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**The Spatiality of Strategy:  
Using minimal structures in practice**

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**Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Adam Smith Business School**

**College of Social Sciences**

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**September 2013**

## **Abstract**

This theory-building case study conceptualizes organization sensemaking using minimal structures. Inductive grounded theory methodology is employed to develop an explanation of the minimal structures as improvised spatial frames, rather than static rules, and understand their contribution to strategic management activities. My study also considers new aspects of the structure and agency relationship in relation to spatial values constructs, and explores an enhanced understanding of how people derive personal meaning from strategies. Despite the acknowledged importance of organization structure and agency in conducting strategic management, there are very few field studies focusing on agent-based improvisation and the meaning of strategy in practice. I place a particular emphasis on the interpretative practices of actors revealed in their spatial orientation to strategy from the perspectives of cognitive frames, values, and a personal sense of place. These attributes and others suggest strategy adoption may be accelerated with consideration of the spatiality of strategy. In the completion of the dissertation I attempt to partially fill this research gap by examining new attributes of minimal structures. Through an iterative discourse with the case study data and cross-disciplinary extant literature, I produce theoretical propositions and substantive middle-range theory supporting a cognitive spatial turn in the Strategy as Practice research perspective.

## **Key Words**

Strategic management, strategy-as-practice, improvisation, minimal structures, spatiality, values, sensemaking, grounded theory, case study

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Whitehouse Memorandum - Developing Effective Place-Based Policies for  
the FY 2012 Budget, M-10-21, June 21, 2010 (Cover)

## Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank my first and second supervisors, Dr. Donald MacLean and Dr. Robert Macintosh, for their personal encouragement, professional guidance and deliberative approach in providing academic supervision in this study. Each offered contrasting yet critical insights regarding my research plan, and with integrity, maintained a commitment to helping me successfully achieve my goals. Donald particularly demonstrated a model of coaching others through research challenges; I could not have finished the course without his direction. I owe a debt of gratitude to Adam Smith Business School faculty who participate in PhD Thesis Committee Reviews, as well as fellow students engaged in this important process. Through their provocative questions and useful recommendations, my research focus, method, and presentation improved significantly. Special thanks also go to Anne McCusker whose sense of service and hospitality is always conveyed with a gracious spirit, making one feel welcome after a lengthy travel itinerary away from home. Furthermore, I am grateful to the University of Glasgow for offering me the opportunity to pursue and refine my ideas through the rigor of the PhD program.


Second, I appreciate the sacrifice my family, friends, and professional colleagues made to enable my research these past years. The time and space they contributed became the currency for development of new ideas, evidence, and evidentially, theory. Their love and non-judgmental posture communicated God's grace, helping me explore beyond the limiting bounds of my initial thoughts. My own sense of place has been allowed space to mature. I am especially grateful to my wife Reid for her perseverance in taking on responsibilities beyond her fair share while I pursued my academic goals, worked fulltime, and generally led an isolated existence. I also acknowledge the dear friends who have shaped my life

with a desire to ask important questions, think critically, and not take it all too seriously: Roger, Harry, and David you are a blessing. This indebtedness certainly extends to the special sanctuary at Cnoc a' Chalmain, Isle of Iona. In so many ways you watched over me my friends.

Third, thank you to all the participants of my case study. Your commitment to public service, and willingness to become transparent in the process, opened up new worlds of meaning. I learned to learn as a participant in your lives, and this gift is more profound than the words expressed in the following descriptions and findings obtained in writing about your story. Moreover, to the many individuals I have been proud to serve in my various professional roles, thank you for your example. My experiences with you have influenced my research topic selection, and fostered an observant and reflexive state of mine.

### Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature: 

Printed Name: Stephen Oliver Costello Lowe

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

I begin this chapter with a presentation of the study's purpose and continue with a discussion of the origins of my interest in conducting the research, the study's focus area, and the research topic. I sequentially introduce key research questions from the literature review and present a conceptual framework, followed by an overview of the research organization, design, methods, and high-level practice model. I will conclude by introducing my contributions to the research community, summarizing my research findings, and present the structural overview of the dissertation.

### ***1.1 Purpose of the Study***

The primary aim of my thesis is to explain the presence and contribution of minimal structures as components of improvisation routines used in strategic management. I will investigate these interpretative frames as cognitive structures, identifying the emergent frames empirically through an inductive grounded theory methodology. I will apply this methodology to case study data, which extends the concept of minimal structure beyond the idea of simple rules. I will also consider new aspects of the structure and agency relationship and explore an enhanced understanding of how people derive personal meaning from strategies.

### ***1.2 Origins of Interest***

I am attracted to the investigation of applied improvisation with minimal structures as a practitioner and social innovator. With a base of experience in commercial professional services, supporting clients who deploy business technology in partnerships with the White House, the United States Department of Agricultural, the United States Congress, and



various industry partners such as IBM, Esri, Microsoft, and Google, I acquired intimate inside knowledge of strategic management and complex public sector implementations. My roles demanded personal ingenuity, responsiveness, and invention to ensure successful introduction of new technologies in the workplace. These contributions resulted in process innovation and automated interventions, as well as customer services, which changed the way organizations understood business rules. The significant impact information technology has on people impressed me with its ability to accelerate and empower individuals for the crafting and fitting of rough strategies to delicate local implementation, based on touch and sense of context.

My executive leadership responsibilities in public service, furthermore, provide numerous observations of strategic management behavior in large bureaucracies. Volunteering for the United States Department of the Navy training in the new methods of Total Quality Management and business process reengineering led to my applying a variety of product and operational improvement techniques to entrenched human and technical systems. Serving as an executive coach, work group facilitator and participatory leader, position me to see dysfunctional institutional cultures in action, and observe, firsthand, the reciprocal rules controlling individual initiative, creativity, and undermining the healthy organization. Similarly, my contributions to the establishment of the Federal Enterprise Architecture program management office for the Executive Office of the President served as a learning space for enabling e-government. The actions I took developed my skills as an enterprise architect, offering intimate lessons in the applied local use of strategic vision, design and management, as well as fostered a respect for the layers of organizational complexity that do not respond harmoniously to strategic management initiatives.

In my current senior executive role as the Geospatial Information Officer for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), I find the organization setting to be enthusiastic about new ideas and also highly risk averse; open to opportunistic sharing as well as compartmentalized, retrospective, and tactically oriented. There are many contradictions. The nature of my work requires a liberal and entrepreneurial platform from which to launch transformative changes, though these opportunities to promote and deploy value are restricted and bound by the current structure and decision-making patterns. Employee responses to new initiatives, and the potential consequences of adoption, are teaching me lessons about the conflicts and tensions regarding strategy as something we have, and forget that people do things, or should have that option. Independent improvisation is often discouraged even when it has a clear connection to higher strategy adoption rates and energy levels. The institutional paradigm frequently represents a retrospective understanding of both the strategic present and the future. My experience and conversation with colleagues working at other large organization leads me to believe this current context is not unique or isolated.

Therefore, my motivation to conduct minimal structure research includes reflexive consideration of improvisation activities as a colloquial capacity for organization strategic management interpretation, adaptation, and valuation. The desire to conduct rigorous empirical research is drawn out of a significant professional foundation of practice-based learning, social networks, and an emerging ethical dialectic about the nature of strategy as practice. My contributions are intended to offer strategy researchers and practitioners an alternative frame for understanding operational dexterity.

I am currently participating in an innovative effort intended to shift core legacy strategy paradigms of a complex public institution. This is my subject research area. The activities of strategic management are my field

of study, and I engage in an inductive qualitative case study to gather data and analyze strategy for an the initiative called Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food (KYF2). For this initiative, a diverse team of experts from the USDA successfully deployed an unprecedented digital governance solution, designed to engage citizen-stakeholders in the recently emerging discussion about local and regional food systems across the country. USDA is the second largest United States federal civilian government institution, with over 120,000 employees internationally, 17 separate and distinct public agency programs, and an annual budget of approximately \$155 billion. The KYF2 solution facilitates the principles of open government, placed-based policy and programming, and participatory governance. It does so through a web browser-based geographic information system mapping interface, which delivers a unique, robust content management service to users.

### ***1.3 Study Focus Area***

One of the most significant current discussions in organization science is the practice of strategy. Agency is an important component of organization strategy and plays a key role in both design and implementation. In the rapid emergence and accelerated evolution of the socially networked enterprise, agency has become a central issue in maintaining the fidelity of strategic plans during deployment. Likewise, central to the entire discipline of strategy is the variable of structure. Structure is at the heart of our understanding of organizations and how they operate. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in adaptive structures and their use by agents in social practice. Both of these topics reflect the academic tension between the deliberate and emergent strategy perspectives.

To investigate alternatives describing this tension, a surge in interest around the attributes of improvisation flourished in the late 1990s. As an increasingly important area in applied strategy studies, organizational

improvisation provides a rich field of learning. Whereas researchers have recently demonstrated an increased appetite for the growing perspective of strategy as practice, the area of strategic improvisation has received limited empirical attention. Moreover, the topic of socially constructed knowledge with minimal structures, as an attribute of improvisation, receives considerably less critical attention. Greater understanding of minimal structures, those interpretative constructs potentially employed for sensemaking in strategy formulation, pattern heuristics, and personal frames, offers fresh insights for reconstitution of the meaning of deliberate and emergent strategy in practice.

#### **1.4    *Research Topic***

My central research concern is explaining how and why organizations use minimal structures for strategic management to formulate and enact strategies. I explore ideas about improvisation originally described in the analogy with jazz music to reveal and reflect on minimal structures as small sets of big rules. With the new concepts and constructs emerging from three iterative literature reviews and ground theory method data analysis, the study extends the understanding of minimal structures with empirically derived data. My work helps move beyond the dominant categorical description in the literature of minimal structures as “rules,” and investigates other possible interpretations and explanations regarding minimal structures.

The investigation produced five initial formative ideas suggesting unexplained minimal structures descriptions: Trust, Pace, Ambiguity, Conflict, and Spatial. My literature review reveals basic ascribed attributes regarding each category, and based on further analysis of case study evidence, I develop theoretical propositions from the aspect of space and personal sense of place: an thoroughly unexamined and promising category.

The reorientation of strategic management as a cognitive spatial construct introduces a vivid and rich field of new inquiry. The remaining variables listed as formative ideas above were considered for joint theory construction, and ultimately not included in the scope of my study, which is discussed in Chapter 2: Literature Review.

As a practitioner, I find this topic compelling for many reasons, including the following two examples.

First, organizations often develop inordinate dependence on well-articulated strategy to convey principles and values about workplace norms. Appropriate action is represented, first, in the strategy thinking, and this thinking then bounds or frames the organization's identity embodied in strategy paradigm, design, performance measures, hiring practices, and so on. The pretext for interpreting the correctness of a decision or process - ideally prospectively, but frequently retrospectively - is conformance with an original top-down, time-bound strategic vision. Minimal structures may offer a means of release from this deductive spiraling cycle of purpose-built strategy.

Second, minimal structures appear to be commonly deployed to grapple with complexity attributes of ambiguity, tempo, and trust, which are common obstacles to organization strategy sensemaking and implementation. Building a greater understanding of how and why these devices are used introduces knowledge to help fabricate more elegant strategy, on one hand, and guide the placement of markers for in-practice field elaboration, or reassembly, on the other hand.

### ***1.5 Key Research Questions***

In the course of my study I identify two important focal questions to help

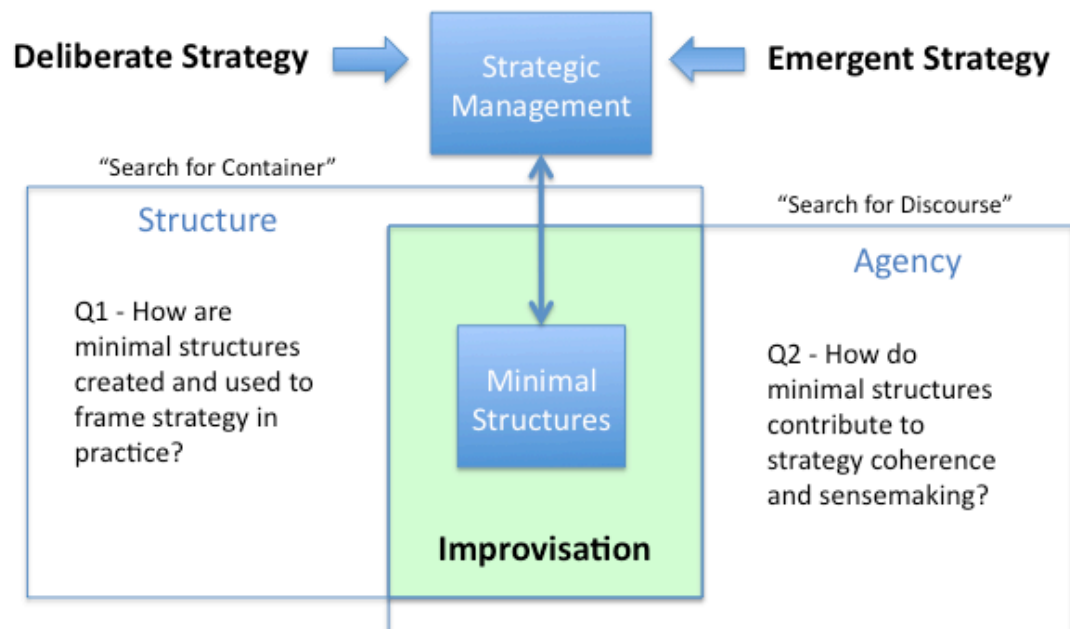
generate and shape further ideas for the initial research design, scope, methodology, and data collection stages of the study. These puzzling questions are derived from my professional and life experience, conversations with practitioners, and a preliminary literature review that narrows the theoretical field of study. The key research questions are:

1. How are minimal structures *created* and *used* to frame strategy in practice?
2. How do minimal structures *contribute* to strategy coherence and sensemaking?

### ***1.6 Conceptual Framework***

I offer a tentative, rudimentary graphic representation of the study domain. The framework evolves iteratively throughout my research process, and the data analysis phases contribute empirically for later theory development (Creswell, 1994: 97; Miles and Huberman, 1994: 18, 22). Whereas the principle of creating a “no-risk” framework is evident in this basic model, my research design and methodology deliberately postpone the development of theoretical constructs with the intent of listening to the voice of the narrative text and allowing it “tell” me how and why certain meanings are associated with particular activities. Figure 1, Conceptual Framework Model, provides a simplified landscape of the research domain.

**Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework Model**



The model presented in Figure 1.1 illustrates a parsimonious overview of the research domain, developed to improve clarity, though at a high level of abstraction in the early phases of my research (King, et al 1994: 50). This is an acceptable consequence of electing an iterative knowledge-building process. Whether the model remains relevant, or correctly represents all essential features of potential constructs, is not critical; only that an approximate visual display of the research domain, or territory, is offered to readers as an abstract framework that maps the relationships among concepts (King, et al 1994: 37, 42). This is evident in the graphic as the central concern is located in the minimal structure connection to strategic management, situated and influenced by the counter balancing perspectives of structure and agency. The general alignment of the deliberate and emergent schools flows from the prospective attributes of strategic sensemaking initially articulated as container or discourse.

### ***1.7 Organization of Research***

My research design demonstrates an interpretivist paradigm influence, which directs the ontological and epistemological positioning of the study as well as the selection of method. Under this paradigm, the principle of social construction of reality implies that what people know and believe to be true about the world is constructed but not fixed. Shared meanings are situated and under negotiation (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999: 40). These are “contextualized meanings” derived through a dialectic process, which assumes a subjectivist posture toward knowledge acquisition (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998: 384). Subsequently, maintaining the integrity of my design, I organize and align my study with a qualitative approach to examine the meaning associated with the creation and use of minimal structures

### ***1.8 Research Design and Methods***

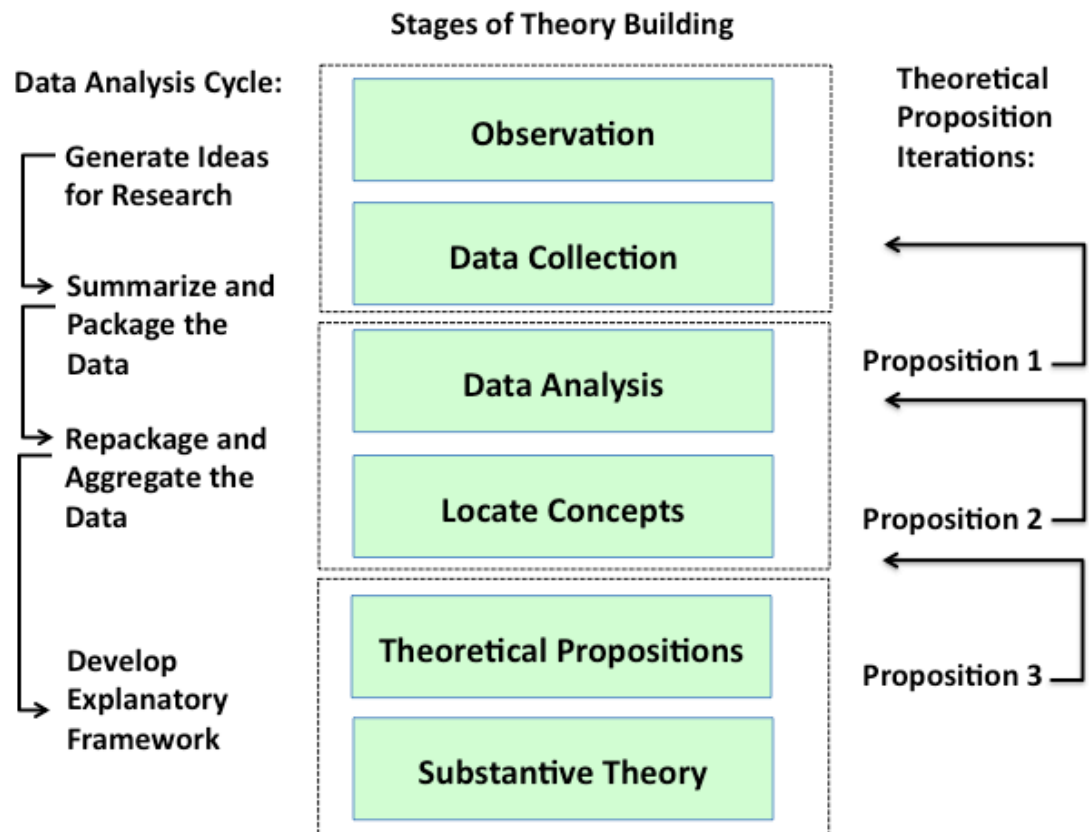
I am seeking to discover “situated knowledges” (Clarke, 2005: xxi) describing the phenomenon; therefore, I have chosen a design that logically orders the complex, dense, and ever emerging assortment of data in a uniform practice, which provides traceability linking the data to theoretical propositions. I elected the case-study method to conduct the study phases of data gathering, packaging, and identifying propositions within the text for further explanation-building data analysis. A case method “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Yin, 1989: 23). The style is adapted from Kathleen Eisenhardt’s pivotal article concerning theory-building with case studies, where she presents a “roadmap for building theories” composed of various qualitative approaches to case-study research and synthesizes these into an applied method (Eisenhardt, 1989: 532).



I exercise an inductive theory-building structure for reporting findings, wherein causal inferences about the use of minimal structures are explained. The structure enables ideas about concepts, and relationships between concepts, to emerge as they “embed themselves” in the settings and situations of the participants under study (Jaccard and Jacoby, 2010: 48). Using the field-based case study protocol, and the emergent theory orientation, I discuss a theoretical explanation regarding the nature and use of minimal structures in strategic management in the research findings, achieved through “analytic generalization” (Yin, 1994: 31, 110). My role as researcher involves interacting directly with subjects in a naturally value-laden and biased context, where the personal voice of those studied is most clear (Creswell, 1994: 5).

The Model of Research Design, Figure 1.2, provides a high-level, top to bottom blueprint for theory-building with emerging theoretical propositions. This visual enables the reader to capture in a single image the intended movement of my empirical study; it maps the construction of social meaning in cooperation with the people who are interpreting it in practice and the growing data describing the common experience.

Figure 1.2: Model of Research Design



I will use this structure to develop iterations, revisions, and refinements to, first, advance formative ideas – which are derived from initial observations, literature readings – and second, create the text, as the new analytic evidence presents itself with each turn. Whereas I have simplified the model as a vertical, linear structure, in practice, the inductive process moves forward-backward to validate and test emerging propositions in the context of the data.

### ***1.9 Original Contribution to Knowledge***

My research extends the understanding and definitions of minimal structures to include the construct of spatial sensemaking and enactment. This work intends to make a contribution to the organization strategy field in the areas of new concepts and theories regarding strategy improvisation with minimal structures. The result is a set of theoretically significant propositions (Yin, 1994: 110) represented in middle-range theory, which extends knowledge about strategic management within the strategy-as-practice research perspective. Moreover, my research produces several original innovations and novel contributions, including:

- New evidence to bear on the issue of defining an adequate bridge between deliberate and emergent strategy in practice
- New theoretical synthesis of strategic management, minimal structures, and a cognitive spatial turn
- Cross-disciplinary approach exploring insights from human geography to better understand strategic management

### ***1.10 Summary of Research Findings***

The goal of my inductive strategy is to discover the meanings different minimal structure activities have for people, and how their understanding and use of improvisation with minimal structures is impacted and defined by these meanings. My findings help to explain the processes of the social phenomena of minimal structures spatially in the context of human sensemaking. These internalized, non-material devices appear to be instrumental for interpreting strategy as practice. Space is defined as an empty expanse we travel that is like a known surface or container (Massey, 2005: 4; Cresswell, 2004: 19); spatial is the configuration, order or implacement of our encounters in a space (Massey, 2005: 127; Morris, 2004:

25). Based on these investigations, I formulated four theoretical propositions, explained in this thesis, which are:

- Minimal structures enable actors to reflexively construct and navigate spatial reference points using the sense of place.
- Minimal structures enact actor values as place-based cognitive frames for the spatial fabrication of interpretative value sets.
- Minimal structures facilitate the emergence of spontaneous thinking surfaces for interpretation of contextual cues.
- Minimal structures empower actors with a living instrumentation for storytelling to increase emplacement and presence.

### ***1.11 Structural Overview of Chapters***

The thesis consists of seven parts: 1. Introduction; 2. Literature Review; 3. Research Methodology; 4. Case Study; 5. Data Analysis; 6. Findings and Comparisons; and 7. Conclusions.

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to establish basis and relevancy for the thesis by describing its overall purpose, scope, meaning, and research approach, including contributions. **Chapter 2** reviews the relevant literature, which is grouped according to four aspects of strategy significant to the research focus: strategic management, strategy-as-practice, improvisation, and minimal structures, which I have critiqued for research implications in a summary. The study epistemological orientation, research methodological design, and implementation structure are explained and illustrated in **Chapter 3** along with the rationale for selecting a case study approach. Grounded theory methodology guides the methods used for data analysis and is central to the way in which this thesis inductively examines the empirical evidence. **Chapter 4** provides a detailed narrative of the case study report as text of the experiences and

socially constructed meanings observed in this study. This narrative builds a life model of the case participant's strategy management processes and produces formative ideas for focused data analysis through consideration of strategic episodes as concentrated units of analysis. Next, **Chapter 5** presents the outcomes of applying the rigorous grounded theory research methodology to analyze empirical data collection. The use of graphic examples of coding, memos, and other visual displays of ideas, such as tables, provide insight into how each of the categories, concepts, constructs and theoretic propositions was developed. These are offered as steps outlined in the inductive theory-building analytic structure and help simplify extensive work required to arrive at iterative findings and large volumes of data from a broad variety of sources. This section concludes with a presentation of the emergent theory and a model. **Chapter 6** returns to key theoretical works in the literature to make comparisons with the study findings as substantive theory. The chapter synthesizes contrasts with the literature to elaborate the utility of the new knowledge within the context of strategy-as-practice field and in the interpretation of the minimal structure research questions. The final chapter, **Chapter 7**, formulates the conclusions elicited from the study in relation to the aims identified above and makes suggestions for further research. The **Appendices** sections cover referenced material, the consent form, and interview questions as well as multiple examples of coding, memos, and other study tools and products that made a direct contribution to the research agenda.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter describes my focused survey of strategy research literature. I explore four related, and seemingly embedded, aspects of strategy; the dimensions of general strategic management, the origins of the strategy-as-practice perspective, various expressions of improvisation, and the nascent work describing minimal structures. My goals are to essentially arrange these findings, first, to construct intertextual coherence between the sources so as to exhibit a progressive relationship among these data; second, locate research practitioner disagreements, anomalies, and/or gaps contributing to weakly developed concepts and applications of theory; third, to identify themes and key research questions through a sensitizing process of directly working with the literature data; and four, determine the appropriate direction for my research methodology as an inductively develop study, which is illustrated in Chapter 3, Research Methodology.

