A. Kennedy
1982 Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life. Reading, Massachusetts:Addison-Wesley.

Despres, L. A.

Deutsch, C. H.

Downing, G. D.

Dubinskas, F. A.

Evans-Pritchard, E. E.


Feirstein, B.

Firth, R.

Fiske, S. J.
Fox, R.  

Gal, S.  

Gales, R.  

Gamst, F. C.  

Garza, C. E.  

Geertz, C.  

Gluckman, M.  

Goffman, E.  

Greenfield, S. M. and R. R. Prust  

Gregory-Huddleston, K.  
Hamada, T.


Hamada, T. and W. E. Sibley, eds.

Harris, M.

Haviland, J. B.

Herskovits, M.

Hoijer, H.

Hunt, R. C.

Iyer, P.

Kaufman, L. and J. McCormick

Kawamura, S. and M. Kawai
Kemnitzer, L. S.  

Kluckhohn, F.  


Kroeber, A.L.  

Laabs, J. J.  

Lakoff, G. and M. Johnson  
1980 Metaphors We Live By. Chicago:The University of Chicago Press.

Lévi-Strauss, C.  

Louis, J. C.  

Malinowski, B.  


Mauss, M.  

Mead, M.  
Mooney, J. D.

Moore, R. H.


Morey, N. C. and F. Luthams

Murphy, D. A. et al.

Nadel, S. F.

Nisbet, R. A.

Ortiz, S., Ed.

Parsons, T.

Penniman, T. K.


Sapir, J. D. and J. C. Crocker, Eds.  

Sayles, L. R.  

Sayles, L. R. and M. K. Chandler  

Sayles, L. R. and G. Strauss  

Schein, E. H.  

Schubert, G. and R. D. Masters, Eds.  

Schubert, J. N.  
Schwartzman, H. B.

Schwartzman, H. B. and R. H. Berman

Scott, J. C.


Scott, W. G.

Shafritz, J. M. and P. H. Whitbeck

Slosar, Jr., J. A.

Smith, C. J.

Smith, M. E., Ed.
Steward, J. H.

Turner, V.

Van Willigen, J.

Vonnegut, Jr., K.

Wayne, L.

Weber, A.

Weber, M.

Weibel-Orlando, J.

Whorf, B. L.

Wolf, E. R.


Zemke, R.