I am seeking improved descriptions and explanations of the presence and relevancy of minimal structures in strategic management. The literature review supports a survey and critique of the existing literature, and the selected data sources provide a focused overview of the four primary theoretical and conceptual domains. The review efficiently employs core works, and relevant academic dialogues, to build a theoretical foundation for advanced, concentrated minimal structure empirical research. However, my discourse with the literature initiates the formulation of working concepts, or ideas, rather than beginning with preconceived theoretical positions, or overt bias, regarding explanations of the social phenomena.

To accomplish these goals, I problematize the data within the literature critique. I am watching for incompleteness, inadequacy, and incommensurate displayed in the cited literature (Golden-Biddle and

Locke, 1997: 43). Moreover, maintaining congruence with my inductive ground theory building approach, I adhere to the recommendation that:

Investigators should formulate a research problem and possibly specify some potentially important variables with some reference to extant literature but avoid thinking about specific relationships between variables and theories at the onset (Eisenhardt, 1989:536).

## **2.1 *Strategic Management***

Multiple constructs and models exist for the interpretation of strategic management practices. These theories and concepts generally align statically, as a fixed point, along a continuum of deliberate and emergent strategy positions. In this section I survey references concerning deliberate, emergent, and balanced strategies, as well as frameworks and topologies. With the exception of deliberate strategy survey, the leaning of the data is primarily emergent, based on the theoretical nature of the areas under investigation, and this factor is emphasized in the level of detail.

### **2.1.1 *Deliberate Strategy***

First, deliberate strategy enthusiasts emphasize a strategic management approach for the development of strategy as an aspect of internal structure and configuration (Ansoff, 1987) in the selection of organisation goals and objectives (Rumelt, 1982). Strategy follows structure, and individual leaders are selected, who predictably leverage rational analysis, and partition the conceptual and execution functions with, for example, a focus on organisation profit (Chandler, 1962, Rumelt, 1982). These attributes are perceived to help drive organization stability in a repeatable and traceable planning process (Thompson, 1967), and produce “strategy as fit,” as the internal features of the firm are matched to circumstances and

events within the environment (Andrews, 1971). Strategic management is perceived in this instance as a *structural imperative*.

As resource-based, portfolio-maximization aspects of strategy are readily adopted, proponents of the competitive landscape planning model (Porter, 1980) employ strategic management to realize both means and ends.

“Strategy is the creation of a unique and valuable position involving a different set of activities” (Porter, 1996: 68). Porter (1979: 137) explains “the corporate strategist's goal is to find a position in the industry where his or her company can best defend itself against these forces or can influence them in its favor.” Marginal consideration is given to the institutional context, where unique cultural values influence decision-making, but rather focus is upon differentiating the key factors, or forces, which must be successfully unveiled and controlled for a successful strategy to be realized. However, the concept of individual *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977) may be leveraged in strategic management to emphasize the internalization of cultural rules that reinforce structurally stable behavior. Institutions operating from this orientation are composed of cognitive, normative, and regulatory structures and activities, which provide “stability and meaning to social behavior” (Scott, 1995: 33). Further, these cognitive frames and underlying assumptions about the organization establish organizing principles for accomplishing goals (Friendland and Alford, 1991: 248). With these views, strategic management involves the *construction of rules and cognitive boundaries*.

The prescribed deliberate structure explains strategy setting direction, focuses effort, defines the organisation, and provides consistency (Mintzberg, et al 1998:17). The centralized, internal processes of strategy may be understood as an explicit form of business transformation concerned with the creation of intentional, often radical, change by directly addressing and determining processes, technologies, and resource



allocation (Hendry and Seidl, 2003: 178). Yet the selection of a deliberate strategy is through management judgment, and an internal bargaining process. “Solutions are not so much likely to be adopted because they are shown to be better on the basis of some sort of objective yardstick, but because they are acceptable to those who influence the decision or have to implement it” (Johnson, 1987: 29). Ironically, when organisations are structured for functional roles and categories, they often become dysfunctional as rapid adjustments and agile action is required in response to changing conditions and context (Scott, 1998: 329). “Human agency and structure in fact presuppose each other” (Sewell, 1992:4), and therefore, may be seen as an important balance. Deliberate strategic management is criticized for *pervasive, and sometimes debilitating, rigor*.

The understanding of deliberate strategy offered through these core concepts suggests a primary function of strategic management is elimination of variance. This is closely related the mitigation or elimination of risk in a military or industrial business model, and aims to reconfigure what exists, which leads to minimal change. Whereas strategy for the sake of maintaining both internal and external competitive positions is clearly important, there appear to be significant tradeoffs for electing deliberate strategy. The deliberate strategy approach seems to concentrate instrumentation of strategy in its structure, based on rules, and enabled by rigor. However, limited insight is offered in regard to how strategies organically grow and change in the hands of those who implement them in practice. The emphasis on strategy as a formal plan made once, and managed corporately, appears not to allow for and explain the influence of enactment on these formal plans, especially under conditions of emergence, constant change, and uncertainty.

### 2.1.2 Emergent Strategy

Second, on the emergent side of the strategy continuum, some emergent strategic management theorists define the trap of deliberate strategic planning as an unwarranted belief in adherence to structural devices such as strategies and rules, conceived as means, but evolving as ends in themselves, which leads to goal displacement (Merton, 1957: 199). Mintzberg perceives that traditional strategy is about analysis and programming, while emergent strategy is actually about synthesis and action. Therefore, the metaphor of “crafting strategy” evokes the idea of mastery of detail: intimacy with the raw material to be formed versus a mechanization of plans (Mintzberg, 1989: 26). This viewpoint advances a functional sense-and-respond treatment within the craft metaphor, and reflects the nature of strategies emerging as actions that converge into patterns. The individual strategist role involves unearthing or narration of patterns (Mintzberg, 1989: 31, 38). The attraction to solving real-world problems leads scholars to observe a gap between professional knowledge and real-world demands, which finds practitioners treating formal strategy models as probes, or metaphors, employed only as sources of new perspectives on complex situations (Schon, 1983: 44). Here strategic management is about orchestrating the elements of a context to *create understanding rather than conformance*; to see beyond the immediate or retrospective deterministic view.

This contrast continues as a structural demarcation occurred between traditional deliberate strategy as “building long-term defensible positions or sustainable competitive advantage” toward continuous adaptation and improvement where strategy requires the capacity to be “constantly shifting and evolving in ways that surprise and confound the competition” (Eisenhardt and Brown, 1998: 787). This transition to greater leverage of transition in strategic management includes the appreciation of strategic

thinking where attributes of a holistic view of a networked organization systems; focus on intent rather than fit; interconnections in time of past, present, and future; hypothesis generating and testing; and invokes capacity to be opportunistic in face of emerging prospects, demonstrating a preference for adaptive strategy thinking over deliberate planning (Liedtka, 1998: 32), which coincides with the disruptive complexities and accelerated growth of internet technology and communications. Strategic planning, conversely, does not actually facilitate strategic thinking but has, in fact, often impeded it (Mintzberg, 1994). Strategic management in this context is *permeable to new ideas, frames, and cross-disciplinary views*.

Uncertainty is perceived as an important factor in the configuration of resources within a “platform organization” emergent strategic management approach. In rapidly changing environments, well-known organizational arrangements may not work to optimize resource utilization. Therefore, the organization “requires a much quicker generation [and elimination] of new arrangements...[strategies].” These conditions create demand for a “shapeless organization that keeps generating new forms through frequent recombination” (Ciborra, 1996: 104). The platform enacts strategy where fragmentation, fuzziness and displacement are the norm, but not as a specific organizational structure, rather as a “virtual organizing scheme, collectively shared and reproduced in action by a pool of human resources, where structure and potential for strategic action tend to coincide in highly circumstantial ways...” (Ciborra, 1996: 114), which corresponds with the strategy as practice and an acknowledgement of the imperfections inherent in the formal organization. The platform style of strategic management promotes *virtualization and the recombination of resources*.

To further offset uncertainty, emergent strategy researchers prompt the examination of how strategy discourse is formulated and understood to be

"embedded in social practices that reproduce the 'way of seeing' as the 'truth' of the discourse" (Knights and Morgan, 1991: 253). Here a reflexive approach to strategy context and content yields understanding of how strategy is an evolving means of maintaining a discursive posture toward practices themselves.

Strategy as a discourse is intimately involved in constituting the intentions and actions from which it is thought to be derived. Strategy, then, is an integral part, and not independent, of the actions or practices that it is frequently drawn upon to explain or justify. - (Knights and Morgan, 1991: 268)

In another example, the emergent conceptual model of Blue Ocean strategy, organizations create "uncontested space" that reduces relevancy of competitors as markets are constructed rather than entered (Kim and Maiborgne, 2004). These are conceived as unknown and virgin strategic market spaces. In contrast with the top down command strategy approach of Red Ocean Strategies, Blue Oceans move to create territories versus confronting others in a limited supply context; being forced to accept the constraints inherent to the legacy environment. This view is similar in kind, but not context, with deliberate strategy where the organization's resources are expressed as "strengths that firms can use to conceive of and implement their strategies" in the same market, and sustained competitive advantage is demonstrated when "...a firm is implementing a value creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitors and when these other firms are unable to duplicate the benefits of this strategy" (Barney, 1991:101-102). It portrays a distinct comparison between the structuralist (Red Ocean) and constructionist (Blue Ocean) paradigms. This orientation to strategy management leverages the *creation of new spaces and new rules*.

The perspective of strategic management as an emergent process, employed in the enactment of strategic goals, gives the impression of placing greater emphasis on agency. The role of persons within organizations as change agents consigns significant confidence in the practitioner's capabilities, and the cooperation of the environment in their enactment of strategy through ongoing testing and re-formulation. The attributes of sensemaking, permeability, reconstitution of resources, and created space provides a distinct comparison to deliberate approaches to strategic management. These descriptions do not, however, explain how and why an individual, or for that matter groups and organisations, may recognize the appropriate practices in an emerging context, nor the reflexive awareness of their role in these processes. Moreover, an occasional overreliance of the fallacy of ad hominen arguments against deliberate strategy provides weak support for emergent strategy theories.

### ***2.1.3 Balanced Strategy***

On the border between deliberate and emergent strategy are many professionals, such as planning strategists, primarily engaged in design as the process of changing existing situations into the preferred (Simon, 1972: 55; Schon, 1983: 78). I explore strategy design to emphasize this point. Organizations are understood to create, or invent, their own environments. They select among a range of alternatives, which are then organically perceived as social norms and customs, where perception is unreflective and disorderly (Starbuck, 1976: 1069). Strategy is one important tool in reducing organizational and environment complexity (Schreyögg and Steinmann, 1987); the presumed elimination of equivocality represented in competing frameworks is another tool (Weick, 1979). Lastly, wrong answers produced in the traditional planning process are in fact allowed as long as control, social, and symbolic functions are achieved (Langley, 1991).

Looking toward design from a deliberate strategy orientation, researchers see organizational routines as reflecting “repetitive, recognizable patterns of interdependent actions, carried out by multiple actors” (Feldman and Pentland, 2003: 95). These concepts demonstrate an attempt to still preserve technical rationality, which must maintain agreement, or imposed coherence, about ends described in strategic outcomes affecting clearly defined problems (Schon, 1983: 40-41, 48). Strategic management in this respect includes *design as a tool of cultural formation and change*.

Design as a strategic process may be applied to non-existent, emerging conditions and situations as well. “Strategy as a discourse is intimately involved in constituting the intentions and actions from which it is thought to be derived. Strategy is an integral part, and not independent, of the actions or practices that it is frequently drawn upon to explain or justify” (Knights and Morgan, 1991: 268). Design as emergent strategy reflects the structural dynamics an organization maintains within its context allowing for maximum environmental sensitivity and agile response (Weick, 1977: 201). A designer may increase legibility of complex circumstances, and improve strategic literacy. This is no less true for micro-design where individuals modify patterns and configurations, than in macro-design of comprehensive organization strategies. The strategic management use of *design as a discourse* is offered as a means of environmental sensitizing.

The act of design, of fitting something to its inner organization and outer function, is a major strategic management activity. The work is, however, an approximation, where the behavioral attributes of the inner system will only partly respond to the task environment due to its self-limiting properties (Simon, 1972: 13-16). Human search for good design is intrinsic to solving problems in highly complex outer environments. Our processes of judging, deciding, choosing, and creating distinguishes us as agents of design (Simon, 1972: 159). This is a “bounded rationality” adaptation

approach, which suggests we do not “simply assemble problem solutions from components but must search for appropriate assemblies” or alternatives (Simon, 1972: 144). Inside these routines, emergent strategy recognizes that social reality is not a steady state; there is a material process and an imagined process in the mind of an individual (Weick, 1990: 8). Here strategic management employs design to *mediate between the outer and inner boundaries*.

Using a simulation modeling methodology explores the tension between too little and too much structure. Tensions result from “the core tradeoff between efficiency and flexibility” in dynamic environments, and concluded it is more desirable to have “too much structure,” and different dimensions of “environmental dynamism (i.e., velocity, complexity, ambiguity, and unpredictability) have unique effects on performance” Specifically,

[a] strategy of simple rules, which combines improvisation with low-to-moderately structured rules to execute a variety of opportunities, is viable in many environments but essential in some. - (Davis, Eisenhardt, and Bingham, 2009: 413)

The consequences of “limited attention, mistakes, and the fleeting and varied nature of opportunities” demands use of increasingly simple rules to capture increasingly erratic opportunities. Their theoretical framework reveals the “surprisingly wide applicability of a simple-rules strategy and semi-structures...” Without adequate structures, “it is impossible to improvise effectively and so to capture opportunities.” (Davis, Eisenhardt, and Bingham, 2009: 440-444). Furthermore, “highly dynamic environments require flexibility to cope with a flow of opportunities that typically is faster, more complex, more ambiguous, and less predictable than in less dynamic environments.” Research shows that high-performing organizations

cope with dynamic environments with less structure. Overall, this finding suggests that the optimal amount of structure decreases with increasing environmental dynamism (Davis, Eisenhardt, and Bingham, 2009: 414). Their results, however, fail to describe how structure influences efficiency and flexibility, and therefore, the attributes of the efficiency-flexibility tradeoff and the particular selection and apportionment of structure (Davis, Eisenhardt, and Bingham, 2009: 414). Strategic management in these terms is concerned with *identifying the aspects of dynamic equilibrium* in the strategy context.

In summary, the aspect of the balanced strategic management, illustrated within the strategy design process, offers a tangible example of a somewhat blended practitioner role. Whether as a tool of cultural transformation, discourse, or mediation, centrist positions leverage either extreme. Defining design as a verb, rather than simply a noun, begins to construct a framework for understanding the characteristics of strategic management conducted across organizations by many actors. Whereas design context and creative methods are considered key among some scholars, the relationship of balanced approaches to strategy-as-practice remains unexplained in the literature.

#### **2.1.4 Strategy Frameworks**

Other strategy theorists attempt to construct bridging frameworks to describe these continuum tradeoffs. For instance, an applied strategy model is offered by Whittington to classify and categorize observations within four strategic perspectives: classical rationalism, evolutionary metaphor, processualist accommodation, and systemic relativity. The continuum between these simplified strategy orientations ranges from preserving the status quo to recognizing behavior embedded in networks of social relations (Whittington, 2005: 2, 26). The framework claims to



effectively configure, bound, and anchor the theoretical strategy domain, and allows practical compartmentalization of an organization's strategy by degree of intention and process, which are represented in such elements as institutional market focus, innovation, competition, business rules, and so forth. Strategic management is executed in *well-defined levels of effort*.

Whereas the image of strategic leadership is modeled explicitly in the four part framework, the implicit message is individual leadership strategy-making must be "fitted" more broadly into the social environment context and collective social characteristics of the organization, market, and beyond (Whittington, 2005: 55-56). The performance of strategy by individual strategists, conversely, receives minimal attention in Whittington's normative framework. The level of effort in practicing strategic management seems to remain constant, the structure for interpreting agency is not presented, and the means of understanding agency in relation to deliberate and emergent strategy is not readily apparent. Therefore, the Whittington framework appears to default to a deliberate strategy placement and conceptualization of strategy practice.

### **2.1.5 Strategy Topologies**

Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel give significant attention to the landscape of deliberate and emergent strategic management as schools of thought, represented in a helpful topology. In a field review of ten proposed strategy schools, findings are presented from a survey of strategy represented as a plan, pattern, position, perspective, and ploy. From the aspect of plan and pattern, these working definitions may be considered as, first, real-world, contrasting forms of thinking ahead, and second, formulating adaptations en route (Mintzberg, et al 1998:11). So in this sense, agents may avoid disruptions by not attending to the larger issues. The authors are building a normative foundation for comparative review of

strategic management, which implies agency is most successfully executed within a set of assumptions, or exceptions, concerning the context:

We function best when we can take some things for granted, at least for a time. And that is the major role of strategy in organisations: it resolves the big issues so that people can get on with little details. - (Mintzberg, et al 1998: 17)

The topology they develop presents a particularly insightful gallery of strategy types, offering the degree of emergence for each school, as well as exploring the potential or inherent conflicts, primarily in the planning and learning schools. Several examples from the research findings are useful.

First, echoing the observations from my previous section about balanced strategies, the formal processes associated with the “Planning School” articulate the classical, deliberate strategy approach. Strategy in this sense is guided through the expertise of specialized, “well-trained strategists” (Mintzberg, et al 1998:48). The emphasis is upon engineering the context from the beginning, whereby plans are formulated centrally with models, tools, and quantitative techniques; these components aid in making decisions before an event to drive behavior. In a prescribed roadmap, performance is controlled and responsibility for success rests with the senior strategist. Here the pre-constructed plan is an extension of the executive leader, who engages strategic management to *orchestrate the plan*.

Whereas the planners are perceived to occupy valued roles, Mintzberg et al submit several critical observations. First, the planning school often lacks management support; undermines commitment to strategy making; and promotes organization inflexibility by creating rigid categories.

Additionally, core fallacies are embedded in the planning process orientation. For instance, the perceived requirement of stability during strategy making ensures predictability in deployment assumes controlled predetermination necessary to implement plans. The fallacy of strategic detachment in development and direct deployment of plans requires systematization, which assumes action is detached from thought where the system provides the thinking. A problem is presented in the inability of senior managers and abstract planners to fully understand the consequences associated with the plan of deployment. This fallacy reinforces the selective “decoupling” of institutional norms from the operational delivery structure (Meyer and Rowan, 1977), which satisfies myths and rituals but does little to encourage strategy adoption in the technical components of the organization.

The fallacy of formalization presumes innovation may be institutionalized in the accurately representative plans, however, the authors question the organization’s ability to internalize, comprehend, and synthesize the planning agenda. The critique is summarized in the statement, “because analysis is not synthesis, strategic planning has never been strategy making,” which suggests the idea of strategic programming versus planning; a process supporting the assessment or elaboration of plans. (Mintzberg, et al, 1998:64, 68-77).

Second, the descriptive nature of the “Learning School” is explored, relating the approach to patterns of emergent strategy. Observations reflect the complexities of implementing strategy, acknowledging the science of muddling through a disorderly world (Lindblom, 1959: 80). This strategy approach advocates, as a systemic approach perspective, a collective process of learning effective strategy, particularly in professional, highly complex organizations where the knowledge required to create strategy is broadly diffused (Mintzberg, et al 1998: 229). Central

authority is relatively powerless to impose strategy across the entire organization. The individual innovation associated with “truly novel” situations demands a learning capability to understand the dynamic and unpredictable context, and this capability is primarily voluntary; irregularity is a fundamental, intrinsic property of the learning organization (Stacey, 1992: 99-100). Strategic management demands an *ability to absorb information*.

Moreover, the Learning School strategy management emphasizes knowledge creation (Crossan, White, and Lane, 1999), with recommended frameworks such as intuiting, interpreting, integrating, and institutionalizing. Organization agility must account for this challenge: “changing position within perspective may be easy; changing perspective, even while trying to maintain position, is not (Mintzberg, et al 1998:14). Finally, cumulative learning and constant renewal may best be represented in learning organization attributes embracing the value of failure, reexamination of efficiency, knowledge alignment with proximity to the process, transference of knowledge across organization boundaries, and seeking knowledge outside the organization (Mintzberg, et al 1998:214-215). In this instance, strategic management is expressed as an evolving set of understandings, obtained through *intentional reflection*.

There are several critical perspectives offered about this emergent strategy approach. The learning school orientation can lead to piecemeal innovation introducing a collective mess, and the incremental nature of the strategy formation could be ineffective in emerging crisis situations, which generally require coherent responses. Conversely, over-learning, and unlearning, can undermine completely a fit strategy resulting in strategic drift, or the least common denominator collective. This process is expensive as well as, demanding of limited resources, producing false starts, and requiring high levels of individual and group agility in both

cognitive and structural capacity. Infusing balance and boundaries is a valid concern. As Mintzberg, et al state, “we claim the answers usually lie not at the extremes, but in how the contradictions are reconciled in practice” (Mintzberg, et al 1998: 360), and a warning against over reliance on acquiring novel learnings must not be taken lightly.

In summary, the schools topology of strategic management research introduces a clarifying group of strategy types. Spotlighting my literature review on the aspects of Planning and Learning schools emphasized the significant contrasts of the strategy continuum. The seemingly contradictory nature of the quote: “the more emergent the strategy, the more a central management must treat content as process - in other words, manage people and structures deliberately” (Mintzberg, et al, 1998: 363), increases my curiosity, and motivation, concerning the relevancy of the improvisation in strategy practice. Furthermore, the literature reference leaves open questions regarding the nature of the agent, or actor’s, subjective *inception point* with organization strategy, whether or not it matters, and it remains unclear how agent improvisation actions are used and why. I believe we inherit structure and strategy in organizational settings, and must deliberately grapple with how people embed strategies in practices as a sense of dwelling in the work performed. In the next segment of literature review, I concentrate on those emergent aspects of agency practice and enablement.

## **2.2    *Strategy as Practice***

The evolving perspective of Strategy-as-Practice (SaP) advocates agency in strategic management. It argues that strategy formation is a social activity, and not restricted to organizational planning or other strategists; bottom-up and middle-out orientations for strategy-making may be employed. It is an “activity-based view of strategy” (Johnson et al., 2003: 3-4;

Jarzabkowski, 2005: 4-5). The inclusive approach is extended from the early “social practice” inquiry of “how *managers* actually do strategy” (Whittington 1996: 731-732, emphasis added). Whittington (2003: 121) later extends the field of observations in a practice perspective to be “concerned with finding out what strategists and organizers jobs *really* are.” This emerging research domain investigates the granular activities of organizational life, and the actions that represent the “internal life of process” (Brown and Duguid, 2000: 95; Feldman and Pentland, 2003; Chia and MacKay, 2007). According to the practice perspective, people who might not be designated formally as “strategists” can and must engage in collective, systematic, and iterative revisiting of the existing processes and technologies (Hendry and Seidl, 2003; Mantere, 2005). This enfolding asserts that,

[i]t is time to shift the strategy research agenda towards the micro; to start not from organizations as wholes...but from the activities of individuals, groups and networks of people upon which key processes and practices depend. - (Johnson et al., 2003:14)

SaP scholars increasingly focus their investigations on the daily activities of actors, and how these actors and their activities interact with the organization context (Jarzabkowski, 2005). As an alternative to focusing on organizations, change and abstract macro-processes, the SaP perspective emphasis follows a deeper focus “on people than organizations, the routine as opposed to change, and situated activity rather than abstract processes” (Chia and MacKay, 2007; Whittington, 2003: 118). Subsequently, research priorities in SaP attend to the micro activities-based approach for comprehending strategy and strategizing (Jarzabkowski, 2004), and the stabilizing effects of activity (Hendry and Seidl, 2003; Jarzabkowski, 2005). Aligning to the activity approach, Whittington proposes the key questions of inquiry concerning the SaP approach include: “where and how is the

work of strategizing and organizing actually done; who does this strategizing and organizing work; and what are the skills required for this work and how are they acquired” (Whittington, 2002: 119)?

Micro-phenomena need to be understood in their wide-ranging social context: actors in their micro-situations are not acting in isolation but are drawing upon the regular, socially defined modes of acting that arise from the plural social institutions in which they participate. Much of the social infrastructure, such as tools, technologies and discourses, through which micro actions are constructed, has macro and institutionalized properties that enable its transmission within and between contexts, while being adopted and adapted differently within micro contexts (Wilson and Jarzabkowski, 2004: 15). In this sense the SaP approach tries to establish explicit links between micro and macro perspectives. (Jarzabkowski, 2005; Whittington, 2006: 620). This attempt at aligning perspectives offers a growing theoretical location for improvisation theory development.

Finally, scholars sponsoring the concept of strategy as social practice (Christensen and Overdorf, 2000; Jarzabkowski, 2004; Johnson, 2004; Luhmann, 1996; Pettigrew, 2001; Whittington, 2003) contend organizations should enhance the conditions and context necessary for systematic exchange of strategic ideas among rank and file members, as well as view their employees as contributors to the strategizing process. However, researchers also acknowledge little is actually known about how such a strategizing process can be organized, how its outcomes can be returned into an organizational system for implementation, and what approaches and tools would make the strategizing process more effective (Hendry and Seidl, 2003; Jarzabkowski, 2005; Mezias, Grinyer, and Guth, 2001). The social practice orientation toward strategy formation guides investigating the presence of a mediating capability between deliberate strategy and the emerging process of strategizing, which helps explain how employees may

improvise in practice to produce, consume, understand, and re-constitute organization strategy.

The SaP body of literature introduces a new applied lens for observing agent strategy-making activity. An emphasis on collective behaviors conducted in social, contextual aligned communities, presents interesting options for creating a diverse set of data across multiple organization types. Conversely, the field thus far has immature, undeveloped, and untested theoretical contributions and constructs from which to assess and validate the reliability of improvisation in deliberate and emergent strategy design.

A particularly attractive concept produced in my SaP review is that of reconciling essentially unpredictable institutions with the “emergence of distinctive patterns” (Houchin and MacLean, 2005: 150). Where this literature contribution produces more profound and original thought is revealed in identifying the retrospective, law-based orientation of some theorists in construction of meaningful implementations of complexity theory. This fallacy is forcefully dislodged by exposure to arguments concerning human intricacies and interpretive options, ambiguity of system and human boundaries, and commonality of rule breaking behaviors.

Recommendations for furthering the new SaP research agenda include extending study to a broad, plural social context of the field of investigation (Whittington, 2006), based on a recognized framework (Jarzabkowski, Balogun, and Seidl, 2007). Theoretical positions and methods are criticized, calling for a shift away from methodological individualism (Chia and MacKay, 2007). To address these and other concerns, a prospective-oriented research agenda has emerged (Golsorkhi, Rouleau, Seidl, and Varra, 2010: 13-14). Targeted research is suggested along eight perspectives: 1) linkage of macro and micro strategy; 2) agency



in strategy and strategizing; 3) coping and resistance; 4) practitioners and their knowledge; 5) spread of strategy discourse and praxis to new areas; 6) cross-national comparisons; 7) longitudinal analysis and the role of history; and 8) mediation and technologization of discourse and practice.

An important inferred attribute for this future work is consideration of strategizing at both the center and periphery of the organization (Regner, 2003). Others present research directions with more emphasis on macro level investigation (Huff, Neyer, and Moslein, 2010: 204) to incorporate, for instance, questions such as:

- How are organizational level strategies and processes across a range of organizations affecting micro-activity in a specific organization of interest?
- How are micro-level strategies and processes in a given organization interacting with organizational-level strategies and visa versa, how are organisational processes and strategies affecting micro-level activities?
- How do institutionalized structures and processes affect micro-behavior?

Furthermore, an argument for expanding strategizing research in public government organizations, and express interests in building out the theoretical contributions to SaP is warranted (Huff, Neyer, and Moslein, 2010: 213). Their summary of additional explanatory tools and methods for ongoing research is formulated from the ideas of sensemaking under uncertainty, appreciative inquiry, broadcasting problems, rigorously designed field experiments, and process of value co-creation and with customers and users, among others (Huff, Neyer, and Moslein, 2010: 214).

Suddaby et al reference others in stating that SaP may profit from including an understanding of how individual perceptions are embedded in broader cognitive schemes (Johnson et al., 2007), the process by which “actors” and “actorhood” are socially constructed (Hwang and Colyvas, 2011; Meyer, 2008), and the role of social institutions in explaining how practices are maintained and reproduced (Corradi et al., 2010) (Suddaby, Seidl, and Le, 2013: 330).

SaP research offers well-founded material for raising questions about the applicability of various improvisation principles to strategic management. However, the work does not describe, or effectively integrate, a common framework model to further conceptualize knowledge-building opportunities. A set of robust examples and empirical evidence about improvisation behaviors from the direct observations is also immature. Additional descriptions and scenarios of what, how, where, why and to whom SaP improvisation proved useful may provide essential elements for the construction of a common framework. In addition, SaP findings support the emergence of an improvisational attribute exercised by individuals. To develop greater understanding of improvisation as an attribute of SaP, and utility for implementation in practice, I will revisit the SaP literature in Chapter 6, Findings and Comparison, to locate applied linkages to emerging theory.

### **2.3 *Improvisation***

The word “improvisation” appears toward the end of the 18th century, and has a similar connotation to the existing French 17<sup>th</sup> century expression “impromptu.” This concept of is also expressed in a Latin root phrase, “ex tempore,” which has implications for improvising in the moment; as does the term “improvisus” meaning not seen ahead of time. From the aspect of engaging creative work, regardless of the discipline, improvisation

represents spontaneous creativity in the act of extemporization around core themes (Nacmanovitch, 1990: 5, 8) such as in music, visual arts, and architecture design.

Improvisation is “the conception of action as it unfolds, by an organisation and/or its members, drawing on available material, cognitive, affective, and social resources” (Cunha, Cunha, and Kamoche, 2002). It represents an inseparable convergence between concept and execution, and enables organizations to subdue the consequential, emergent risk of decision-making, thereby exerting more control (Cunha, et al, 2002: 96, 99).

Improvisation involves reworking pre-composed material and designs in relation to unanticipated ideas conceived, shaped, and transformed under special conditions of performance, thereby adding unique features to every creation. - (Berliner, 1994: 241)

This statement about reworking supports the belief that actions taken by individuals, or groups, allow sensemaking to occur, so without action, there is nothing to judge or interpret, and this raises ambiguity (Weick, 1969).

The improvisation analogy has been useful in helping view organizations as collaborative, co-creative entities needing to respond within relatively short time horizons to unexpected and unplanned events and information (Miner, Moorman, 1996). Each day, organizational actors must also improvise in response to “immediate stimuli of the environment ” (Frost and Yarrow 1989). The consequences of these actions range in strategic significance for overall organizational performance and the social construction of the organization itself. Researchers and theorists have looked to the arts not only to help understand and describe improvisation in the organizational setting, but to help guide how to create the conditions in which it will flourish.

Capacity to improvise implies preexistence of a set of resources, whether as a plan of action, a knowledge base, or social structure. It is the ability to respond in real-time; and brings together bricolage with improvisation (Cunha, et al, 2002: 105). Moreover, paradoxically, improvisation is deliberate resulting from intentional efforts; it is extemporaneous, produced without a plan; it occurs during action of the organization, or its members. The correctness of improvisation actions must be judged in “hindsight; not by foresight in traditional planning.” Its use involves a “typology of resources” such as material, cognitive, affective, and social (Cunha, et al, 2002: 106). Generally, building toward improvisation capacity may be understood according to degrees across four levels: interpretation, embellishment, variation, and improvisation (Cunha, et al, 2002: 107). This scale demonstrates the ability to provoke significant changes by building upon unlimited variations, in a fashion close to the butterfly effect proposed in chaos and complexity theory (Stacey, 1996).

Suggesting that improvisation serves an alternative to, rather than complements, innovation, is short-sighted, and event driven (Cunha, et al, 2002: 109). As a practice-oriented construct, the organization must understand an unexpected event, with no predefined script, to be: 1) perceived as important; and 2) perceived as within the action span of the organization (Cunha, et al, 2002: 111). The idea that the higher the speed of the environmental framing of the organization, the higher the likelihood of it undertaking improvisational activities, is a restrictive, narrowing view (Cunha, et al, 2002: 114). Conversely, conditions fostering improvisation include an experimental culture, minimal structure, and low procedural memory (Cunha, et al, 2002: 115). Finally, the authors state the quality of improvisation is impacted by traditionally measured factors of: organization leadership, member characteristics, information flow, memory, configuration, and resources (Cunha, et al, 2002: 118). Moreover, improvisation functions to bridge between what is planned and that which

is required at any particular moment (Sharkansky and Zalmanovitch, 2000: 4), which is a necessary capability for effective synthesis of ideas.

Therefore,

[t]he idea of improvisation is important for organisational theory because it gathers together compactly and vividly a set of explanations suggesting that to understand the organisation is to understand organizing, or as Whitehead (1929) put it, to understand “being” as constituted by “becoming” - (Weick, 1998: 551).

### ***2.3.1 Key Improvisation Analogies***

The relatively constrained exploration of alternatives in improvisation may be a result of fundamental misunderstanding. For example, many associate theatrical improvisation with sketch comedy and entertainment (e.g. Drew Carey’s *Whose Line is it Anyway*, or the many comedy sports clubs that use improvisational games). The underlying principles guiding successful improvisation, and the individual competence required are largely overshadowed (or dismissed altogether) by the light-hearted entertainment goals of these forms of improvisation. According to another Hatch, (Hatch, 2002), networks and virtual organizations challenge traditional notion of organizations themselves; collapsing the single-event two-dimensional frame. This empty space attracts as a vacuum (Hatch, 2002: 73). Use of improvisation metaphor as vehicle to describe reconceptualization of organization structure is recommended.

Researchers have looked to the arts not only to help understand and describe improvisation in the organizational setting, but to help shed light on how to create the conditions in which it will thrive. Seeing the organization as “performative” calls upon engagement, or reengagement, with organizational practices and processes using jazz [for example] as

hermeneutic rather than analytic device for understanding ambiguity, emotion and time (Hatch, 2002: 75). The approach escapes worn-out vocabularies. It is the re-description process following from the metaphor that matters. Jazz helps the researcher feel, hear, and engage beyond simply thinking about organizational structures. To move past stereotypes, the essence of improvisation may be revealed in the initial use of several analogies, and/or metaphors, starting with the attributes of Jazz Music.

### “Jazz”

The jazz practice has offered themes useful in developing the theory of organizational improvisation. The parallels are intriguing – jazz music begins with some degree of structure (the song) from which musicians improvise. Organizations have various comparable structural elements such as mission, values, knowledge, norms, procedures, and even physical structure and artifacts (Crossan, 1998). Jazz musicians must strike a balance between their memory and past experience and their pursuit of new discoveries, as do most organizations. The quality of improvisation, moreover, further depends on the “grammar” created by the imposed structure (Crossan, 1998: 595). These structures may include common languages, narratives, symbolic images, metaphors; all interpreted by people with unique individual frames of reference.

Many have offered definitions of improvisation and its manifestation in organizational settings by drawing largely from jazz. Kamoche, *et al* (Kamoche, Pina e Cunha et al. 2002: 100-107) provide a thorough compilation of many of these definitions, correlating them both to their original source (such as jazz improvisation), and with their intended application. Of the articles analyzed in their edited book (Pina e Cunha, 2002: 100-107), 36.6 % draw almost exclusively on the jazz analogy for improvisation, while none draw exclusively on theatrical improvisation.

Less than 10% reference theatrical improvisation at all, and always in conjunction with the jazz.

Frank Barrett seeks to understand the relationship between action and learning where individuals fabricate and invent novel responses without prescribed plans and without certainty of outcomes; discovering the future of their actions as they unfold (Barrett, 2002: 139). He examines seven highly exploratory and tentative characteristics of jazz improvisation, which require going to edge of known experience:

- Provocative competence: deliberate effort to interrupt patterns
- Embracing errors as sources of learning
- Shared orientation toward minimal structures that allow maximum flexibility
- Distributed task: continual negotiation and dialogue toward dynamic synchronization
- Reliance on retrospective sensemaking
- Hanging out: membership in a community of practice
- Taking turns soloing and supporting

His experienced-based thesis states progression in jazz requires learning the governing theory and rules, and making these tacit, on which one builds a vocabulary of phrases and patterns, thereby becoming part of a repertoire (Barrett, 2002: 140). A transformation occurs in a player's development when they begin to export materials from different contexts and vantage points, combining, extending, and varying the material as they gradually shift the meaning of previous phrases. This practice may breath life into old forms (Barrett, 2002: 141).

According to the Barrett, many improvisers approach their work with self-reflexiveness to avoid ingrained habits, routines, recipes, conventions, and

so forth, that are encoded through learnings in the past. The improvisation discipline helps them operate in the active thinking mode by intentionally placing themselves in unfamiliar territory and observing the response (Barrett, 2002: 143).

Conversely, interruptions may be used as an affirmation of members as this conveys confidence in individual capacity to improvise. Furthermore, creating unconventional obstacles to habitual thinking inspires others to imagine alternative possibilities; establishing and encouraging mindfulness in the task (Barrett, 2002: 145). Errors are seen as inevitable and something to be assimilated and incorporated into a performance; repeat it, amplify it, and develop it further until it becomes a new pattern. Elevate courageous efforts; not just successes based on an external standard of perfection (Barrett, 2002: 147). A valid organizational counterpart to the song metaphor is rapid prototyping; it leaves enough room to depart and deviate, yet enough structure to build collective confidence (Barrett, 2002: 150).

Barrett shares his awareness of improvisational activities as both a researcher and a jazz musician. The seven characteristics of jazz provide a welcome and thoroughly elaborated structure for comparative study. For instance, would an organization consider paying a consultant to make mistakes to intentionally generate a learning culture? This could introduce intriguing outcomes. Further, the Barrett presents an awkward idea, suggesting jazz players are continuously shaping their musical statements, or discourse, in anticipation of other's expectations, approximating, and predicting what others might say based on what has already happened (Barrett, 2002: 151). This may be a projection and not a common, conscious behavior.



From the aspect of mitigating turbulence in performance, another study assumed a distinct research process perspective, which aimed to understand jazz performance within a time-ordered sequence of events; videotape, written notes during video review, and written observations of others following their viewing of video and reading of the case study report about the performance (Bastien and Hostager, 2002: 15). Turbulence results from both the dynamic individual invention, and coordinating invention with others. New musical ideas are invented, adopted, and implemented through musical structures and social practices in use of rules for musical grammar; similar to conversational discourse. These provide constraints to the turbulence of improvisations. Social practices include behavior norms and communicative codes, employed during performance (Bastien and Hostager, 2002: 17). The interactions occurring in performance require constant visual attention; with more selective focus as the performance continues (Bastien and Hostager, 2002: 20).

In both jazz and business, the social level of structural constraints on behavior involves relatively informal norms and codes that concern interpersonal relations and communication. The level of social structure mediates between task structure and behavior, and is essential for innovation in organizations. Implications suggest that social tasks involving individuals of different knowledge bases will be problematic; social tasks are critically reliant on shared knowledge (Bastien and Hostager, 2002: 25). This research claim, curiously, debunks contemporary applications of diversity teams as the normative approach for all organization projects.

In summary, the jazz analogy does not fully offer executives, managers, workers, and organizations a way to actually increase their competence in improvisation, partially because the skill and talent for jazz is inaccessible to most (Crossan 1998: 594), and even with a high degree of jazz competence, it remains more as a metaphor in need of translation for

practical application in organizational settings. Part of the bias toward this metaphor may be explained by a pre-existing competence or exposure to jazz improvisation by some theorists (Kao 1996; Barrett 1998; Hatch 2002). Moreover, Hatch discusses the role of memory using jazz as a metaphor, citing the improvisational value of memories from prior performances of a piece in influencing how the piece is played *this time*. Here, too, memory serves as a structure where “the future is invited into the present via expectation created by recollection of similar experiences in the past” (Hatch, 2002: 89).

### “Drama”

As previously observed, drama as a metaphor has not received the same attention among researchers as the other forms. Frost and Yarrow’s metaphoric definition of Improvisation represents the dramatic emphasis:

Improvisation: the skill of using bodies, space, all human resources, to generate a coherent physical expression of an idea, a situation, a character (even, perhaps a text); to do this spontaneously, in response to the immediate stimuli of one’s environment, and to do it a l’improviste: as though taken by surprise, without preconceptions - (Frost and Yarrow, 1989).

In several separate articles, Crossan (1996; 1997; 1998) explores the value of theatrical improvisation in both illuminating our understanding of organizational improvisation, and giving direction for actual improvisation skill development for individuals and organizations: “. . . improvisation is more than a metaphor. It is an orientation and a technique to enhance the strategic renewal of an organization. The bridge between theory and practice is made through exercises used to develop the capacity to improvise ( Crossan, 1998: 593).

In performance, improvisers enter an artificial timeframe and world where responses to immediate actions result in unchangeable consequences. Basically, this is thinking in motion. And one must be able to hold short and intermediate range goals simultaneously; expressing the ability to hold a layered image and actually exchanging former patterns for recombinant shapes. It requires recall (Nachmanovitch, 1990; 200). Actors must also rely on others to support the scene, and an audience will continue to be supportive as long as actors themselves are engaged. Lastly, trust and kinship enable individuals to put themselves at risk, operate as a team, and take different leads at various times, and allow toleration for mistakes to make improvisation work. Interestingly, actors experience the stage; interpret the meaning of the stage. But this is not reality for the audience because the audience sees the various dimensions of the performance as well.

The direct analogies provide meaning through the elaboration of patterns of insight. This is contrasted in exploring the difference between traditional orchestrated theatre and improvisation theatre; full scripts and prescribed, well-defined roles, within a constructed set for complimentary context (Crossan and Sorrenti, 2002). Costumes are designed to provide clarity and focus. Acts are rehearsed and controlled. Improvisation uses none of these things. It is flexible, open and unpredictable as well as energized by the audience. Nevertheless, like jazz, improvisational drama builds on traditional structures, and relies on skills acquired in practice (Crossan and Sorrenti, 2002: 37). An equivalent set of stages in improvisational minimal structures might be credos, stories, myths, visions, slogans, mission statements, and trademarks (Cunha, 2002: 149).

The goodness or viability of improvisation is judged by audience response, and is the result of letting the environment shape the actors versus trying to shape the environment. It reflects incremental steps in the

development of the storyline. Individuals focus on intuitive spontaneity and groups focus on trust, friendship and reciprocity; establishing a place where mistakes are tolerated; and rewarding risk taking (Crossan and Sorrenti, 2002: 38). Since much improvisation occurs at the intuitive level, a climate of friendship and trust governs the situation rather than a climate of professionalism and logic. The absence of such an improvisational climate may be the greatest barrier to improvisation (Crossan and Sorrenti, 2002: 44). The researchers explain the contribution of improvisation to get performances back on track, though spontaneous action must be sufficient and be performed within the limits of the character's personality and the direction of the dramatic action (Crossan and Sorrenti, 2002: 44).

Finally, Thomson observed some of the capacities developed by graduate students who learned collaboration via improvisation games. These capacities included idea flow, freedom from judgment, "true listening and authentic response, surrendering to the unexpected, and the equal authority and creativity of questions and answers." Conversely, Thomson reported, "improvisation demonstrates how quickly conversations can fall apart when the anxiety for knowing interferes with the quest" (Thomson, 2003: 123-4).

Where jazz provides a useful metaphor for theoretical understanding, theatrical improvisation provides both metaphor and the opportunity to develop transferable skills for the practice of organizational improvisation. However, there are few studies that describe the development of such transferable skills through dramatic improvisation training.

### *"Story Telling"*

Others, including Crossan (1996; Fleming, 2001), have linked core competencies of improvisation, and story development, to strategy

development, further articulating the role of stories in improving and dispersing organizational memory. Crossan states emergent strategy is intuitive, action-oriented, spontaneous, in the moment, bottom-up, and ongoing (Crossan, 1998). Good storylines are plausible, cohesive, and anticipate customer and audience needs.

Stories are told everyday at work. By listening, leaders can learn when and how to use those stories to communicate vision, values and meaning. Listening to work stories provides important information about the people in the organization. It gives leaders clues about how to communicate with different types of people. Stories that emerge from the history of the organization become powerful anchoring tools for the present and the future; reviewing past success provides a map for navigating the terrain of the current cycle (Fleming, 2001: 36).

Improvisation could be conceived as the art of creating stories, in real time, and “in response to the immediate stimuli of the environment” (Frost and Yarrow, 1989: 1). In theatrical improvisation, these stories become part of the players’ memory, particularly in long-form improvisation, and become “givens” (non-negotiable boundaries or plots) within which the players continue to make discoveries, expand upon and explore. The ability to accept (and remember) the givens is central to improvisational success. “Improvisation is not just grounded in forms, but memory. Forms and memory and practice are all key determinants of success in improvisation that are easy to miss if analysts become preoccupied with spontaneous composition”(Weick, 2002: 59).

A key challenge to improvisation is recognizing when the story is losing effect, and redirecting it; this requires personal intuition. In both improvisational storytelling and unfolding organizational “stories” the content becomes a structure, or “given,” that is both the result of the

existing structure and the foundation for additional structure, similar to the process Giddens describes as “duality of structure” in which “properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize” (Giddens, 1984: 24).

### *“Play”*

Basing his observations on the sources of spontaneous creation, such as art, music, and craft, Nachmanovitch strives to explain, or more readily identify, the full use of human imagination (Nachmanovitch, 1990). The classic notion of seeing something others may not see, and releasing it from the material at hand, is a component of finding an authentic voice - in the moment. Improvisation is characterized as uncovering patterns; playing over themes and motifs. A key to discovering extemporaneous potential is found in the idea of reuniting composition and performance, that is, form and function.

The author employs the analogy with “play” to convey the intrinsic attributes of improvisation. Play sharpens the adaptive capacity to address change in context or conditions (Nachmanovitch, 1990: 45). Archetypes are used to demonstrate roles, symbols, and rituals expressed in play for common understanding, while permitting individuals to embody imaginative, transformative acts. He also offers important declarations about the nature of practice as a preparation for performance; real work. There is an inherent confusion related to acquiring a skill through practice. It is described as an artifact of the Western society work ethic. The author, conversely, suggests practice is more appropriately aligned with experimentation without fear of consequences; trying what we cannot do yet. “Mastery comes from practice; practice comes from playful, compulsive experimentation” (Nachmanovitch, 1990: 73). Our skills become

unconscious with practice, and practice is effectively a “repertoire” of procedures we invent to enable context-free innovation.

Nachmanovitch claims originality may be practiced in the repetitive process of finding open-ended provisional breakthroughs (Nachmanovitch, 1990: 11). This is not a linear organisation of knowledge or evidence. Instead, the conditions for improvisation begin with inspiration enacted in time with the will to create; improvisation expands in kind with conversations consisting of vocabulary and grammar (Nachmanovitch, 1990: 21). Moreover, the performance is the frame in which the actor exercises, or not, the unique presence of mind (surrender) to allow one to create through technique, not with it.

This understanding of improvisation as play has a reflexive quality. Each episode of life introduces an unscripted moment, from which self-perception, learning, and expectation construct our conscious thoughts when no conscious plan exists. According to the author, these reflexive interludes follow certain boundary-like rules; there is limited randomness in improvisation. Continuing, the association of virtue acted from impulse, not rules, is presented as an example of a self-creating, organizing structure. Impulse in this sense is not composed of random acts of wildness, but in civilized gestures of surrender. There is a “deep seeing of the underlying patterns beneath appearances.” (Nachmanovitch, 1990: 31) The concept reflects the principle that all enacted activity must be interpreted with some form of grammar, and play helps get around the obstacles (Weick, 1979: 248).

An awareness of giving attention to interruptions is another dimension of reflection, which opens new vantage points for seeing a familiar situation in a new light (Nachmanovitch, 1990: 154). Obstacles to innovation and insight may best be overcome with a pause, or stepping back, and these

interventions enable learning as well as provide a means of not concentrating on the problem so as to recognize it better. Again, the author is at odds with convention in explaining a contrary predisposition to idea that the world consists of things and forces that move things (Nachmanovitch, 1990: 143).

Though not positioning itself as an academic, scholarly work, the book presents influential ideas on the subject of applied improvisation. It also presents an enormously rich table of images and collectable phrases; in themselves very original. Repeated sorting through these concepts confirms, however, the admittedly Eastern orientation reveals constructive metaphors for institutional application to successful implementation of improvisational approaches. Nachmanovitch also adopts jazz composition and performance as a learning metaphor for applied improvisation from which reactions, or responses, to unforeseen and unexpected conditions, events, meanings, and so forth, may be understood. In this context, jazz improvisation is a reflection of play attributes in this context.

Nachmanovitch summarizes improvisation as the tacit process by which individuals and groups rework and reenact plans, structures, controls, authority, and procedures when unanticipated views and situations occur in the moment. Ultimately, improvisation requires discipline and experience because one must absorb a broad base of knowledge and conventions to build ideas logically, cogently, and expressively (Nachmanovitch, 1990: 492). Rapid processing of experienced information is a core attribute of this capacity. What stands out in this assessment is the potential of “images” have on breaking free of conventional conformities in thinking. The work influences my research from the aspect of the venturesome, cross-disciplinary approach stylized in mental models that are accessible to everyone. This artistic orientation summarizes the essence of improvisation as a self-liberating tool, which removes the door hinges for



experimentation with new ideas. The book represents one of the strongest arguments for study of applied improvisation. Its' breadth accommodates various disciplinary fields, while offering a synthesis of the key subject leverage points. The concept of the diminishing quality of increased tempo suggest research questions about what conditions contribute to good improvisation over encumbered.

### *“Renewal”*

Another researcher posits improvisation is more than a metaphor; it is an orientation and technique to enhance the strategic renewal of an organization. In fact, it forms a basis of comparison for traditional theatre in which the relationship between actors is defined by a script for specialized roles. She explains, “What we do not see is the drama, intonation, expression, and pauses for effect that bring dialogue to life” (Crossan, 1998: 595). Improvisation breaks the mold where action is spontaneous and intuitive. Structure imposes grammar through which actions are interpreted; structure enlivens rules and procedures as language, storyline, and many different frames.

Organizations are often plagued by the inability of members to breakout of familiar patterns of interpreting. The author sets several principles: the environment will teach you if you let it, rather than trying to control it; one can free up intuition by carrying out contradictory actions; new understanding must be reflected in the patterns of action of the organization to be effective; individuals take different lead at different times, and this highlights the need for individuals to expand their set of competencies in order to take on a variety of roles; yes-anding where one accepts the offer and builds on it within a common goal is key. Moorman and Miner also cite the proximity of the thought and action, or stimulus and

response, as a critical determinant of successful improvisation (Crossan, 1998: 596).

In conclusion, lack of attention to improvisation relates to the idea that no skill or quality can be taught from it, and that improvised action is considered inferior to planned action; we employ improvisation only when planning breaks down (Crossan and Sorrenti, 2002). All ad hoc action is not improvisation; simply a dimension of planning (Crossan and Sorrenti, 2002: 29). Again, confusion persists as frequently the emergent nature of strategy is entitled improvisation (Crossan and Sorrenti, 2002: 34). Whereas an outcome may have an “elegant logic” in retrospect, it should not be confuse the original intention with the outcome (Crossan and Sorrenti, 2002: 35). The unconscious process is based on distilled experience and recognition of patterns, whose quality depends on awareness of a particular domain, such as jazz, painting, and so forth. It is resident energy stored as potential (Crossan and Sorrenti, 2002: 30). However, learning is not synonymous with improvisation (Crossan and Sorrenti, 2002: 48).

For example, sololists encourage exchange of ideas by leaving space in performance; spacemaking and filling are spontaneous as performers listen, creating and filling it with logic that emerges as part of the interaction between players (Hatch, 2002: 76). A logical parallel with organization success suggest instruments for listening and responding may help or hinder player awareness concerning when to solo, when to end, and how. This process creates performance interpretation language versus forcing it (Hatch, 2002: 79). Mistakes are defined by their context, so agreement to change the context can save the situation; moreover, changing language may change an organization (Hatch, 2002: 77).

A further distinction is made between incremental, full spectrum, and solitary improvisation, which acknowledge the attributes of sudden, transformation change in the style of punctuated equilibrium.

Improvisation, however, is not simply “spontaneous composition.” Rather, as forms, memory, and practice combine to enable self-reflexive backward analysis, which extends the formative conversation between an emerging patterns and existent features such as formal composition, previous interpretations, and responsiveness to the audience, among many.

It is noted, the capacity to think on one’s feet may not be attractive to an organization because: one, incremental change is the norm; two, improvisation in one unit may compound problems in another; three, profusion of innovations demands support services; four, values of rigor, reliable performance, and repeatable standards do not sustain the search for novelty and evolution; and five, customers are perceived as not rewarding originality (Nachmanovitch, 1990). Furthermore, increasing the pace and/or velocity of activity does not result in creative experimentation and improvisation, rather, it rapidly pushes people back into old ideas and mental frameworks; musicians embrace improvisation techniques to respond to surprises whereas managers want to avoid surprises. In fact, successful innovations draw organizations away from the improvisational sources that led to the original innovations.

### ***2.3.2 Improvisation Processes***

The techniques of spontaneity may be taught, as in theatre training, or commercial product innovation. Improvisation also has a complimentary, intuitive attribute of improvisation as well, which seems to work as an extension of more traditional and fundamental skills (Crossan, 1998: 593). The intuitional process makes quality improvisation possible (Weick, 1998: 544), if not somewhat mysterious. In each instance, a tension exists as the original model is transformed, within a pretext, and something fresh emerges (Weick, 1998: 546).

Crossan and Sorrenti acknowledge a less tangible, but essential dimension in their definition of improvisation as “intuition guiding action in a spontaneous way” (Crossan and Sorrenti 1997: 155). Referring to Mintzberg’s study (1973: 36) finding that over 90% of CEO’s verbal interactions were spontaneous, the authors suggest that one might conclude improvisation would be a highly studied area in the management literature. Given this has not been the pattern implies two possible biases: 1) it is difficult to isolate or improve individual competence in spontaneous behavior; and 2) “improvisational action is often considered inferior to planned action: one reverts to improvisation only when planning breaks down” (Crossan and Sorrenti 1997: 156). The planning bias not only inhibits organisations from supporting their members in developing improvisation competence, an over-reliance on planning, itself, fosters an environment that stifles new ideas, insights and discoveries (Mintzberg 1994: 12).

Laying the foundation for further empirical study Pina e Cunha et al (2002: 111) cite Miner et al’s narrower definition of organizational improvisation that establishes criteria for the instances of true improvisation as a response to the unexpected *and* unplanned (Miner, Moorman et al. 1996). They reflect on rationalizing that an event can be unexpected (as when an air craft loses cabin pressure), but not unplanned for (oxygen masks automatically drop from the overhead bin, a procedure for which passengers have been prepared). When the event is both unexpected *and* unplanned for (as they were for passengers on the flights overtaken by terrorists on September 11, 2001), participants must improvise. It is impossible for anyone to be so well trained, educated and experienced that they are prepared for all unexpected and unplanned for events. Multiple times each day, individuals are called to improvise. The chances for individual success in improvisation can be greatly increased through skill development, while organisational success is dependent on additional factors (Pina e Cunha, Viera da Cunha et al. 2002: 115 -123) including:

- 1) *Experimental culture* grounded in “values and beliefs that promote action and experimentation—as opposed to reflection and planning—as a way of understanding reality.”
- 2) *Minimal structure* or controls imposed on people in organizations.
- 3) *A low procedural memory*: While Moorman and Miner (1997: 91) find a positive link between memory dispersal and organizational improvisation, they find that a high level of procedural memory inhibits improvisation.
- 4) *Leadership*: As with organizational memory, leadership can either encourage or stifle improvisation. An improvisation-friendly leader is one whose style supports collaboration, without heavy-handed controls or monitoring.
- 5) *Member’s Characteristics*. Skill in individuals’ practice area, skill in improvisation, and heterogeneous group composition all support organizational improvisation.
- 6) *Information Flow* between the environment and the organization, and within the organization is also considered important for the success of improvisation.
- 7) *Organizational Configuration* which, along with minimal structures, fosters trusting relationships, and a safe environment for exploration and risk-taking.

The presence of these conditions affords a greater chance for both the incidence and success of organizational improvisation. The complementary individual agent qualities may be explored via four primary characteristics.

First, improvisation involves reworking pre-composed material and designs in relation to unanticipated ideas conceived, shaped and transformed under the special conditions of performance, thereby adding unique features to every creation. (Berliner, 1994:241) Improvisation does not involve the complete discarding of planning, but a change in how planning is done and in how the plan is viewed (Isenberg, 1987: 92). What improvisation appears to allow is concurrency: an opportunity to design, act, learn, reflect and renew as parallel and complementary undertakings rather than as linear and competing activities (Weick and Westley, 1996).

Second, the concept of improvisational bricolage is well developed in the literature. Described as “the ability to build solutions from available resources” (Pina e Cunha, Viera da Cunha et al. 2002: 99), bricolage necessarily occurs in time bound situations. If time were not a limitation, the participants would be able to find optimal resources rather than making due with what is at hand. The authors bring us closest to a working definition of improvisation that describes its manifestation in both the arts and organizations. Linking the concepts of time-bounded action and available resources, Pina e Cunha *et al* define improvisation as “...the conception of action as it unfolds, drawing on available material, cognitive, affective and social resources” (2002: 99)

Third, Karl Weick composes an essay recognizing the concept of rearranging the order and control of organisations for the purpose of adaptation (Weick, 1998). He describes improvisation as “guided activity whose guidance comes from elapsed patterns discovered retrospectively.” This suggests people act in order to think, thereafter leading to sensemaking, rather than decision-making, as a primary quality of improvisation. A sequenced chain of interpretation, embellishment, and variation lead to improvisation in a more nuanced order of sensemaking activity.

Fourth, thinking of improvisation as a skill developed and refined through practice suggests that improvisation can be progressively honed until proficiency is reached (Crossan et al., 1996, Weick, 1998). Its emphasis on experiencing, experimenting, and incremental development, lends itself to work-based methodologies that support ‘designing-by-doing’, thereby enacting strategy. What improvisation allows is concurrency: an opportunity to design, act, learn, reflect and renew as parallel and complementary undertakings rather than as linear and competing activities (Weick and Westley, 1996: 442). This makes improvisation a viable model from which to train people in use of social media, for example, for contemporary environments.

If improvisation is to some degree a skill (rather than an illusive “talent”) this is positive for individuals and organisations wishing to improve their response ability. Barrett (Barrett, 1998: 606) and Weick (Weick, 2002: 170) call these the skills of a “disciplined imagination.” Weick expands on the theme that “improvisation does not materialize out of thin air” (Weick, 2002: 58) by citing “the extensive amount of practice necessary to pull off successful improvisation” (Weick, 2002b: 67). In reflecting on the tragedy of Mann Gulch, where 13 smoke jumpers lost their lives in 1949, Weick wrote, “If improvisation were given more attention in the job description of a crew person, that person’s receptiveness to and generation of role improvisations might be enhanced” (Weick, 1993: 636).

Improvisation is close to the root process of organizing, and organizing itself consists primarily of embellishing small structures (Weick, 1998). Characteristics of groups with high capability and potential for improvisation within these organization structures have the following characteristics:

- Willingness to forego planning and rehearsal in favor of acting in real time
- Well developed understanding of internal resources and materials that are at hand
- Proficiency without blueprints and diagnosis
- Ability to identify or agree on minimal structures for embellishing
- Openness to reassembly of and departures from routines
- Rich and meaningful sets of themes, fragments, or phases on which to draw for ongoing lines of action
- Predisposal to recognize partial relevance of previous experience to present novelty
- High confidence in skill to deal with non-routine events
- The presence of associates similarly committed to and competent at impromptu making to
- Skill at paying attention to other's performance of others and building on it to maintain interaction and to set up interesting possibilities for one another
- Ability to maintain the pace and tempo at which others are extemporizing
- Focus on coordination here and now, undistracted by memories or anticipation
- Preference for and comfort with process rather than structure, making it easier to work with ongoing development, restructuring, and realization of outcomes, and easier to postpone the question, "...*what will it have to amount to?*"



## 2.4 *Minimal Structures*

Minimal structures have been characterized as central to the creativity and innovativeness of jazz musicians. They provide coordination without hampering creativity. The claim suggests that either there is too little structure, or the wrong kind of structure, in organizations, and that is what makes it hard for them to innovate (Weick, 1999:180). The structure of jazz provides the material idea upon which jazz musicians improvise. Its' use of structure in creative ways enables them to alter the structural foundations (Hatch, 1999:78).

To help describe variants of minimal structures, many researchers summarize them within the analogy with jazz developed by Bastien and Hostager, 1988, distinguished in two general categories: 1) *social structures*: behavioural norms; communicative codes; partnering in an autonomous ensemble; soloing/comping; high trust and zones of manoeuvre; risk-taking attitudes; supportive culture; and 2) *technical structures*: definition of key, chord progression and repertoire; template of a song, chorus or riff; wide stock of talent; knowledge of music technology and instrumentation. These characteristics reflect the musical context of jazz improvisation in a compelling manner, and provide a common, rational baseline for generating knowledge. Songs are understood to be cognitively held rules for musical innovation. Improvisation is based on the repetition of the song structure (Bastien and Hostager, 1988: 585).

Others, expressing these same principles, think jamming stresses coordination of action over the alignment of cognitions, mutual respect over agreement, trust over empathy, diversity over heterogeneity, loose rather than tight coupling, and strategic communication over unrestricted candor [social]. Creativity is enhanced when emphasis is placed on coordinating action with minimal consensus, minimal disclosure, and

minimal site as simple structures. Modest structures value ambiguity of meaning over clarity, preserve indeterminacy as well as the paradox over excessive disclosure (Eisenberg, 1990:160). Weick suggests that the value of a minimal structure is that small structure such as a simple melody [technical], general assumptions, and incomplete expectations can all lead to large outcomes and effective action (Weick, 1989; 242).

In either determination, a minimal structure can be described as a small set of big rules. More precisely, minimal structures can be defined as coordination devices that attempt to focus the activities of people around a common set of goals and deadlines without limiting their discretion in deciding how best to reach these goals (Kamoche and Cunha, 2001:740). One observation is improvisational freedom is only possible against a well-defined and generally simple backdrop of rules and roles. This tacit agreement allows making do with a minimal set of commonalities and elaborating simple structures in complex ways (Eisenberg, 1990:154).

Structures are construed to be nonnegotiable, impersonal limitations; musicians do not have to stop to create agreements long way; tacit rules are rarely articulated. Musicians know the chord changes, which coordinate action (Barrett, 1998:612). However, soloists encourage the exchange of ideas by leaving space in their playing for other musicians to make suggestions. Space making and filling are more spontaneous than simple openings. Musicians listen to the playing of other musicians and, in listening, spaces are created and filled as part of the interaction of the musicians. This simultaneous listening and playing produces the characteristic give-and-take of live jazz improvisation and also provides the conditions for conflict that can introduce the unexpected that inspires performance excellence, but also risks disaster (Hatch, 1999:79).

Representations of minimal structure emerge in everyday organization activities. In the organizational context, the presence of minimal structures were identified in the most effective new product development teams, demonstrating the necessary fulfillment of providing a semi-structure, which combines specific guidelines and a high degree of flexibility (e.g., responsibilities, project priorities, time intervals between projects). Semi-structures exhibit partial order, and they lie between the extremes of very rigid and highly chaotic organization (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997:28). The limited structure provides the overarching framework without which there are too many degrees of freedom. The communication allows the players to coordinate and mutually adjust within that framework. Together, people can adaptively accomplish tasks even as the context is changing (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997:15). As knowledgeable human agents, their actions may also have the consequence of transforming the very structures that enable them with the capacity to act (Giddens, 1976:161). Coordination is assumed to be a mature capability in this context.

Certain organization forms may promote the use of minimal structures. Under varying conditions, Ouchi claims mediation and control are necessary to influence individual cooperation, and reduce transaction costs through the elimination of barriers (Ouchi, 1980: 129-130). Minimal structures may represent an improvisation on conditions resulting in a more fluid, seamless transaction between individuals in several ways. First, transaction costs associated with realizing equities are reduced as overlapping cognitive frames begin to facilitate perceptual co-evolution of common conditions. As people engage minimal structures, they contribute to the large whole, and become more accommodating of varying frames. This asymmetrical value relationship inversely shapes the conditions of the transaction (Ouchi, 1980: 130).

Second, the socialization of minimal structures as sensemaking devices produces changes in the nature or standards of reciprocity (Ouchi, 1980: 132). “When tasks become highly unique, completely integrated, or ambiguous...,” (Ouchi, 1980: 134) the clan-like behavior and social orientation of minimal structures in practice offers more congruent conditions of exchange. However, Ouchi’s views do not entirely support the premise of minimal structures as a means of enacting improvisational routines. The common values and beliefs reflected in homogenous clans (Ouchi, 1980: 138) appear to be in opposition to the general themes in the improvisation literature, which place ideas such as stability in the posture of a springboard to independent rather than interdependent behavior.

Concluding this section on minimal structures, a thorough review of existing improvisation and other strategy management literature yields a rudimentary list of proposed minimal structure themes and attributes, Table 2.1. The limited quantity of references, underdeveloped nature of descriptions, and sparse follow-on field studies, inhibit a more robust account and comparative research illustrations. This may result from several factors: apparent challenges of integrating concepts about improvisational minimal structures into traditional arguments; perceived barriers or inability to adequately conduct further empirical research; a obvious demand for cross-disciplinary study; the unclear application of appropriate research methodology; and the general limitations, or weaknesses, in the predominant Jazz metaphor to produce extended theorization. These may provide rich landscapes for validation in future research, and there could be numerous other obstacles and difficulties arising in practice. I am curious, however, even given these and other possible challenges, why the potential of minimal structures has not been thoroughly investigated, mined, and exploited to address questions, or identify gaps, in organization strategy management theory?

Table 2.1: List of Minimal Structure Themes and Attributes

Minimal Structure Themes:	Minimal Structure Attributes:
Trust	Nonnegotiable, impersonal limitations with no need to stop to create agreements long way; tacit rules are rarely articulated. (Barrett, 1998)
	Social structures with behavioral norms; communicative codes; partnering in an autonomous ensemble; soloing/comping; high trust and zones of manoeuvre; risk-taking attitudes; supportive culture (Bastien and Hostager, 1988)
	Coordinate action with minimal consensus, minimal disclosure, and minimal site. (Eisenberg, 1984)
	Small set of big rules defined as coordination devices to focus the activities of people around a common set of goals and deadlines without limiting their discretion deciding how best to reach goals. (Kamoche and Cunha, 2001)
	Effective new product development teams use semi-structures, which combine specific guidelines, partial order, and a high degree of flexibility. (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997)
	Credos, stories, myths, visions, slogans, mission statements, trademarks. (Weick, 1990)
	Repetition of cognitively held rules. (Bastien and Hostager, 1988)
	Improvisation tilts the balance between economy and interdependence toward autonomy, so the form is well-suited for innovation, requisite arriving, new ideas, and

	multiple at-bats. (Weick, 1999)
	Stress coordination of action over the alignment of cognitions, mutual respect over agreement, trust over empathy, diversity over heterogeneity, loose verses tight coupling, and strategic communication over unrestricted candor. (Eisenberg, 1984)
<b>Pace</b>	Link products together over time through rhythmic transition processes. (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997)
	Attention to ongoing temporal coordination driving innovations and avoiding organization segmentation. (Weick, 1990)
<b>Conflict</b>	Purposeful omission of contextual cues allows for multiple interpretations; tensions and ambiguity promoting a sense of unity. (Eisenberg, 1984)
	Simultaneous listening and acting produces give-and-take of live improvisation and provides conditions for conflict that introduce the unexpected that inspires performance excellence and risks. (Hatch, 1999)
	Process improvement through diversity and minimal consensus. (Hedberg, Nystrom, and Starbuck, 1976)
	Minimum of agreements between actors keep the events moving. (Weick, 1999)
<b>Ambiguity</b>	Minimal constraints allow freedom to express considerable diversity. (Barrett, 1998)
	Enable combinations of previously unrelated material, introducing incremental alterations. (Barrett, 1998)
	Adaptively accomplish tasks even as the context is changing. (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997)
	Experiment with a wide variety of low-cost probes. (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997)

	Pragmatic and hermeneutic rather than analytic. (Hatch, 1999)
	Value ambiguity of meaning over clarity, preserve indeterminacy and the paradox over excessive disclosure. (Eisenberg, 1984)
<b>Spatial</b>	Impose order and create a continuous sense of cohesion and coordination where actor's location is known at any given moment. (Barrett, 1998)
	Innovate and collaborate on ideas with the assurance that actors are oriented to a common place. (Barrett, 1998)
	Function like a prototype design pattern upon which actors model creative variations on basic structures. (Barrett, 1998)
	Provides the overarching framework without which there are too many degrees of freedom. (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997)
	Technical structures provide definition of key, chord progression and repertoire; template of a song, chorus or riff; wide stock of talent; knowledge of music technology and instrumentation. (Bastien and Hostager, 1988)
	Semi-structured state is a dissipative equilibrium. (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997)
	Backdrop of commonalities and elaborating simple rule and role structures in complex ways. (Eisenberg, 1984)
	Use of structure in creative ways enables alterations to the structural foundations. (Hatch, 1999)
	Encourages exchange of ideas by leaving space for others to make suggestions; space making and filling are more spontaneous than simple openings. (Hatch, 1999)
	Maximize ambiguity and potential for interpretive

	multiplicity; not playing structures creates space to improvise, producing a framebreaking attitude that provokes the creative imagination. (Hatch, 1999)
	Small set of big rules defined as coordination devices to focus the activities of people around a common set of goals and deadlines without limiting their discretion deciding how best to reach goals. (Kamoche and Cunha, 2001)
	Implicit and tacit that frees creative capabilities and the unique ability to manage the paradox of flexibility and structure. (Kamoche and Cunha, 2001)
	Guides rather than constrains action, providing a flag to certain basic conditions actors must realize to achieve a successful performance, and enjoy multiple variations beyond. (Kamoche and Cunha, 2001)
	Circumvents too little structure or the wrong kind of structure in organizations. (Weick, 1999)
	Encourages simultaneous cooperation and individuation, simultaneous closeness and independence. (Weick, 1999)
	Small and simple structure, general assumptions, and incomplete expectations lead to large outcomes and effective action. (Weick, 1989)

## 2.5 *Formative Ideas*

The core attributes and contrasting relationships among literature data represented in Table 2.1, situate them in five general groupings for which I provide higher order definitions in this section. The groupings are the basis for locating and developing “formative ideas” regarding the literature descriptions about minimal structures, which then enable identification of consistent themes in the evidential case study and data analysis stages of my research. The five formative ideas are:



First, the idea of *trust* emerged from the literature as an apparently important ingredient in the ongoing improvisation with and predictable leverage of minimal structures among people. Limited use of formal agreements and lack of pervasive, rigid structures is an acceptable compromise to achieve something not necessarily defined as the original outcome. Actors place trust in roles before conformity to rules, though essential, tacit rules guide individual choices as the norm. This orientation encourages multiple chances to experiment, test conventions, and to succeed.

Second, *pace* is referenced as a driver to successful use of minimal structures. The attention to a temporal reference, or variable, is suggested for adequate coordination among actors. However, this factor of pace does not appear to dictate sequential, step-wise behavior as a means of tight synchronization of activities, but rather releases actors to exercise independent judgment and conduct their respective activities in a parallel, spontaneous manner.

Third, authors acknowledge the potential of minimal structures as mediating tools, or mindsets, when addressing *conflict*. In fact, the disruptions associated with conflicts are welcome, and anticipated forms of increasing the dialogue among actors. A diversity of perspectives, and loose implementation approaches, produce disagreement, which minimal structures are equipped to positively, and creatively, manage.

Fourth, *ambiguity* is an idea that surfaces in various literature references. Minimal structures give the impression of promoting and sustaining a productive tension between expectations and discovery. These structures help manage complexity and paradox, rather than resist their convoluted and erratic interruptions, and facilitate unity and confidence building.

Five, the emergence of a *spatial* dimension is further expressed in the sense of place, and space; knowing where others will be located at a given time. The minimal structure is inherently spatial, offering relational insights about closeness and distance, means and ends, cohesion and independence, and so forth. This embryonic attribute suggests a new cognitive frame for interpretation, discourse, and innovation. Deliberate creation of small, mobile space for framebreaking is a unique concept in the literature primarily describing instances of music performance.

Summary of Formative Ideas from the literature review:

- **Trust** contributes to improvisational strategy using minimal structures
- **Pace** generates demand for minimal structures to improve strategy sense-making
- **Conflicts** create opportunities for strategy improvisation with minimal structures
- **Ambiguity** concerning strategy adoption demands an interpretive structure
- **Spatial** minimal structures are used to interpret strategy alternatives in practice

I reviewed and tested these five formative ideas as potential research variables used to develop explanations about minimal structures, and thorough the interviews and ground theory data analysis process highlighted in Chapter 5, was led to maintain a more narrow study scope of one particular aspect of the minimal structure phenomena: Spatial.

Furthermore, there are viable reasons for this choice outlined as follows. First, trust is a difficult to define and confusing concept to analyze (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman, 1995: 710), and may encompass a broad spectrum of

orientations and meanings to strategic management (Williamson, 1993: 453, 455). Moreover, high initial trust is viewed as multi-dimensional paradox, which is difficult to reconcile empirically across the literature (McKnight, Cummings, and Chervany, 1998: 477). Additionally, whereas trust appear to be an important factor in the use of improvisation when implementing minimal structures in Jazz performance, I felt it is not clear that interpersonal trust is a necessary and sufficiently persistent factor in intrapersonal agent improvisation to warrant an further investigation at this time. This decision was confirmed in the relatively abstract views of trust expressed by interview participants, and reflected in observation notes themes, which suggest a complexity outside my capacity to incorporate in the scope of this research.

Second, the idea of pace, or time, is deliberately excluded from the research. Time has been perceived as something innate to social behavior, bounded, and bundled due to material constraints (Hagerstrand, 1975: 247), and experienced as a serial phenomena, similar to a pathway (Hagerstrand, 1978: 123). This perspective focuses on the physical constraints in human activity, deemphasizing socially constructed meaning. Foucault assumes a different orientation toward time, claiming disciplinary power is used to partition and enclose time as a source of direct manipulation (Foucault, 1979: 143-144, 160). These theses concerning time were not clearly represented in the case study data, and therefore, did not earn a place in research analysis. Time, as understood by study participants, was not a core factor in improvisational activities; scales for demarcation of intervals between events or within processes functioned more like permeable, socially constructed impressions rather than hard, confined chronological stages.

Third, I struggled with the option to further investigate attributes of ambiguity as a factor of minimal structures. I recalled Weick's construct

that actions taken by individuals, or groups, allow sensemaking to occur, so without action, there is nothing to judge or interpret, and this raises ambiguity (Weick, 1969). I concluded my internal debate quickly with adherence to the idea that social reality can only be attributed to concrete interactional processes, and studied from the perspective of the participant's interpretation of those actions (Blumer, 1962: 190). Ambiguity is a shape-shifting research abyss, which would consume significant analysis time while creating significant subjectivity challenges in my research. I also found interview participants struggled most with this question, and I therefore resolved to postpone the analysis of this severely murky and intangible factor.

Fourth, interpreting minimal structures as conflicts provides one means of framing and organizing meaning, but it also frames involvement of participants in distractive ways, such as informing and regulating the interpretation of all events in common within an activity (Goffman, 1974: 345, 347). Often researchers recognize human tendency to avoid conflict with agreements and consensus, even when we do not accept certain rules or trust those with whom we engage (Maslow, 1965: 337; Robey, 1986: 177). For similar reasons stated above with respect to ambiguity, I considered this factor to be outside the scope of my investigation to conduct adequate conflict analysis, given the complexity of this factor, with my available resources.

Lastly, I also considered power as a fundamental attribute of improvisation with minimal structures. Power is most frequently associated with the ability to influence or control the actions of others so as to do something they would not have done otherwise (Dahl, 1957: 202; Magee, Galinsky, and Gruenfeld, 2007: 201), to achieve outcomes (Giddens, 1984: 257) using various forms such as rewards, coercion, legitimacy, expertise, and referent power (French and Raven, 1968: 259). These latter two

characteristics, expert and referent power, most often result in building a climate of trust (Pfeffer, 1993), thereby demonstrating the complexity of combining an analysis of multiple attributes of minimal structures in a single case study. Though the empowering aspects of internal coordination offer a promising venue into strategic management practice in general, I thought the factor of power in the use of minimal structures as personal cognitive structures is limiting and inappropriate for the purposes of my study. In fact, power factors can too easily lead into arguments for attributing “modes of domination” to all social systems (Bourdieu, 1977:190-191). Assuming minimal structures are the obvious constructs of institutions, and the power exercised therein, for instance, negates the potentially new relational voices and dynamic paradigms that may “emerge out of social interaction rather than being viewed solely as constraints to individual behavior” (Cumbers, McKinnon, and McMaster, 2003: 327, 337).

## ***2.6 Focused Research Questions***

This empirical step of gathering rich data for analysis produces two key research questions. The questions formally reflect particular gaps, or dilemmas, regarding my understanding of minimal structures, and assist in the organization and bounding of my study area. They are also primed by my experiential understand the phenomenon of strategic management. The forthcoming selection of my research method is also shaped by the nature of these questions. The two focused research questions are:

Q1: How are minimal structures *created* and *used* to frame strategy in practice?

Q2: How do minimal structures *contribute* to strategy coherence and sensemaking?

The questions emphasize inquiry about the strategy processes used by

strategy practitioners, and their interpreted outcomes of participating in those processes. Minimal structure literature, what exists of it, is thick in description of the perceived mental models and collaboration benefits, but presents limited insights about the actual process of doing minimal structures in real organization settings, and inadequate applied research from which to draw enhanced theoretical findings.

## **2.7 Literature Review Summary**

The review of literature affords me a paradoxically broader as well as narrower scope of research themes than initially anticipated. Broader from the perspective of apparent, unexplored opportunities to *investigate cross-disciplinary literature data sources* for improved insights about minimal structures; and the assumption of a narrower, or applied, *definition of minimal structures in contrast to the dominant concept of rules*.

Ultimately, the answers usually lie not at the extremes, but in how the contradictions are reconciled in practice, and testing the validity of persistent beliefs must be unbundle (Mintzberg, 1998: 360, 363). To begin to accomplish the unbundling objective, I make several critical observations regarding the literature I surveyed in this chapter.

One, a common thread is woven across all four areas of literature review. The aspect of the increasing attraction of understanding agents as enactors of strategy, as opposed to simply recipients, is clearly expressed in the research writings. This perspective assumes an important role for individual actors, and displays a coherent view toward the human side of strategy. I see the research linkages forming between emergent strategy proponents, SaP researchers, and the early, less developed conjectures of improvisation and minimal structure. However, the conceptual unity breaks down with respect to the required skills and capacity necessary for agents to fulfill their potential as strategists. The emphasis on agency without contextual specifics appears to diminish their contributions because they each

reinforce, to various degrees, a material-personal consciousness dualism. Agents still seem to exist to serve the purposes of strategy, though at a much greater personal utility than previously encountered in deliberate strategic management views.

Two, the principles of experimentation with strategies as a natural component of work has additionally been present as a theme. This idea is primarily expressed as a hermeneutical exercise rather than actual production activities; in this case, agents talk about and consume strategy differently. Whereas improvisation gains traction as a viable discourse tool, for instance, the true attributes of improvisation as a practice are not fully recognized. The theme leaves gap in the literature for discussing the embedded creation of things in contrast to more or different ideas.

Third, the literature generally explains a collective dissatisfaction with the normative structures of strategic management. The concentrated points of this criticism range from strategy planning to resources to enablement of the social construction of meaning, and numerous other perspectives. What remains interesting to me is the concept of personal values is never addressed in these research dialogues. It presents itself like academic segregation; we cannot talk about ethics and values in the context of the stuff of hard strategy. I believe this isolated approach bounds and severely limits the nature of strategic management research as it reflect emergent and practice based theory building.

My emerging theoretical sensitivity toward the Strategy as Practice perspective of study, and in particular, the promise of expanding understanding of minimal structures for strategic management practices, lead me to three immediate conclusions about the appropriate direction of my research. Moreover, the practice view of strategy illuminates the concept of *process* further, understanding it as “a sequence of individual

and collective events, actions, and activities unfolding over time in context” (Pettigrew, 1997: 337). Several implications are apparent for the research design.

First, minimal structures are difficult to explain. They emerge, or appear to emerge, as a practiced set of fabrications used to constitute effective coordination. Whereas the outcome of using them may produce an observable material artifact, minimal structures are far more likely to be represented as cognitive structures, which direct actor attention and behavior, especially in collective activities. Subsequently, my research method should support a data collection process that is receptive to situated, *socially constructed meaning*.

Second, the parsing of meaning is best achieved through the study of comparative literature. The limited production of field research, and substantive theory, following the early descriptive interpretations improvisation suggest extant sources have not been adequately consulted and integrated for a greater understanding of improvisational tools and approaches to strategy management. My research method must therefore *account for alternative interpretations* of minimal structures.

Third, a reliance on the Jazz metaphor, for example, has not resulted in an extension of knowledge beyond an associative relationship with strategy, nor generated theory outside the rules construct. The implications of minimal structures as efficient enablers of successful strategy management remain to be described in a more robust model. This explanation of the creation, use and contribution of minimal structures deserves a revised view of both the propositions and theory, and informs my choice of a *theory-building research orientation* for my study.



In the next Chapter, Research Methodology, I address these literature and experience-based conclusions as the stimulus for choosing my particular research design, and further reference these as a guide in the subsequent participant observer data collection approach depicted in the Chapter 4 Case Study narrative.

## **Chapter 3:      Research Methodology**

In this chapter I explain the implementation of my research design and methods. It provides an overview of the research paradigm, ontological assumptions, and epistemological orientation elected to respond to the early research questions emerging from the literature. The chapter presents a detailed analytic framework is presented as the guide for conducting the rigorous grounded theory processes, and descriptions of various data collection, analysis, and methodological controls are also introduced. The chapter concludes with a set of research principles for reflexive activities employed throughout the investigation.

### **3.1      *Research Approach***

My research offers an explanation-building study examining improvisation with minimal structures. It explores the process of using minimal structures in the elaboration of strategy management within a large institution. The approach seeks to extend and enhance the definition and description of minimal structures with an increased recognition of their uses in practice. The intent is also to investigate the characteristics of the “forestructure” of expectations, or pre-understandings, that we bring to our encounters with strategy. The observed performance offers evidence about actor beliefs and collective representation of reality (Goffman, 1959:17, 27). My research studies individual experiences of reality, as they encounter it, and to identify unanticipated phenomena, which lead to new, grounded theories (Huberman and Miles, 1984: 132). The inductive framework exercises a case study to organize data and comprehend the dynamic nature of the case setting (Eisenhardt, 1989: 534).

For the purposes of this investigation, my core ontological assumption claims the world is socially constructed in our attempts to understand it and act upon (within) it (Berger and Luckmann, 1966: 78; Blumer, 1969: 19; and Giddens, 1984: 89-90). Our perception of reality is derived from belief-based imagination, which shapes the essential meaning of what we understand as real. Furthermore, my epistemological approach adopts an interpretivist orientation for obtaining insights about strategy management, where the participant definition of the meaning of activities offers an instrument for acquiring knowledge about social reality. The choice of this paradigm leads to the inherently relativistic conclusion that all social constructs of reality are equally valid and important (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999: 49).

I do not, however, primarily seek to reveal the personal inter-subjectivity among individuals, as in pure symbolic interactionism theory. The work is focused, rather, on observations concerning agent interpretation, or sensemaking, exercised in the use of minimal structures to frame strategy management activities employed across organisations. The interpretivist epistemological inquiry paradigm (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999: 48) is adopted to obtain insights in context, and define processes for acquiring knowledge. The form of interpretivism used in my study of the minimal structures phenomenon is less about the negotiation of social reality between people and more concerned in identifying the meaning of typical traits of minimal structures embedded within events from “the point of view of those who live it” (Schwandt, 1994; 118).

### **3.2 Key Research Questions**

The development of initial key research questions from my literature review, as well as professional experience, guides the research methodology selection. Leveraging reported findings and conceptualization

from previous research provides empirical grounding for independently emerging theory (Eisenhardt, 1989: 536). A set of key questions helps focus the systematic collection of data (Mintzberg, 1979: 585), rather than predetermine the theoretical constructs; neither in definitions or methodological processes. Therefore, the research questions offered at this stage of the study provide a means of bounding the field of research and stimulating discovery within the research process. The subsequent application of my research methodology will clarify why the research questions are significant in the practice of strategy management, and why there is no existing theory that offers a feasible answer (Eisenhardt, 2007: 26). The initial, broad research questions are:

Q1: How are minimal structures *created* and *used* to frame strategy in practice?

Q2: How do minimal structures *contribute* to strategy coherence and sensemaking?

### ***3.3 Purpose of Research***

My research of the Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food (KYF2) strategy management practices presents an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) focusing on the phenomenon of improvisation with minimal structures. The work describes, explores, and explains the collective activities, and process, of formulating and enacting strategy among a purposefully selected group of practitioners in a large bureaucratic institution (Creswell, 1994: 148). The opportunity to participate directly in the planning, implementation, and management of KYF2 at the highest levels of government represents “revelatory” access (Yin, 1994: 40) to the experiences of practitioners not generally available to researchers. In addition, the single case study may enable the “creation of more complicated theories than multiple cases, because single-case researchers

can fit their theory exactly to the many details of a particular case.... reminding readers that parsimony, robustness, and generalizability characterize superior theory” (Eisenhardt, 2007: 29).

Whereas this is a bounded study of a single organization setting, multiple “strategic episodes” of strategy management are empirically examined. These episodes help to illustrate various contextual perspectives about the KYF2 strategy as practice activities using minimal structures (Creswell, 1998: 74), which further build comparison of diverse practice views (Yin, 1994: 45-46).

I am focused on the activities associated with minimal structures rather than outcomes or products. The meaning of these activities to study participants is of primary interest, and I become the medium by which data about their lives, experiences, and structures of the world are interpreted. Subsequently, am I conducting research in the field with close, daily proximity to the research subjects, within their structure, touching the same content, and part of the organization story and atmosphere, to observe behavior in its natural setting.

### ***3.4 Theory Construction***

Based on the nature of my research questions, I am electing a qualitative case study investigation of minimal structures. “Theory building seems to require rich description, the richness that comes from antidote” (Mintzberg, 1979:587), which are revealed through developing a case narrative. Case studies are demonstrated as an effective empirical approach to generating new theory (Eisenhardt, 1989:535; Gersick, 1988; Harris & Sutton, 1986). “The qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit” (Merriam, 1988, p. xiv).

In this respect, the case study provides a presentation of the data as a discursive telling of the KYF2 story, and “since it is a theory-building approach that is deeply embedded in rich empirical data, building theory from cases is likely to produce theory that is accurate, interesting, and testable” (Eisenhardt, 2007: 26).

The goal of my inductive theory construction schema is to discover the meanings different strategy activities have for people, and how their understanding and use of improvisation with minimal structures is impacted and defined by these meanings (Jaccard and Jacoby, 2010: 256-257). This theory-building research initiates a study aligned to new theory development, with no hypotheses to test (Eisenhardt, 1989:536). My descriptions of the minimal structure phenomena are derived from personal conversations, observations, participation, and reflections, which comprise the substantive elements for inductive theory building (Merriam, 1998: 19-20). My approach and methods support the notion that the study process should leave

the grounded theory researcher as free and as open as possible to discovery and to the emergence of concepts, problems and interpretations from the data. - (Glaser, 1998: 67)

According to Creswell (2009: 13, 229), grounded theory is “a qualitative strategy of inquiry in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants in a study.” I intend to learn from the people, the situation, and my own reflections in the practice of conducting research, without preconceived beliefs shaping what I observe, firsthand, in the field. I will “...begin the research with a partial framework of ‘local’ concepts, designating a few principal or gross features of the structure and processes in the situations” that I use to formally compile the case study data, yet

remain “...sufficiently theoretically sensitive so that [I] can conceptualise and formulate a theory as it emerges from the data” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 45-46).

Glaser and Strauss (1967, 2009) saw the function of theory as follows:

1. Theory should enable prediction and explanation of behavior.
2. Prediction and explanation should ultimately prove useful to the practitioner in practical application.
3. Theory should be able to guide and provide a style of research regarding particular areas of behavior.
4. Theory should provide clear concepts so they can be verified in present and future research.
5. The concepts should be clear enough to be operationalized for future quantitative studies when appropriate.
6. The theory must “fit” the data rather than be forced; in other words, the theory must readily explain the behavior under study.

These principles for practice of theory construction represent sound and stable advice, which I accept and endorse as guidance in my methodology. I use an embedded case study design, where five units of analysis (Yin, 1994: 41) are employed to examine applied uses of minimal structures in detail, and implement a grounded theory-building methodology that emphasizes the technique of allowing theory to emerge from the data rather than using data to test theory. Furthermore, five core attributes of knowledge production expressed in Mode 2 research influence the spirit of my inductive theory-building plan: knowledge production in context of application; transdisciplinary; heterogeneity and organisational diversity; social accountability and reflexivity; and diverse range of quality controls (Maclean, MacIntosh, and Grant, 2002). The final product of building theory from case studies may be “concepts, deliberate and emergent

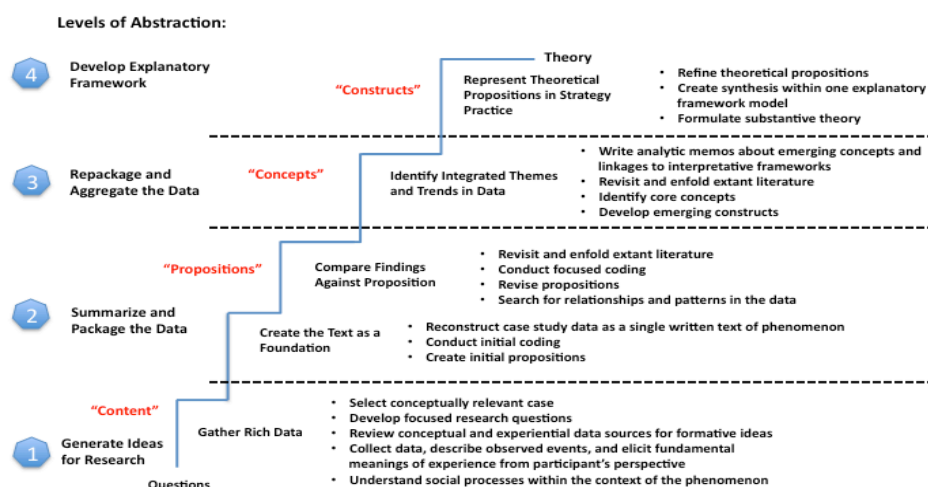
strategies, a conceptual framework, or propositions or possibly mid range theory” (Eisenhardt, 1989:545).

### 3.5 Research Design Framework

The research design provides a stepwise structure for developing an explanation of minimal structures, grounded in the case study narrative data. The qualitative research paradigm recognizes reality as subjective and diverse from the perspective of the study participant, and I observe the recommendation that investigators may formulate a research problem and identify some hypothetically important variables from extant literature references “but avoid thinking about specific relationships between variables and theories from the onset” (Eisenhardt, 1989:536).

The iterative steps of my framework structure, presented in Figure 3.1 below, therefore, begin with no particular assumptions about theory or the data. The framework also provides the elements of my case study protocol, and offers a persistent guide for conducting my theory-building study of the KYF2 case (Eisenhardt, 1989:536). Larger version offered in Appendix R.

**Figure 3.1: Inductive Theory-Building Framework Structure**



(Modified from Miles and Huberman, 1994:92, and Eisenhardt, 1989: 533)

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### **3.6 *Researcher Role***

According to King, qualitative research, in seeking to describe and make sense of the world, does not require researchers to strive for objectivity and distance themselves from research participants. Indeed, to do so would make good qualitative research impossible, as the interviewer's sensitivity to subjective aspects of their relationship with the study participants is an essential part of the research process (King, 1994: 31).

Fundamentally, the highest contribution and value derived in the research initiative is created through interaction. I remain faithful to my epistemological stance, believing culture and meanings are socially constructed, situated and aligned to a specific context, not fixed but negotiated, articulated in a plurality, and participatory. Subsequently, my research role involves direct participation in the life world of my subjects. I have unusual, intimate access to the research domain with frequent, sometimes daily, in person and virtual interactions with subjects. These associations range from personal encounters across various traditional communication channels such as email and telephone, to intimate contextual contact during events such as formally scheduled and ad hoc meetings, conferences, presentations, hearings, and social connections. Appendix U contains a copy of the Ethics Approval to conduct this study.

### **3.7 *Case Study Strategy***

The case study approach is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1994: 13). The approach helps me illuminate single instances of phenomena through the examination of individual case examples to produce detailed descriptions, develop possible explanations, and evaluate

the phenomena. “The case study is a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings” and can employ an embedded design, represented in multiple levels of analysis within a single study (Esinhardt, 1989: 534). Concerns regarding the use of a single case setting are answered in that

[t]he challenge of presenting rich qualitative data is readily addressed by simply presenting a relatively complete rendering of the story within the text. The story typically consists of narrative that is interspersed with quotations from key informants and other supporting evidence. The story is then intertwined with the theory to demonstrate the close connection between empirical evidence and emergent theory. This intertwining keeps both theory and evidence at the forefront of the paper. - (Eisenhardt, 2007: 29)

My case study approach employs these narrative devices and an intensive within-case analysis conducted in an embedded single case design. To explore the rich data attributes, a composite narrative style presentation of the case data is collected among multiple sources and methods of inquiry discussed later in this section. Theory is woven into to the critical analysis processes as well. Much of the case content is derived and validated from observing people in their own space and interacting with them in their own vocabulary and context of understanding. This approach follows the endorsement

[t]o use cases as the basis from which to develop theory inductively. The theory is emergent in the sense that it is situated in and developed by recognizing patterns of relationships among constructs within and across cases and their underlying logical arguments... But while laboratory experiments isolate the phenomena from their context, case studies emphasize the rich, real-world context in which

the phenomena occur. The theory-building process occurs via recursive cycling among the case data, emerging theory, and later, extant literature. (Eisenhardt, 2007: 25)

To develop theoretical depth within the case, the study examines mini-cases, or “strategic episodes,” (Hendry and Seidl, 2003: 176) of strategic management, and describes how minimal structure enabled improvisation influences strategy in practice. The theoretical insights are derived from strategic episodes separately, as stand-alone entities (Eisenhardt, 1989: 540), and at the greatest depth appropriate to satisfy the inductive research objectives. This method enables study across multiple case episodes to make comparisons for building theory.

I select strategic episodes, as the appropriate unit of analysis, along several key criteria: first, episodes should be self-contained yet representative of larger strategy context; second, they are bounded in a clear beginnings and endings; and exhibit a lack of inhibition with regard to communication practices (Hendry and Seidl, 2003: 180). To facilitate identification of patterns for potential middle-range generalization, these strategic episodes are used to mine corroborating evidence, which furnishes observable, predictable results, or produces contrasting results, within a common replication logic (Yin, 1994: 46).

The case study investigates the minimal structure phenomena embedded in the following five units of analysis:

- Taskforce Composition
- Management Team Meetings
- Specialist Map Development
- Agency Adoption
- Functional Conflict Resolution

The strength of theory-building from case studies is the strong potential of generating novel theory. Creative discernment and reframing of

perceptions grows out of attempts to reconcile evidence across cases, types of data... and between cases and literature, which produces “new theoretical vision.” The contrast of conflicting meanings works to ‘unfreeze’ thinking “so the process has the potential to generate theory with less researcher bias...” (Eisenhardt, 1989: 546). Emergent theory has greater likelihood to be testable, presenting measurable constructs, and empirically valid due to the high interaction and intimacy with the case evidence. The assessment of “good theory” forms from the evaluation of the emergent products of the defined process and procedures. “Theory building which simply replicates past theory is, at best, a modest contribution. Replication is appropriate in theory-testing research, but in theory-building research, the goal is new theory. Thus, a strong theory-building study presents new, perhaps framebreaking, insights” (Eisenhardt, 1989: 547).

### ***3.7.1 Case Study Protocol***

In a blended dialogue with my inductive theory-building framework, the case study approach helps simplify and improve the interpretation of complex data through the narrative story construction, which allows: 1) studying episodes of interpreted reality from the perspectives of those experiencing it and in their environment; 2) understanding the subjective meaning of social action through observation of strategy design and implementation; 3) iteratively testing and refining constructs describing the use of minimal structures in organizational settings as a sensemaking tool; and 4) developing empirical evidence for theory-building about the nature of minimal structure assumptions and practices in the context of strategy management. The theoretical framework iteratively emerges from cross-case analysis.

To achieve an adequate level of confidence regarding the case reliability and validity, I use a case study protocol to map the procedures followed in collecting and composing the case narrative. The investigation leverages this instrument with defined processes rules guiding the study. This structure generally includes a project overview, field procedures, case study questions, and a guide for reporting (Yin, 1994: 64-65). A detailed outline of my protocol is presented in Inductive Theory-building Framework presented previous, which closely follows the Eisenhardt (1989) model in Appendix Q.

Nevertheless, when warranted and well documented, deviations from the protocol may be necessary. Changes in site conditions, place availability for interview participants, access to artifact, and so forth could lead to adjustments in any aspect of the steps outlined in my framework. “A key feature of theory building case research is the freedom to make adjustments during the data collection process...” because investigators are trying to understand each case individually and in as much depth as is feasible, and this “controlled opportunism” requires flexibility in the field (Eisenhardt, 1989:539).

Though the professional proximity to the subjects offers enormous advantages, the potential for bias as well as personal attribution is ever present. Likewise, subjects may negatively misinterpret the data gathering process based on their knowledge of the researcher role and status within the organization. Guarding against the influence of these potential shortcomings requires diligence, embedded in the research protocol, accountability with other researchers, and when possible, exercised in peer reviews of collected data. My role as researcher involves interacting directly with subjects in a naturally value-laden and biased context where the personal voice of those studied is most clear (Creswell,

1994: 5). Therefore, both predictable rigor and sensitivity to real, intervening human conditions are balanced and appropriate dispositions.

### ***3.7.2 Semi-Structured Interviews***

Interviews are conducted with a diverse group of participants who are directly involved in KYF2 organizational strategy, and whom engage in improvisation activities. “Interviews are a highly efficient way to gather rich, empirical data, especially when the phenomenon of interest is highly episodic and infrequent” (Eisenhardt, 2007: 28). I am selecting highly knowledgeable informants who view the minimal structures phenomena from various strategy management perspectives.

The interview focuses on understanding subject responses from their point of view; in context of and situated in minimal structure improvisation behavior. Interviews are intended to reveal applied, operations-oriented individual perspectives, how these persons construct meaning, and social realities about strategy management using improvisation with minimal structures. Individuals were selected intentionally. “Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most” (Merriam, 1988, p. 48).

The interviews investigate the experience of the event, its relationships, and/or the emotion for the subject. Intensive, focused, and semi-structured protocol interviews enable experiences to be described by the interview participants with reference to concrete situations; as the events or episodes appear and make sense to them. King (1994:15) recommends that one have “a low degree of structure imposed on the interviewer, a preponderance of open questions, a focus on specific situations and action sequences in the world of the interviewee rather than abstractions and

general opinions.” These factors are taken into consideration in the protocol, and Appendix A provides copies of the Plain Language Statement, Interview Guide, and Consent Form.

Participants are asked to reflect on their direct experience, to go beneath the surface of ordinary conversations (Charmaz, 2006: 26), as well as their understanding of those experiences, and associated feelings, in relation to KYF2 strategic management, but not to attempt a full recounting of all the initiative details; not a memory test. I ask them “what” and “how” questions to encourage them to reconstruct and narrate a range the essential elements of the experience (Seidman, 2006: 17). Their responses become the core foundation of my case study narrative produced as a text for further analysis. Appendix B introduces the Semi-Structured Interview Protocol Questions.

Interviewees were chosen purposefully among a range of participants, and selected based on their position and expertise. The questions used to engage participants are intended to stimulate conversations in which the researcher takes cues from interviewee with respect to their approach to the topic, such as expressions, questions, metaphors, and sidetracks in dialogue. I primarily listened for concepts and themes, and pursuing these in collaboration with the participant. Their perceptions of the phenomena of using minimal structures are examined through their detailed descriptions to understand the lived experience (Creswell, 1994: 12).

The interviews produce content that may remain concealed in unexamined events, etc., and discover meaningful shared themes in common experiences. Analysis of transcribed data is characterized as open; focusing on meaningful units as the most granular segments of text with self-sustained meaning. These are described as concepts, themes, and patterns versus categories. The goal is to identify what is invariable across

all manifestations of the phenomena of minimal structures (Tesch 1994: 147).

### **3.7.3 Reporting**

My research approach avoids the mistake of constructing a report composed of a simplified, sanitized collection of facts. Czarniawska noted that “stories capture organizational life in a way that no compilation of facts ever can; this is because they are carriers of life itself, not just ‘reports’ on it” (Czarniawska, 1997: 21). The interpretive oriented, inductive approach will build an argument for certain culturally significant propositions, and portray an informing context as to how the case details and facts interweave (Van Maanen, 1988: 30).

I am striving to accurately represent the interaction between events and those who experience these events to better understand their contextualized interpretations, and given meanings, of the processes they enact. I am present in these acts, either as a participant myself, or in immediate proximity as an observer. An important heuristic in the success of communicating my understanding of minimal structures is to remind myself “it is the written report that must represent the culture, not the fieldwork itself.” A culture is not precisely a scientifically observable item, “...but is created, as is the reader’s view of it, by the active construction of a text” (Van Maanen, 1988: 7).

To organize the recording and telling of the research experiences, I use devices from several reporting methods. The objective is reasonable coordination of the large data stores acquired during the initial collection phase of the case study. These devices focus the written material along three complimentary dimensions described in the next section: operationalization, format, and the reflexive voice.



### **3.7.3.1 Operationalization**

The case study presents a container for the classification and categorization of data. This structure enables coordinated, but flexible, abstraction of content in the direction of the emerging data patterns and themes. As the textual narrative organically grows with each iterative pass through the data, the composition begins to look more like a purposeful story of the phenomenon rather than a list of chronological facts (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998: 155). To logically extract the theoretical argument from the case data and evolving narrative, I elect to take up the Theory-Building Structure articulated for case study researchers (Yin, 1994: 140).

The application of the model is intended to enhance and refine the nature and strengths of my theoretical reasoning in support of the developing argument (Jaccard and Jacoby, 2010: 279). The use of a Theory-Building Structure is epistemologically defensible with respect to the inductive theory construction, and remains faithful to the iterative stages represented in my research design framework. A case narrative approach is particularly well suited to new research areas or research areas for which existing theory seems inadequate. This type of work is highly complementary to incremental theory building from normal science research. The former is useful in early stages of research on a topic, or when a fresh perspective is needed, whilst the latter is useful in later stages of knowledge creation (Eisenhardt, 548-549).

### **3.7.3.2 Format**

Pettigrew presents a set of four research reporting output formats, and further recommends attention to the achievability of each varied format in context of research method, the delivery sequencing, and the suitable formats for an intended audience (Pettigrew, 1990: 279). One of the four,

the *interpretative theoretical case*, deliberately moves the analysis and writing beyond the first level analytical reporting chronology. I employ the interpretative style as an explicit, intentional attempt to engage and understand the text narrative, and also seek to link the emerging conceptual and theoretical ideas inductively derived from the case to both the stronger analytical themes within the case and wider theoretical debates in the literature. The method leads to a generalizing process of linking the empirical findings in the case to other published empirical data (Pettigrew, 1990: 280). An interpretative theoretical case format aligns with my intended grounded theory methodology.

### **3.7.3.3 Reflexive Voice**

Weil demonstrates the creativity and potential contribution of opening space in the case study text to convey multiple voices, or realities. She developed a narrative approach embracing the research process as well as the outcome, and created a varied texture, unconventional description of the field where the researcher's observer voice, the researcher's reflexive voice, the reflexive interaction with the data, and the participant's voice, as a practice of "remaining alert to different voices of others and of herself" (Weil, 1996: 225-230).

My role as narrator becomes one of orchestrating an equitable outcome for all participants, in which their voice is given space to influence the story. This writing device assists me in being attentive to all aspects of knowledge and points of view residing in data, processes, decisions, and so forth.

In the spirit of giving time to a reflexive voice in creating the report, I struggled over the election of a fourth dimension: Van Maanen's "Formal Tales" ethnographic approach. From the aspect of narrative style, I sensed benefits in leveraging a practiced style of deriving generalizations through

concentrated inductive and inferential logic, implied in with the narrow approach (Van Maanen, 1988: 130). I appreciated the concept of creating a text that “travels” beyond its context, which would lend itself to interpretative extensibility into other domains. I resisted the temptation to indulge in an experiment in ethnomethodology techniques, which may result in unknown, or disproportionate, costs to other dimensions of my reporting plan.

### **3.8 Data Sources**

I am combining multiple data collection methods to understand minimal structures in the context of practice, to build theory, and anticipate “...the triangulation made possible by multiple data collection methods provides stronger substantiation of constructs and [theoretical propositions]” (Eisenhardt, 1989: 537-538). It is the anecdotal data gathered through rigorous collection and interpretation methods that enable the emergence of new theory as I uncover relationships and explain them (Mintzberg, 1979: 587). In the Appendices and Accompanying Materials attachments of to the dissertation, multiple examples of data sources are introduced. I summarize all my sources types in the following table.

**Table 3.1: Case Study Data Sources**

<b>Source of Evidence</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Solutions</b>
<b>Documentation</b> (includes emails)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable - repeated review</li> <li>• Unobtrusive - exist prior to case study</li> <li>• Exact - names etc.</li> <li>• Broad coverage - extended</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retrievability - difficult</li> <li>• Biased selectivity</li> <li>• Reporting bias - reflects author bias</li> <li>• Access - may be blocked</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct access</li> <li>• Electronic copies</li> <li>• Diversity of holdings and authorship</li> </ul>

	time span		
<b>Archival Records</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as above</li> <li>• Precise and quantitative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as above</li> <li>• Privacy might inhibit access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management is an aspect of my professional function</li> </ul>
<b>Interviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted - focuses on case study topic</li> <li>• Insightful - provides perceived causal inferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bias due to poor questions</li> <li>• Response bias</li> <li>• Incomplete recollection</li> <li>• Reflexivity - interviewee expresses what interviewer wants to hear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field tested questions</li> <li>• Flexible adaptation to interviewee time</li> <li>• Probing questions</li> </ul>
<b>Direct Observation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reality - covers events in real time</li> <li>• Contextual - covers event context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time-consuming</li> <li>• Selectivity - might miss facts</li> <li>• Reflexivity - observer's presence might cause change</li> <li>• Cost - observers need time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part of team with open access</li> <li>• Scheduled as aspect of professional role</li> <li>• Participants accepted my note taking as normal</li> </ul>
<b>Participant Observation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as above</li> <li>• Insightful into interpersonal behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as above</li> <li>• Bias due to investigator's actions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear separations between overt request for data and participation</li> </ul>
<b>Physical Artifacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insightful into cultural features</li> <li>• Insightful into technical operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selectivity</li> <li>• Availability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Predominantly in public domain, i.e. website URL</li> </ul>

### 3.8.1 *Extant Literature*

Extant concepts must earn their right to become part of the textual narrative; they must be alive in the data gathered in my study (Glaser, 1978: 112). This element of my data collection method is essential for

uncovering taken for granted meanings and practices associated with minimal structures. Therefore, previous theory and descriptive literature are critiqued as another source of data (Charmaz, 2011: 38), which introduce independently derived data in relation to my first-hand collected data (Reinharz, 1992: 166). The existing literature is a type of nascent data available to test contextualized theory as the data analysis teases ideas from my case narrative text (Jaccard and Jacoby, 2010: 261).

I incorporate three iterations of literature review into my research methodology to ensure saturation at all levels of emergent theory construction. The structure is intended to stimulate a conversation between the case data and the existent literature, which informs as well as problematizes theory construction. Though “nobody starts doing research with a totally blank sheet” the iterative framework process guards against a closed mind and promotes a willingness “to have faith in the data.” My approach requires that “a detailed literature review comes after the data has been collected when tentative theories or concepts have started to form” through case study analysis (Goulding, 2001: 23). However, according to Eisenhardt, examining literature conflicting with the emergent theories is important for two reasons. First, the chance of neglecting conflicting findings is reduced. Second, “conflicting results forces researchers into a more creative, frame-breaking mode of thinking than they might otherwise be able to achieve” (Eisenhardt, 1989: 544).

Three types of literature are appropriate data sources in regard to grounded theory methodology (Glaser, 1992: 31):

- Non-professional, popular and pure ethnographic descriptions
- Professional literature related to the substantive area under research
- Professional literature that is unrelated to the substantive area

As expressed previously, my research design includes each of these literature types at various iterative stages, and goes beyond the “the normal, extensive literature review to ascertain gaps to fill in, hypotheses to test, and ideas to contribute to, in descriptive and verificational studies” (Glaser, 1992: 31). For example, my reading of organization blogs and tweets as non-professional descriptions, or transcripts, of strategy management provides affirmation of foundational ideas and emergent themes embedded in my case narrative.

The first pass at the substantive professional minimal structure literature provides help forming an initial “theoretical sensitivity” (Glaser, 1978: 109) toward the minimal structures field of study. It enables me as a qualitative researcher to see possibilities, establish connections, and ask important and relevant questions (Charmaz, 2011:135). These extant excerpts make use of sensitizing concepts and methods as well, which provide a validating research tool in my research design (Clarke, 2005: 77).

The second and third pass at unrelated professional literature supports awaiting the “emergence” of themes, connecting story threads, and patterns from the data in combination with attentiveness to generating underdeveloped data types whereby “invisibled issues and silences” may be located (Clarke, 2005: 75-76). I consult diverse and conflicting, interdisciplinary literature sources, such as cultural geography and spatiality, as my extensive review after data collection, to expound known qualities of minimal structures and expand conceptual models. “Tying the emergent theory to existing literature enhances the internal validity, generalizability, and theoretical level of theory building from case study research” (Eisenhardt, 1989:545).

### 3.9 Grounded Theory Method

“Grounded theory provides a bridge to seeing the same problems and processes in other areas so the researcher can further inform his theory and develop comparative substantive theory and formal theory. Pure description does not provide this ability to build and contribute on more general level of the scientific enterprise, such as to a theory of becoming no matter what the occupation. Pure description is situation specific.” (Glaser, 1992: 15)

The process itself involves constant iteration backward and forward between steps. The process is alive with tension between divergence into new ways of understanding the data and convergence onto a single theoretical framework (Eisenhardt, 1989:546). The grounded theory-building components, used to iteratively formulate an empirical understanding of minimal structures, are defined in Table 3.2, Grounded Theory-Building Definitions, below:

**Table 3.2: Grounded Theory-Building Definitions**

<b>Analytic Elements</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<i>Formative Ideas</i>	General statements expressing theoretical sensitivity toward phenomena
<i>Codes</i>	Identified textual anchors that allow the data to be categorized
<i>Concepts</i>	Generalized abstractions of data categories that enable understanding
<i>Construct</i>	Combinations of concepts that logically form theoretical propositions
<i>Substantive Theory</i>	Middle-range theory composed of theoretical propositions

### 3.9.1 Sampling

Building theory from case studies relies on theoretical sampling.

Theoretical sampling connotes that cases are selected because they are “particularly suitable for illuminating and extending relationships and logic among constructs” (Eisenhardt, 2007: 27), and my case is deliberately chosen to extend emergent theory (Eisenhardt, 1989: 537). I elect to conduct a mixed sampling method, which includes: first, Critical Case Sampling, where a small number of important cases or episodes are likely to “yield the most information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge” (Patton, 2001: 236); second, Purposive or Subjective Sampling among sources of data to build an awareness of possibilities, and begin “talking to the most knowledgeable people to get a line on relevancies and leads to track down more data and where and how” to locate myself in a rich supply of data (Glaser, 1978: 45). “Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most” (Merriam, 1988: 48); and third, theoretical sampling, where I am seeking and collecting pertinent data to elaborate and refine categories in my emerging theory (Charmaz, 2006: 96). These sample selections adhere to the insights offered for developing new theory from case studies, because

[s]election of cases is an important aspect of building theory from case studies. As in hypothesis-testing research, the concept of a population is crucial, because the population defines the set of entities from which the research sample is to be drawn. Also, selection of an appropriate population controls extraneous variation and helps to define the limits for generalizing the findings. - (Eisenhardt, 1989: 537)



### **3.9.2 Memos**

During formal and informal meetings, and phone conversations, I will collect scratch notes in my business journal, which is a common tool used by many of the KYF2 team members. Examples are provided in the Appendices. These notes are very brief and written down as short phrases, quotes, keywords, gestures, and textual models (Lofland and Ofland, 1995: 90) to help my memory of the event when written up later in more structured field note memos. My memo practices are generally kept out of sight of participants, with my journal in my lap and not in front of people so as to avoid making them feel self-conscious; though in other respects, some participants also use journals in practice, thereby allowing me to fit into the behavioral norm (Brymand and Bell, 2003: 333). The field notes provide a space for me to reflect afterwards about what I was observing and feeling about the research in progress, and contribute an emergent list of impressions about minimal structures. These memos are more than reminders in the grounded theory, they are

[a] striking feature of research to build theory from case studies is the frequent overlap of data analysis with data collection. While many researchers do not achieve this degree of overlap, most maintain some overlap. Field notes, a running commentary to oneself and/or research team, are an important means of accomplishing this overlap. -(Eisenhardt, 1989: 538)

### **3.9.3 Coding**

My initial data coding analysis works line-by-line through interview transcripts to establish fit and relevance. Fit in respect to ensuring ideas emerge out of the actual context of participant's experience, and relevance in regards to the interpretation derived from the analytic framework accurately describing what is happening (Charmaz, 2006: 54). I

follow an inductive approach, which avoids predefining code schemas, developing starter lists, and use of domains or set of categories drawn from existing theory. I deliberately maintain an open, interactive perspective to grounded codes in the textualized data, and not lose the original context (Maxwell, 1996: 79).

This “code-in-use” method (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 58) supports the goal of matching observations to middle-range theory without pre-coding, which may influence, distract, or bias the analysis process. Furthermore, the development of provisional, initial codes in an open format generates new insights and enables new ideas to emerge directly from the data, as well as identify the data gaps (Charmaz, 2006: 48). In a ground theory pattern, my code emerges from data as I collected it, and is shaped by my interpretation, unlike “quantitative research that requires data to fit into the preconceived standardized codes” (Charmaz, 2000: 515). I also offer an example of this tool in the Appendices.

During the first phase of analysis, the coding activity begins early in collection of data with line-by-line coding of texts concentrating on the minimal structures processes as spatial phenomena. This method is appropriate to reveal the minimal structure story narrative, and scripts, embedded in my exhaustive observations of people, actions, and settings. Nuances in the data, implicit concerns, and explicit statements collected from study participants and situations are swiftly located in the text with the ongoing, parallel notation of codes and comparison of emerging data categories (Charmaz, 2006: 50).

#### **3.9.4 Constant Comparison**

With each iteration of coding, I then revisit each participant’s written, and audio recording, interview interpretation to identify significant thematic

statements, which included metaphors, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs connecting directly to the participant's personal experience of minimal structures used in practice. The intention of this analysis process is to describe facets of the phenomenon as experienced by each individual in the context of other data sources such as historical records and my field journal notes. The attention to maintaining a "steady and explicit dialogue" between emerging ideas and evidence, and entering into data by means of a dialogue, is a crucial comparison step (Ragin, 1987; Charmaz, 2006: 25). This cyclical process continues until I am satisfied my study has reached theoretical saturation.

### ***3.9.5 Linking Data to Propositions***

The case study strategic episodes write narrative, combined with in-depth context, provides the foundation for detailed within-case analysis. The write-ups are concise, direct descriptions to simplify very large amounts of data in a single story. These write-ups compose a transcript of the KYF2 experience from the view of participants in the strategic management activities. The intent of within-case analysis is to better understand links between data and propositions as one "becomes intimately familiar with each case [and episode] as a stand-alone entity. This process allows the unique patterns of each case to emerge before investigators push to generalize patterns across cases. In addition, it gives investigators a rich familiarity with each case which, in turn, accelerates cross-case comparison" (Eisenhardt, 1989: 540).

Following within-cases analysis, I conduct cross-case search for patterns to weed out potential bias and false conclusions in processing the case information. I view the data in opposing ways by comparing strategic episode similarities and differences. "The juxtaposition of seemingly similar cases by a researcher looking for differences can break simplistic

frames... the search for similarity in a seemingly different pair also can lead to more sophisticated understanding.” The forced comparisons may produce new categories and concepts, which I did not anticipate (Eisenhardt, 1989: 541). This analytic step illuminates faulty reasoning, and supports the observation that

[t]he idea behind these cross-case searching tactics is to force investigators to go beyond initial impressions, especially through the use of structured and diverse lenses on the data. These tactics improve the likelihood of accurate and reliable theory, that is, a theory with a close fit with the data. Also, cross-case searching tactics enhance the probability that the investigators will capture the novel findings, which may exist in the data.” - (Eisenhardt, 1989: 541)

### ***3.10 Reflexive Principles***

Reflexive analysis applies personal judgment to portray and evaluate the phenomena. Two inductive techniques assist me reflexively understand and describe the experience of improvisation with minimal structures, both for the participant and myself. First, the composition of the case study narrative encourages arranging of data into a storytelling structure. To produce a “good” story requires interpreting KYF2 within a set of already existing rules (Czarniawska, 1998: 15), and the sensemaking properties of identity, retrospect, enactment, social contact, ongoing events, cues, and plausibility are reinforced in the narration process (Weick, 1995: 60). Moreover, the aspects of retrospection enable me to overcome the natural constraint that “nobody is aware that an important event is happening when it takes place” (Czarniawska, 1998: 29).

Second, I conduct the research as a means of sensemaking, and this helps me establish the provenience of the story in which I participate; a form of minimal narrative with all its tensions and contradictions (Czarniawska, 1998: 17). In leveraging the narrative of *conducting research*, I release a mode of association that allowed me to place different things in relationship to others, as unusual combinations of experience enable, for example, the incorporation of a dynamic dialectic view of context (Foucault, 1980: 70). Further, this positionality of the views and actions of participants, as actors in the story narrative, provide an added dimension of description.

### **3.11 Summary**

The research methodologies presented here guide the implementation, conduct, and completion of my research design. Though I may focus on one part of the analytic methodology at a time, “the process itself involves constant iteration backward and forward between steps... converging on construct definitions, measures, and a framework for structuring the findings...intimately tied with empirical evidence” (Eisenhardt, 1989: 546). By creating a deliberate structure, the results of successfully deploying my design raise the value of this work for the research community, and fulfill the requirements of empirical investigation. This structure helps ensure traceability across my findings, and provides a sense of confidence about the reliability and validity of the emerging theoretical propositions. In the next chapter, I describe the case study through a textual narrative, which accounts for numerous perspectives of strategy management, and this story is followed in Chapter 5, Case Data Analysis, with specific explanatory illustrations of the minimal structure inductive theory-building process using grounded theory methods.

## **Chapter 4: Case Study of Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food**

The case study write-up provides a detailed narrative description of the strategy management practices, experiences, and actor-interpreted meanings of the Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food (KYF2) initiative implementation. The write-up consists of content derived from multiple interviews, observations, and the investigation of data sources, which I acquired over a 19-month period. The narrative presents a text of the phenomena as a lived experience.

A case study method is used to organize field research, gather empirical data, and analyze the attributes of KYF2 strategy management. The study presents the phenomenon of improvisational strategy management with minimal structures, and my goal is to establish an empirical data source as a foundation, upon which I later apply theory-building research methods to identify and validate emerging Strategy-as-Practice theory. An embedded case design provides the means of developing an explanation about strategic improvisations “when it is not possible or feasible to manipulate the potential causes of behavior, and when variables are not easily identified or are too embedded in the phenomenon to be extracted for study” (Merriam, 1988: 7).

Theory-building often requires rich description, such as the richness that comes from case anecdotes (Mintzberg, 1979: 587); this unique case offers direct observations of the process of strategy management and the meanings ascribed to processes by those engaged in the work. The initiative exhibits particular aspects of emergent strategy evolving out of a “stream of actions” (Mintzberg, 1987: 12-13). In addition, the initiative positions me to obtain direct insights about the applied instruments and frameworks people use in practice, which help deploy presidential

Administration mandates in large institutions. To paraphrase Gareth Morgan, “[I] need to try and understand how the discrete events that make up our experience of *improvisation*... are generated by a logic *enfolded* in the process of *improvisation* itself’ (Morgan, 1986: 267).

The case is structured according to the assumption that the reader has no immediate knowledge of the initiative goals, setting, participants, and so forth. Therefore, I outline the KYF2 organization background, context, and strategy management problem prior to presenting five strategic episodes, which function as my unit of analysis. The material represents a distinctive participant observation opportunity seldom fully realized by researchers; not because of any special qualities I may possess but due to the essential nature and access of my role in supporting the Administration.

#### **4.1 Background**

The KYF2 initiative began in the written composition of a standard congressional report, which assumed predictable formatting, style, and tone for Agriculture Committee members to whom it was promised. After multiple edited drafts, beginning in September 2011, the Deputy Secretary sponsoring the effort stepped back from the exercise and asked herself what value this local food systems report had beyond the original audience. It was clear that the report was lifeless. The document provided no context for the written content, gave limited project visibility to non-specialists, offered a broken and segmented perspective of USDA missions, and, effectively, demonstrated a government talking to itself.

Entering the fourth year of the Administration, tempered with pragmatic governing experience, the political leadership recognized the self-imposed constraints of following bureaucratic rules of conduct. There were no alternative rules forbidding Departmental innovation and invention;

nothing prohibiting public disclosure of the report content; no mandates regarding report style and distribution. In fact, the Executive Office of the President encouraged prudent release and access to public institution data through the Open Government agenda. Engaging these untested ideas about citizen participation was, however, unfamiliar and undefined space.

The drivers considered for the extension of KYF2 as a participatory solution were unmistakable. These included a steadily emerging trend in public preference for locally grown foods; increased demand and consumption of local foods; significant changes in local producer models and capacity; challenges of old and new supply chain, logistics, and infrastructure resources; severe economic obstacles for start-ups; producers switching products and switching markets; knowledge gaps among stakeholder in the use of information technologies and social media; and the need to establish a congruent USDA brand message with multiple stakeholder groups. Furthermore, drastic reductions in the Departmental budget incentivized creative approaches to maintaining current benefits, addressing local economic hardship, and developing new markets.

It was clear that the former public policy and Administration models of oversight reporting were not sufficient to address the new frame of thinking about KYF2. Whereas data is an excess commodity among agency programs, telling the enterprise-wide story of USDA local food systems support represented a change from passive to active promotion of the public good. Moreover, individual agency career civil-service executives were not conceptually prepared to create an enterprise level solution because they had not fully embraced Open Government. In most instances, the leadership who understood the data about local food systems did not also possess the vocabulary and acumen to champion, communicate, and cultivate the USDA value and brand. There was an enormous gap between, on one hand, taxpayer resources committed to local and regional foods



systems and, on the other hand, public awareness of benefits derived.

To resolve this public relations impasse and establish a position in building credibility with stakeholders both internal and external to USDA, a meeting of principals occurred the week before Christmas, December 2011. The conversation focused on refreshing the KYF2 initiative in anticipation of the report's due date of 23 February 2012. Development of a simple map, used to compliment the report, provided a symbolic means of restoration, but something more expressive and sustaining was needed quickly to reposition the initiative. A Case Study Actors List is presented in Appendix C.

## **4.2 Context**

The fundamental external driver for KYF2 was the Obama Administration's pressing the executive branch of the federal government to "identify ways to use innovative technologies to streamline their delivery of services to lower costs, decrease service delivery times, and improve the customer experience" (*Executive Order 13571: Streamlining Service Delivery and Improving Customer Service*, 2011). The Administration also called for executive branch agencies to address the fact that "for far too long, the American people have been forced to navigate a labyrinth of information across different Government programs in order to find the services they need" (*Building a 21st Century Digital Government*, 2012).

The KYF2 scheme successfully deployed an unprecedented digital governance solution, designed to engage citizen-stakeholders across the country in the recently emerging discussion about local and regional food systems. USDA is the second largest federal civilian government institution, with more than 120,000 employees internationally, 17 separate and distinct public programs, and an annual budget of approximately \$155 billion. USDA is an institution where individuals get hired and leave service

30 to 35 years later; very few employees leave USDA prematurely or deliberately, which plays into a steady culture of conservative norms. The KYF2 solution, conversely, facilitates the disruptive principles of open government and participatory governance through a web browser-based geographic information systems mapping interface, which delivers a unique, robust content management service to outside users. The initiative is about “figuring out ways to make USDA work better for local and regional food systems,” rather than constructing, multiplying, or replicating additional government structures; it is about reaching a “less traditional audience”

([http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=KYF\\_COMPASS](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=KYF_COMPASS)).

Specific to USDA strategies, the KYF2 initiative propelled the Department forward toward accomplishing a coarse-grained nationwide strategy, comprehensively, in several immediate areas: enhancing rural prosperity through new and sustainable opportunities for economic growth; developing and supporting regional food systems via innovative and equitable channels for direct-to-consumer sales and investments such as food hubs; supporting a sustainable and competitive agriculture system, which helps create a positive trade balance from the agricultural sector; supporting the development of new domestic markets that, for instance, encourage certified organic goods, which frequently bring higher prices at market, resulting in increased returns for farmers; ensuring that all of America’s children have access to safe and nutritious meals promoting healthy eating habits and improvements in the average diet; and finally, coordinating outreach and improving consultation and collaboration efforts to increase access to USDA programs and services. Appendix D provides a copy of the Secretary’s Key Strategy Priorities.

For example, USDA is accountable to the Administration to address childhood nutrition where statistics reveal “that 17 million American

households, including more than 8 million households with children, had difficulty putting enough food on the table at some point during 2008. Even more alarming, in more than 500,000 households, with more than 1 million children, 1 or more children simply did not get enough to eat” (*USDA Strategic Plan, 2010-2015*). KYF2 was launched, in part, as a core enterprise leadership effort designed to create awareness of public problems, like childhood hunger, and efficiently build local and regional self-help capacity as well as extend benefits to those in need (*USDA Strategic Plan, 2010-2015*).

The formal strategic language of the KYF2 initiative is provided in the “Guiding Framework.” This framework explains that the initiative intends to demonstrate an enterprise-wide program re-articulation of public services, which “strengthens the critical connection between farmers and consumers and supports local and regional food systems. Through this initiative, USDA integrates and emphasizes programs and policies that

- *Stimulate* food- and agriculture-based community economic development;
- *Foster* new opportunities for farmers and ranchers;
- *Promote* locally and regionally produced and processed food;
- *Cultivate* healthy eating habits and educated, empowered consumers;
- *Expand* access to affordable fresh and local food; and
- *Demonstrate* the connection between food, agriculture, community, and the environment.

KYF2 also leads a national conversation about food and agriculture to increase the linkages between consumers and farmers” (FY2010 Know Your Food, Know Your Farmer Guiding Framework, Appendices). The document offers a flirtation with strategy description. It does not, however, go so far as stating explicit strategic plans and direction, but rather introduces the

scope of the conversation.

Moreover, KYF2 is relatively unusual compared with traditional USDA technology projects. The institutional Office of the Chief Information officer director of technology development stated that deployment of the requested functionality and cloud-based delivery platform would require at least 18 months. Nevertheless, KYF2 was delivered in a formal White House gateway event launch within 45 days after application development began. However, existing legacy development approaches, capabilities, and best practices for creating a new application were minimized, ignored, or reconfigured in the process. The iterative use of a rapid development approach offered space and agile structure for team members to understand the behavioral uses of technology to communicate the evolving strategic vision and to consider users' interaction with the data displayed on the map. Information about strategic vision casting may be found in Appendix S: Whitehouse Update Slide Deck.

The development cycle, additionally, is entirely visible to all nontechnical stakeholders, which results in strategic enhancements in practice. The principles of outside-the-box thinking were transferred to the traditionally rigid technology development methodology, with very suitable returns. For instance, the derivative patterns of notionally adopting a "Blue Ocean" reconstructionist perspective approach (Kim and Mauborgne, 2004: 81) for finding uncontested market space led to belief that "open[ing] up things we know about so people outside the building will have tools at their disposal such as economic development, research...all sorts of things" would result in an overall public good far greater than hording such knowledge.

I explore the relationship between the USDA KYF2 and the applicable White House guidance to the executive branch agencies and describe these

linkages in Appendix M: KYF2 Map Supports Administration Governance Goals. My evaluation provides an overview of the guidance, codification, direct or indirect benefit of KYF2 in satisfying presidential mandates, and sunset dates as well as the URL reference to policy memoranda, directives, circulars, and so forth. Overall, I am struck by the comprehensive scope and scale of KYF2 contributions to the White House agenda; I believe it offers significant evidence about the importance of this solution for USDA and its relevancy to a broader set of the Administration's strategic measures of success. I am also aware that many of the KYF2 participants are not daily cognizant of the profound and pervasive character of what they are doing in the context of satisfying these external mandates. This lack of awareness is unusual in politically motivated bureaucracies, where tangible measures of technology achievements are hard won. The participants clearly focused on deploying a new "way of opening a window into those things [benefits]... looking at USDA from the perspective of a person versus an agency or program."

The initiative is a primary example of how establishing cross-cutting public solutions stimulates, or makes functionally obsolete, former legacy structures to more effectively address critical challenges, identify opportunities for collaboration across agencies, and create new, results-based reporting mechanisms to improve communication, problem solving, and decision making (*USDA Strategic Plan, 2010-2015*). Political leaders also understood that ultimately, "[you] must bring along the larger institution, or you sink yourself." The mode and process of strategic management acknowledged the fragile, brittle nature of introducing unfamiliar ideas while increasing rates of adoption for those ideas to establish positive traction.

### ***4.3 Strategic Management Problem***

KYF2's strategic shape was primarily formed through two events: the Deputy Secretary's imaginative reconceptualization of Department stakeholders" to foster innovation in public service delivery, and a series of discussions among an eight-member Management Team chaired by the Deputy Secretary.

First, the Deputy Secretary pushed past inherited obstacles, such as institutional preference for large producers versus small, entrepreneurial start-ups, by creating a new ground for discovery. In a memorandum to USDA agency senior leaders, she stated publicly her "challenge to think creatively about how USDA can best address President Obama's call for a reinvigoration of local food systems " (USDA Office of the Secretary Memorandum, "Know Your Food, Know Your Farmer," May 11, 2009, Appendix E). The Departmental initiative announcement claimed a groundswell of public support represented in demand for local and sustainably produced food. With this demand, the Deputy Secretary captured an internal transformation mandate to reconstitute the institutional paradigm and begin "a dialogue within USDA to encourage larger, strategic thinking about how to coordinate our work." A basic organizational question shared by the Deputy in an interview was, "How do you build structure not dependent on a particular person or a couple of people or structures?"

The dialogue began with the internal USDA incentive to adopt particularly progressive values, given the institution's historic programmatic emphasis on big agriculture:

- Support the viability of small and medium-size farms, ranches, and agriculture facilities

- Support sustainable agriculture practices
- Reduce energy consumption
- Promote locally produced and locally processed foods
- Ensure equitable access to fresh local food
- Promote healthy eating

In addition, the Secretary of Agriculture provided a descriptive media statement

([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tms8ye8mw\\_k&list=PL4F1ACED0E6040662&index=1](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tms8ye8mw_k&list=PL4F1ACED0E6040662&index=1)).

The private industry responded to the publicly available announcement with attempts to gain perceived advantages in positioning to define why the locally grown movement is considered an economic opportunity. For example, one entity explained that members of the target audience might be labeled "locavores," that is, people "who strive to eat food produced within 100 miles." Playing on the increased popularity of eating locally grown food, the importance of knowing about one's dietary food chain became a key branding symbol. Examples of consumer justification for endorsing local and regional food systems included environmental sustainability; food safety; variety; support of independent multi-cropping farmers, rather than agribusiness, and the local economy; reduced processing; nutrition; freshness with fewer preservatives; and seasonal availability. "Shoppers are willing to pay a huge premium for local... DOUBLE the price for a local product in a farmers' market versus the identical local product in a retail store" was another claim.

(<http://www.harvestmark.com/resources/newsletter/know-your-farmer,-know-your-food.aspx>).

The actual implementation of the KYF2 solution strategy assumed a subtle, almost clandestine undercurrent. For instance, what other senior USDA

executives did not fully realize (and have not yet realized) is that this initiative is actually about internal transformation. Even the Deputy Secretary special assistant required the experience of an “Ah-ha moment, when [she] realized it was an entirely internal initiative”; regarding the criticality in the “overall goal of moving the Department forward,” she said, “I did not recognize it until half way through.” Most of us on the Management Team discovered this principle by accident; it was not explicit or an emphasized theme, nor reinforced in our many conversations. As one team member noted,

It’s important to have the perspective on how big a change this is in the Department...it really is highly subversive what this has done... unthinkable 10 years ago. It’s hard to realize how deeply reinforced the imperative and paradigm of global production agriculture has been and how really radical the idea of promoting local and regional food systems is for USDA.... The coupling of local and regional with the KYF [congressional reporting requirement]... the national conversation of knowing agricultural better, blunted the subversiveness of it. - KYF2 Participant Interview

In the second of the two defining strategic management milestones, the multi-disciplined, eight-member Management Team were invited to brainstorm about the potential for visualizing USDA local and regional food systems data with maps. These conversations produced a conceptual model, which in turn produced a rough pathway toward strategic outcomes. Appendix F displays the KYF2 Guiding Framework. A key factor in the success of this path was its alignment with the congressional requirement to produce a periodic written report about local and regional food systems in conjunction with the annual Farm Bill. Subsequently, the maps became a set of visual narratives linked to a diverse collection of report themes. The use of geographic information systems (GIS) and a



geospatial presentation framework materialized as an initiative core competency, previously untapped by senior executives. “[Our] strategy was to elevate all this... a way of institutionalizing it [that is, geospatial information] in [the] Department...to ride the wave, as it were, that we were not directing or producing but was very clearly happening.”

The Management Team received the Deputy Secretary’s direction to “include all of USDA, think outside of your box, not get bogged down by definitions, understand opportunities around local and regional fairly endless, bring your great ideas.” Our strategic management exercise avoided organizations’ natural tendency to pressure teams to reduce ideas immediately into categories and frames. We refabricated the problem to, as the Deputy Secretary directed, better “harness creative thinking inside the building, outside the building, in small communities, in local government.” We also sought to follow this formative, yet bureaucratically divisive, principle: “[B]e encouraging...but [do] not control or lead.” The Deputy Secretary emphasized that, to survive, the KYF2 initiative must first and foremost prove itself to the people benefiting from it. She discouraged discussion of maturing KYF2 to official program status, versus initiative. However, she stipulated that “harnessing capacity and expertise across the Department in a deliberate and dedicated way” was the objective rather than establishing another program to compete for scarce USDA resources. The Deputy Secretary summarized KYF2’s purpose as follows: “The KYF initiative is the means of manifesting [USDA’s support] for the small farm, local foods constituencies ‘The KYF initiative is *the* means...’”

Participants on the Management Team had three previous years of implementation information to feed their strategy management processes. The initial phases of the KYF2 initiative, beginning in 2009, concentrated efforts and success measures on satisfying the traditional governmental report criteria. These criteria included point-for-point alignment with

original USDA commitments, use of familiar language and style, limited graphic presentation of data, and content targeted primarily to congressional oversight staff. As time passed, and completion of the report lagged, principal actors sensed the insufficiency of the approach. An energetic, engaging story of local and regional food was needed.

The USDA local and regional foods system story line was stuck in a rut — described as generally hidden, nuanced, sometimes virtually lost, and certainly obstructed for outside stakeholders. Internal agency actors did not always comprehend and understand their role, network relationships, and contributions to a larger USDA mission or comprehend the place of local and regional in their work life. Therefore, the Management Team observed four rules for extracting the KYF2 report from the excess of bureaucratic language and narrating the local foods story.

First, information about constituent programs must be presented in simple ways. Often agency programs provide guidance that would help small beneficiaries acquire government resource assistance, but this content is buried in policy directives, memorandums, tens of thousands of webpages, and so forth. The average person may spend hours, if not days, trying to locate qualification information. Usually he or she gives up and contacts field agents directly for help navigating the chaotic bureaucratic landscape, which consumes agent time and resources.

Second, this information, and its component data, should be made accessible to anyone interested in obtaining it. Content extracted from obsolete government content management practices and distribution channels must be equitably available to all stakeholders. This means contextualizing and categorizing program guidance, organizing information by customer segment and classification, and providing a simple process for downloading raw data for alternative uses by the stakeholder community.

Improved access to data balances the power factor for smaller players and collectives in the agricultural marketplace, while encouraging local food policy.

Third, a graphic representation of the data should visualize and explain episodes, vignettes, and scenarios where USDA offered assistance. A geographically correct image lets users see where the Department has successfully provided resources, the types of uses and beneficiaries, and potential gaps in local and regional food system products and services. For individuals or organizations, such as minority farmers, agriculture cooperatives, and organic supply chain services, these views enable market penetration and partnering at an entirely new level. This visual capability is particularly acute as rural and regional economic condition drive producers to find viable markets and products.

Fourth, the visual narrative should be integrated with a textual set of themes, which relate to core local and regional food system policy agendas and values. This goal represented an innovation in content distribution. Whereas maps were used in limited, static ways to project retrospective data, the Department had not previously, or deliberately, connected written content with geospatial mapping visualization techniques to tell a story about programs. The combination of textual descriptions organized around themes and place-based map views created a congruent message, which was easily validated with evidence at the local, state, regional, and national levels.

With respect to specific KYF2 map tool objectives, the Management Team envisioned three strategic directions. From the dimension of improving communication processes, the report and map were intended to situate data so as to create a point of departure for new conversations with and among stakeholders. The dialogue would occur and be sustained in a place-

based orientation to USDA programs, from which agencies would learn about citizen-consumer demand and adoption of USDA products and services in relation to local and regional food systems.

Next, the tools and channels of social media were deployed to encourage virtual advocacy for USDA programs. Twitter, Blogs, Facebook, and other sources increased the viral nature of the Department's efforts shaping a new brand message and enabled crowdsourcing of complex local issues with USDA data. Last, the principles of map building as an accepted, familiar, and egalitarian convention became the formal framework for conveying new content to constituencies. Maps offered bird's-eye views of program impacts, were perceived as neutral displays of facts, and were devised as a primary interpretive tool to tell enterprise-wide and external results stories in the public domain. These three objectives opened a space of possibilities for reshaping the USDA story and brand through the delivery of a nonstandard content report to an oversight institution.

#### ***4.4 Units of Case Study Analysis***

Five strategic episodes form my units of analysis and introduce a general guide for interpreting the case narrative, aligned to the style of the research questions raised (Yin, 1994: 22). Working from the predefined units of analysis consisting of bounded process observations about KYF2 strategy management, I have defined these units as follows:

- Taskforce composition
- Management Team meetings
- Specialist map development
- Agency participation
- Functional conflict resolution

#### ***4.5 Strategic Episodes Description and Analysis***

In this section of the case study, I introduce separate accounts of the five strategic episodes sequentially as they occurred over time. The construction of the case narrative using strategic episodes enables a higher likelihood of examining the phenomenon of minimal structures at an operational level (Yin, 1994: 42) and observing a sequence of events in its context, yet as a unique set of communicative practices and developmental space (Hendry and Seidl, 2003: 180). For exemplary vignettes of strategy processes, I selected episodes that (1) demonstrate a significant relationship to successfully accomplishing the strategy management agenda, (2) clearly embody improvisational practices, and (3) offer the most robust empirical data access. To establish the legitimacy of these episodes, I incorporate data from many sources, collected at various times, and validated in other aspects of practice beyond my research endeavors; quotes from study participants, direct observations, artifacts, and so forth, provide rich content. My explicit goal is to tease out information from this text regarding the lived processes and routines guiding strategy activities (Feldman and Pentland, 2003: 95).

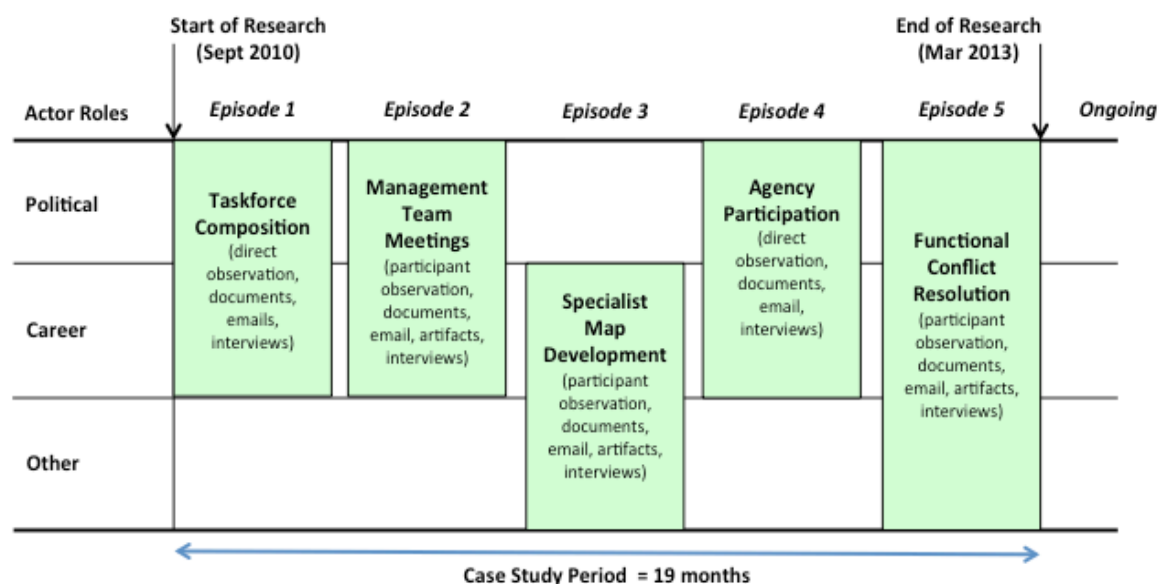
For instance, the composition of the taskforce was a vital accelerator to KYF2 strategy ownership across diverse USDA missions and demanded creative use of structure and interdeterminancy. Management teams meetings were the fulcrum point for strategy idea innovations and collaboration using a small set of cognitively held rules or schema. The work of the map specialist developing the technology product required an enormous tolerance for strategic ambiguity, and the capacity to improvise in practice by linking products together over time. Agency participation demonstrates the spatial opportunities and obstacles to outsider adoption and enactment of KYF2 strategy as a transformative initiative inside the Department to generate spontaneous filling of spaces with existing

capabilities. Last, the activities of functional conflict resolution offer insights into how effective, constructive circumvention of weak or wrong legacy structure may be enhanced through strategy improvisation.

In each of the following sections, I briefly introduce one of the five strategic episodes as context in the larger case itself; summarize the unit of analysis; and close with a detailed table for the episode that describes the meaning of the unit in my words and presents illustrative quotes supporting those statements, my actual comments iteratively developed when reviewing the text narrative, and key emergent themes. A consolidated table of the individually emerging theoretical constructs from each episode is summarized at the end of the case study.

My act of constructing the case textual narrative from multiple data sources, and particularly with respect to the strategic episodes, increased my sensitivity to the actual experiences of the subjects I studied. Episodes facilitate productive reflexivity about strategizing behavior. This increasing awareness of my study data provides the means of authoring the story as it appears to those engaged in KYF2 strategy management, to identify the essential structure or plot occurring in practice, which included numerous actors (Appendices). Therefore, case episodes and their findings are based on the life experience of the actors, but in such a way as to narrate aspects lost to the participants themselves, because often people are not aware that an important event is happening when it takes place (Law, 1994). I am a part, however, of the discursive nature of meaning construction as well, which includes “the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines” (Davies and Harre, 1991: 48). A model of the case study episode timeline is shown in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1: Strategic Episode Timeline of the KYF2 Case Study**



### ***Episode 1: Taskforce Composition***

In the USDA May 2009 KYF2 launch memorandum, the Deputy Secretary asked each of seven Under Secretary mission area political executives to appoint an agency representative for the internal USDA “Taskforce.” Representatives were to be selected based on their subject matter knowledge as well as their “enthusiasm to tackle this challenge...I need worker bees,” the Deputy Secretary wrote. The intention was to bring fresh minds, younger minds to the problem and result in “creating a space to provide and receive ideas.” One participant put a sharper point to the effort: “She [the Deputy Secretary] likes it when there is sort of an original energy when people come together.”

Political leadership initially identified approximately 40 individuals from across the Department to participate in KYF2. Career civil Service tenure

and grade levels were not the exclusive or most relevant criteria in the selection of participants, whose civil service grades diversely ranging from GS 7-15. In most cases, but not all, the Taskforce placement sought to “find [a KYF2 role] close to someone’s job.” Over the course of several years, these persons found a niche in the initiative and managed to negotiate internal agency agenda conflicts, or they self-selected out of the role. Consternation about nonparticipation as a means of exit was a regular discussion point among KYF2 Management Team members. Moreover, accountability to fulfill Taskforce commitments and promised contributions was not explicitly tracked; individuals were allowed to fade away at will. There were no penalties or backlash, and people were welcomed back at any time. Those who did remain constant exhibited a high sense of belonging, demonstrated in faithful biweekly Taskforce meeting attendance; joined in subcommittee work; and volunteered for new assignments. They personally adopted the initiative and embraced the unique challenges of the Deputy Secretary’s efforts “harnessing capacity and expertise across Department in deliberate and dedicated way.” They became willing, true believers. As one Management Team noted, “We saw the Management Team as a way to let some folks have developmental opportunities.”

Whereas the “Administration saw this [KYF2] as a cluster of issues very important to President’s base,” the expectations surrounding the specific strategic, tactical, and operations Taskforce goals and areas of emphasis were not well defined. Generally, the innovative participatory governance idea or principle of fostering “creative thinking inside the building, outside the building, in small communities, in local government” generated a large amount of energy within the White House, yet found less fertile conditions for acceptance among executive office institutions. For example, the competencies available to leadership in this domain of engaging new conversations by leveraging new media were limited, and therefore,

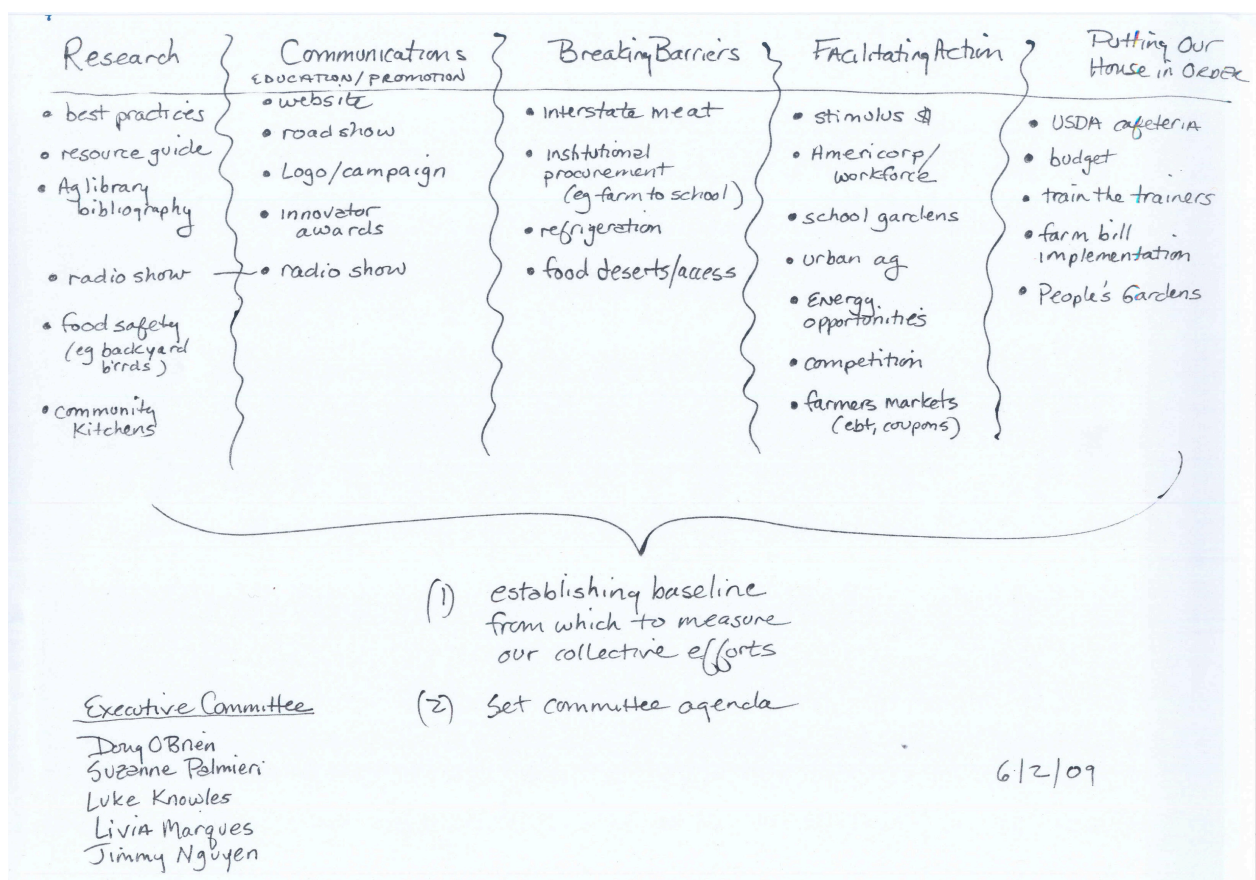


consequences of launching participatory governance ventures introduced undefined forms of risk.

Though the principle outcomes of promoting constituent and other stakeholder conversations were roughly expressed by the Administration, and according to the executive leader of the Taskforce, the Taskforce “implementation was less clear so needed a structure on what things to move forward first.” Consequently, shortly after the creation of the Taskforce, the Deputy Secretary developed an initial strategy concept map for establishing focus areas (see Figure 4.2).

**Figure 4.2: Deputy Secretary KYF2 Strategy Concept Map**

With respect to KYF2 strategic territory and scope, members of the



Taskforce received an initiative strategy structured in five categories: Research, Communications, Breaking Barriers, Facilitating Action, and Putting Our House in Order. These categories formed a set of clearly demarcated swimlanes, on paper, from which members could enact the emerging KYF2 Taskforce agenda and at the same time “solidify the USDA imprint” regarding the paradigm shifts inherent in the initiative. A very deliberate frame-breaking value – that is, the Breaking Barriers category and risk tolerance – emerged early in strategy conceptualization and formulation.

The mythology concerning the creation of this naïve, first-pass structure provided further support for counterculture behavior. One such story depicts the Deputy Secretary at home, sitting at her dining room table after everyone has gone to bed, and drinking a glass of wine as she put together ideas in a coherent structure. The images this story conveys about KYF2 leadership offer Taskforce participants multiple, reinforcing values. For instance, the executive works at home because this is important to her personally, the home has things like I use in my home, i.e. dining room tables, and runs like my home, where my family is part of my life context. She drinks wine, which suggests she can also be relaxed, and so much so she enjoys creativity with a degree of confidence. She has fun.

In the following year, between 2009-2010, the Taskforce structure evolved with practice. Members gained direct knowledge of the implementation hurdles and developed a second, more detailed strategic planning tool. This emerging narrative was structured, according to the initiative manager, as a “guiding framework that provided the initial pieces... and writing it down at that point in reasonably concise way was useful.” The framework classically connects the Taskforce to formal, tangible goals and objectives, which can be measured by the legacy institutions methods (“FY2010 Know Your Food, Know Your Farmer Guiding Framework,”

Appendices). The framework links KYF2 initiative (and therefore the Taskforce participants) to both internal and external performance factors with these goals and introduces the value of stewardship across seven core Taskforce focus areas.

*KYF2 Goal 1* - KYF2 improves the management and implementation of USDA programs that strengthen the critical connection between farmers and consumers and support local and regional food systems.

A. *Objective:* Broaden and diversify program participation and utilization (to include new as well as traditional partners, and to increase utilization in support of the KYF2 mission)

IV. Ensure that USDA program delivery reflects the diversity of America's food systems and USDA priorities and visions for local and regional food systems (from USDA Strategy)

*KYF2 Goal 2* - KYF2 breaks down barriers and supports policies and programs that emphasize local and regional food systems and the critical connection between farmers and consumers.

A. *Objective:* Steward cross-agency initiatives to better leverage USDA resources

- I. Farm-to-school and school-to farm: Enable schools to implement local purchasing plans and develop gardens and curricula to educate
- II. Local meat: Facilitate expanded meat processing and packing capacity
- III. Food distribution hubs: Provide a model for food distribution within local and regional food systems
- IV. Food deserts: Support USDA efforts to eradicate food deserts

- V. USDA in-house operations: Improve in-house operations, such as the cafeteria, to reflect the goals and priorities of USDA and KYF2
- VI. Opportunities in agriculture: Support training and job opportunities in agriculture and at USDA
- VII. Business structures: Educate stakeholders on legal and financial models used by various enterprises to develop robust and resilient local and regional supply chains

In March 2012, the Taskforce members were encouraged to assume new roles and an increased scope of work to engage in USDA and other federal agency “agency outreach.” This push resulted in nine additional federal agencies partnering with USDA to represent local and regional food system government programs on the Compass Map as well as content management on the KYF2 webpage. Additionally, the Taskforce verbally instituted rules describing membership expectations, which required active participation from all on the Taskforce roster.

This move toward formal program status emphasizes contributions to the KYF2 initiative, conducted within a value neutral framework whose themes are under constant monitoring to determine their relevancy to promoting the strategic adoption of local and regional food systems ideals. Further, this description of the first selected strategic episode provides a preview into the template to be used throughout the KYF2 initiative implementation: an overarching set of strategic principles executed with improvisation practices by previously unengaged organization personnel.

Table 4.1 shows a detailed summary of the case episode, structuring the data findings into four parts: summary statement, illustrative data, researcher comments, and key emergent themes. On the basis of the table display, I recognize that the case episode data inductively reveal early patterns, appearing to demonstrate the tension between deliberate

strategies and emergent strategies. The table also suggests the apparent desirability of adopting fewer structured plans for deliverables and on greater emphasis on agents' ingenuity to figure it out as they go. This mode of practice applies even, or especially, to less mature and seasoned employees. The data seem to show the resonance and relationship of successful strategy management with the use of spatial mental frames presented in the nascent themes of inclusion, boundary removal, revelation in place, and tolerance for contextual ambiguity.

Table 4.1 Taskforce Composition Process Observations

**Episode 1: Taskforce Composition**

Episode Summary	Illustrative Data	Researcher Comments	Key Emergent Themes
<p>The Taskforce creation and ongoing processes represent a deliberate strategy to eliminate hierarchical boundaries, and engage isolated expertise previously outside of senior USDA leadership circle of direct influence; emergence of naïve capacity demonstrated the ability to socialize strategic principles rapidly and innovatively solve entrenched definitional, cultural, and process problems in practice.</p>	<p>"Tone setting by DS as she said she wanted to hear everything, [created] very open feeling."</p> <p>"...huge mountain to yet climb... [so the initiative] has to be calibrated so you don't scare people, or overload them with work..."</p> <p>"I felt stuck between certain paradigms for how to get work done... it felt a little uncomfortable..."</p> <p>"People do not have the capacity or need to care about everything, so how do you allow them to be part of the larger team, yet specialize, concentrate on the issues that are really their passion...?"</p> <p>"...shared learning... how does this make my life, my job, more interesting and more valuable, informed?"</p> <p>"...you don't see it while you are sitting in it to realize this is what is going on."</p> <p>"...famous sketch the DS started with gave a very clear statement of what we were trying to do... what the significant pieces might be... intellectual framework... creatively setting it out."</p> <p>"Taskforce fairly uneven in terms of hierarchy... did less checking in with leadership than we should have."</p> <p>"...harnessing taskforce energy is an ongoing challenge... get to point where they [space] can converge better...how to harness upstream piece?"</p> <p>"...go smash some walls for awhile... lets break some barriers then go figure out what we are doing."</p>	<p>Congruent leadership resulted in shared understanding of driving, dominant frame.</p> <p>Larger context of institutional change and paradigm shifts represented as the ground, or stage, for individual actors working at the difficult, and sometimes threatening, margin of these transitions.</p> <p>As enablers of new enterprise strategies places them between two worlds and recognition, or not recognizing, one has entered this space.</p> <p>Requires attentiveness to mixed uses of resources; use of the common window of opportunity.</p> <p>Disjointed nature of give and take as individual actor represent unique styles of learning.</p> <p>Image of strategy assumes mythical status as persistent anchor.</p> <p>Structure of Taskforce authorities and boundaries is amorphous; limited set of rules or clear-cut questions to be answered.</p> <p>Support the emergence of open areas and think ahead; spaces appear like objects to be managed.</p> <p>Eliminate conceptual boundaries, provide alternative perspectives as structures themselves become targets for improvisation; the reaction of image offers a source of reflection and information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish an open sense of opportunity and ownership</li> <li>Work within structure to break down boundaries and smash barriers, then figure it out</li> <li>Make space appear, to emerge as open areas where convergence occurs</li> <li>Cannot not see it when you are in the margin of a transition</li> </ul>

## ***Episode 2: Management Team Meetings***

Within the Management Team, members were assembled from a broad array of functional skills with no apparent schema, or project plan, employed to rationally compose the group. Whereas some members were connected previously via the Obama presidential campaign, and evidential employment in political roles with the Administration, this was not universal and the eclectic profile of the team was unmistakable in the contrasting characteristics of member knowledge of focus programs, age, ethnic background, education, professional grade level, perception of authority, network extent, and other attributes. These differences were not strategy implementation obstacles, or deterrents, and did not inhibit voluntary member professional or social network formation and development. In practice and fact, the group emerged as the “kitchen cabinet” for the Deputy Secretary. Though a reinforcing question or measure bounded our success, captured in the Deputy Secretary’s statement “how do you build structure not dependent on a particular person or couple of people or structure?”

The diversity produced a type of mindfulness about team depth and capacity, which enabled specialization as members trusted, and entrusted various tasks to, key individuals. This trust extended beyond initiative tasks and deliverables and was evident in the personal relationships developed among the team. The members talked openly about their personal concerns, whether related to KYF2 implementation responsibilities, or other more intimate aspects of personhood, demonstrating a clear sense of safety and witness to vulnerability. The awareness that they could talk about anything was guarded and honored among Management Team members behaviors such as constraint with visiting participants, subtle pauses in mixed groups, checking statements with frequent eye contact, and rapid follow-up between members when

disconnects were perceived. Moreover, if a member was perceived to be subject to personal self-doubt or to criticism from outside the team, he or she was tangibly protected and encouraged, reinforcing the relationship and that member's value.

The team members also discovered basic similarities that formed common ground from which to make connections – for instance, in the cultural attributes of New England pragmatism and the idea of a Protestant work ethic. But regardless of ethnicity, place of birth, religious affiliation, or length of work experience, the values of hard work, reward, and commonsense were embraced by each member. This perspective on labor produced an affinity for accomplishing difficult tasks; the common expectation was that it would be difficult to achieve the outcomes of the KYF2 strategy but that it was worth trying, and the team had only one another to realize the overall goals. This orientation of personal persistence despite obstacles reinforced team cohesion and bonding through the course of the initiative.

Another similar characteristic was the level of comfort with ambiguity. Members demonstrated willingness to hold short-term performance goals lightly and to focus on the higher, intermediate strategic goals. Periods of delay, miscommunication, and the need to make process corrections were viewed as immediate results of leading innovation and not reflective of the relevance of the KYF2 solution. Ambiguous and chaotic circumstances were equally accepted as the prices of achieving something worthwhile. Members held this mutual value in common, and it produced confidence in experimenting with new approaches, if a former path closed in practice. There was also a bit of the Irish cultural trait wrapped in this view of the KYF2: the sense that each of life's challenges calls for a celebration, and we must not take ourselves too seriously.



On a functional level, initiative tasks were executed with a clear preference for action over deliberation across specialized roles. Coordination was a spatial concept; when working on a particular problem space, members engaged each other according to the needs of the enactment of strategy at that place and within the appropriate pace. Everyone seemed to understand, intuitively, the correct level of effort and participation necessary to complete a given step. There was no hesitancy among members offering insights and alternative views. Language became simpler, and problem definition was practically instantaneous. Outright rejection and modification of legacy business rules were taken for granted.

Finally, with regard to social relationships, the Management Team was encouraged and welcomed to connect with each other through working meals, after-hour drinks, commuting, and an offsite gathering at the Deputy Secretary's home. The models of civility and hospitality were expressed in direct fashion within these regular gatherings. Common office areas were used for impromptu social meetings within and after work hours, where individuals talked freely about their task impediments, reflexive observations, and personal life experiences. Also, all members leveraged the office spaces with a close proximity to leadership to gain access and personal validation, which resulted in energizing the Management Team.

The team met 42 times, almost weekly, over the period of observation without regard to attaining a quorum, and efficiently consumed the hour time slot with exchanges of content such as updates from past events, current decisions, and future activity planning. Team meetings were formally scheduled to occur Friday from 12-1pm each workweek. Generally, the Deputy Secretary blocked off this time on her business calendar, and only out-of-town business travel disrupted her attendance; even then, she often participated by telephone while team members met

in her office. However, meetings generally occurred as planned regardless of Deputy Secretary's availability in keeping with her belief that "names should be able to be interchanged, including mine."

Adjustments to the meeting schedule and agenda were taken very seriously, in a positive sense. Though team members dedicated specific space on Fridays on their business calendars, modifications or slippage was addressed with a professional sense of cheerful resolve. Any changes usually presented themselves via email, with the assumption that everyone has access to a smart phone device or personal computer and adequate Wi-Fi or internet bandwidth to receive messages the instant they were sent. I do not recall hearing a single complaint or observing any behavior intended to convey displeasure when meeting times or days shifted, although such shifts did cause individual inconveniences related to juggling the meetings and other priorities. People who found themselves caught between priorities were excused from realigned meetings but not considered missing in action; it was understood that each person had additional time commitments to fulfill.

Team members' fulfillment of responsibilities, past, present, or future, was seen as consisting in the current shape of the strategy. Former contributions were interpreted in the present context; future intentions likewise. The success and merit of all actions took form in the immediate understanding of the place. Time between meetings moved quickly.

Team meetings functioned as a gathering place for idea vetting and further incubation. Most decisions regarding strategy formulation evolved out of a process of spiral exploration, where one person introduced a concept for group discussion and the circle of team members turned the new, or refreshed, idea over and over. This equitable sharing or elapsing process

generated further attributes, possibilities, potential alternatives, combinations, and so forth, about the original idea.

The exchange of information assumed a more profound function as it provided content for relationship building. Similar to a bonding agent when constructing a house, the content moved between members as a medium for connection and fixedness against external chaos or unanticipated consequences. These interactions provided a “kitchen cabinet” forum, which orchestrated the emerging components of organizational innovation and exercised the characteristics of strategy as practice through constant improvisation. There was no direct conversation about strategy framework, but one Management Team member noted, “and yet [the Deputy Secretary] indulged us in going through the process, because she knew we needed a framework for task ahead.” The meetings became the strategy experiment from which a framework emerged.

The Deputy Secretary’s round, 9-foot-in-diameter, mahogany conference table appeared to reinforce the cycling of thinking within the large executive office suite. The table inhabited a distinct section of the room, taking up approximately one-fifth of the floor and was fitted with seven chairs. Often, additional chairs were added to accommodate the entire team, when everyone was present. The ritual involved the physical lifting or pulling of a variety of other chairs from across the office space or through the massive doorway connecting to the adjacent staff office, which visitors passed through to enter Deputy Secretary’s office area. As each person entered, there was a mutual shifting to make room at the table. This activity was greeted as a form of welcome to members and produced a positive sense of inclusion demonstrated in tangible acts. The walls decorations enhanced this inclusive feel, with the Deputy Secretary’s memorabilia from attentive and appreciative special-interest groups and

individual farmers and photos of previous political candidates in whose campaigns the Deputy Secretary participated.

For individuals outside the circle, it became imperative as an enactment of diversity to focus on reaching outside the physical space to connect. The act of dialing the conference line, testing and validating the clarity of the voice volume, and asking for specific input from members who were travelling or otherwise unavailable became an exaggerated process apparently intended to demonstrate inclusivity as a core value. On the occasions when I engaged in the meetings via the conference call line, I experienced the meeting like a distant family member, as if I were in a bubble just outside the office. My opinions were sought and extra space and latitude was created for me to express my thoughts through the corporately acknowledged, poor-quality channel of the Polycom device used for group conference calls.

The goals of each Management Team meeting varied slightly with respect to decision kind and degree. Meeting goals, if formally introduced, were presented as concepts rather than well-defined outcomes. This abstraction seemed to result in more-detailed strategy formulations and designs, as member imaginations developed robust, intuitive constructs. Goals frequently took the form of principles, which needed context to find full definition. Likewise, content played several roles beyond the bonding function. For instance, a diverse body of content was used to convey strategic principles and direction, such as slide decks, laptop briefings, charts, and use of poster sheet to draw concepts in real-time. The materials functioned as visual cues and models for elaboration of textually constrained content, usually framed in written point papers or other narrative styles.

Activities employed by the team to reach strategic agreement included several key process techniques. First, a practice of self-depreciation sometimes accompanied the introduction of strategy fragments, alternatives, or themes. The level of intelligence among team members was very high; these were exceptionally qualified civil servants. Therefore, this voluntary approach, and group norm, offered insight into the regard that each member had for others. Whether a reflection of respect, humility, appreciation, awe, intimidation, or another motivation, members deferred to others' opinions as carrying greater total weight than their individual views. The practice had the affect of neutralizing negative and aggressively opposing perspectives, which sometimes attend the critique of people possessing superior thinking skills. In Appendix I the KYF2 Strategy Session notes are provided for reference.

Second, methods and practices, such as showing sequential deference toward others in meeting conversations, qualifying statements to provide context and scope as a mean of prepositioning ideas, and chaining together ideas with concise add-on thoughts, worked to propel strategic conceptualizations forward into more concrete shapes.

Third, the skills exercised by an actor to express an opinion amid the exchange and contribute to the formulation of strategy included postponement and use of timing; building contextual relationships with other members who were sympathetic to the other actors' positions; and the directed probing, intervention or intervening from members who were observing but not directly engaged, as means of checking the direction and validity of the conversation flow.

The tone for the meetings appeared pre-established; in other words, a formula or recipe seemed to be repeated. This was characterized as a set of informal voices, where ideas were explored on equal ground, but in

some cases not at equal length. The informality provided both space for inclusivity and also ambiguity for informal dismissal of ideas that were not fully comprehended, possibly premature, misunderstood, complex and not ready for consumption, or ill fit for the discussion's context. Whereas the team members possessed highly diverse skills and knowledge, as well as intellectual capacity, they occasionally ignored strategic ideas requiring more profound practice or disciplinary knowledge. This behavior was not modeled by the Deputy Secretary but was intermittently exhibited among other actors. Member rewards and incentives for continuing as Management Team participants could be identified along three paths.

- **Self-actualization:** Individuals were seeking an outlet or forum to tangibly contribute public service in their particular style.
- **Desire to follow after the attribution of power:** Membership on the team offered an association with authority, which is difficult to find under normative bureaucratic conditions.
- **Form breaking, or contrarianism, as a contribution to organizational change:** Whereas all the actors were in context creating and demonstrating enormous change management contributions, certain members found the edginess and murkiness of enacting something entirely new and foreign especially stimulating.

The Deputy Secretary's leadership style orchestrated these various motivations, voices, and intentions, so that members felt personally affirmed in their respective role. Those on the margin were verbally acknowledged in meetings for their unique place in conversations.

Meeting facilitation was carried out by the Deputy Secretary's special assistant. She solicited items for discussion before the Friday meetings, composed meeting agendas, organized read-ahead materials, and conducted each gathering as the assumed leader. The Deputy Secretary

deferred to the role of the special assistant, who conveyed a presence much like other members: awaiting her turn to talk, asking permission to offer perspectives, and so forth. This behavior modeled, practiced, and reinforced the acceptable norms and values of the group. The special assistant's facilitation also included timekeeping with the specific goal of completing the entire agenda each session — a goal that seemed much more important to the facilitator than to the Deputy Secretary or other team members. A certain amount of anxiety accompanied this aspect of her facilitation, as she sought to contain and bound the group's agenda. In those instances where the meeting diverged into unanticipated areas, the team's level of energy increased in kind; people moved forward in their chairs, smart phones were laid aside, heads followed closely the speakers gestures, verbal piling on maintained the cadence of the conversation. Generally, the actors appeared to breathe more efficiently and as one unit.

Meetings mostly began on time, and if delays occurred, the Deputy Secretary's office waiting area transformed into a caucus room for pre-meeting conversations among members. The energy in this room was very high, so much so that high-ranking executives who were waiting, or emerging from prior Deputy Secretary meetings, appeared surprised by the Management Team's presence, collective confidence, and informality.

Table 4.2 summarizes the case episode data findings, outlined in four parts: the summary statement, illustrative data, researcher comments, and key emergent themes. The table reveals several newly emerging themes, such as connection points, edges, and boundaries. These ideas also include the sense of actors outside looking in, the creation of space to choreograph strategy and act out of unknowing to improvise in practice. This description of the second strategic episode introduces insights about sustaining strategic actor innovation with basic structures or rules. These rules, nevertheless, do not consist of hardened norms but rather resemble

currents in a channel.

My view of management team meetings probably represents one of the more intimate views among the team members, yet the themes appearing in this episode are surprising in terms of their strong representation and correlation with the spatiality. I was not aware of these attributes while engaged in the various conversation and acts of strategy management, though I see them easily in retrospect.



Table 4.2 Management Team Meetings Process Observations

*Episode 2: Management Team Meetings*

Episode Summary	Illustrative Data	Researcher Comments	Key Emergent Themes
The Management Team sense of place in the strategy as it emerged is expressed in confidence, civility, and spatial presence; strategy is experienced cognitively as a collective, ongoing emplacement activity rather than a rational plan.	<p>"Strategy was to elevate all this [KYF2 solution]... a way of institutionalizing it in Department... to ride the wave as it were that we were not directing or producing but very clearly happening."</p> <p>"I am still uncertain how it all played out... had to adapt my expectations to it... let go of my first idea to get into creative mode."</p> <p>"...interested in moving while we were putting the wheels on as we go... basically permission to go solve problems... one of the best things a person can bring to the work place is imagination."</p> <p>"...trusted us with this content which was so valuable to her... in the room [making decisions]... go make this the best it can be, and you define what the best is."</p> <p>"...finding a structure, or the idea of a structure, and putting it in place and finding out the structure wasn't going to work because of the boundaries; pre-existing structures."</p> <p>"Shared space of bringing together all the agencies in Department was underlying theme, and subversive in breaking down the silos... initiative produced interagency collaboration that would not have happened before."</p> <p>"...shared space is absolutely essential to what KYF is as a management initiative... owning some identity in that space."</p> <p>"Sometimes we need to sanction off space to have a deeper dive discussion."</p> <p>"...watch and learn... try harder and harder to become less tone deaf about what sort of things get what sorts of actions... takes a certain choreography."</p> <p>"...boundaries were defined by certain things stalling out and others moving forward... which is probably not the most explicit way to define them but it works... boundaries are defined organically in context."</p>	<p>Developed sensory capacity to identify connection points and surface areas for opportunistic and derivative actions.</p> <p>Feeling of being stretched to the outside ring of the comfort zone is not unusual.</p> <p>Sense of being in strange space also produced an awareness of limitations.</p> <p>Freedom to invent public solutions encourages willingness to go to the edge.</p> <p>Tension maintained between current and desired cognitive frameworks.</p> <p>Collective approach to strategy management naturally generated shared space.</p> <p>Mental partitioning of thinking space is a strategy technique.</p> <p>Experiments are often designed to place one on the outside looking in.</p> <p>Lack of comprehension requires a certain creative fortitude and courage to move beyond and improvise.</p> <p>Strategy processes became very fluid and function more like patterns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify connection points outside comfort zone</li> <li>Stretching to the edge of surface areas, cross boundaries to open new possibilities</li> <li>Uncertainty in a strange space, outside looking in</li> <li>Sanction off space to choreograph strategy</li> <li>Will to act out of unknowing, to improvise and not block with others surrounding us</li> </ul>

### ***Episode 3: Specialist Map Development***

Accomplishing the mission of KYF2 initiative required an innovative, powerful technology solution. The solution required data integration from multiple USDA and federal agencies with varying content format, file structures, and quality. It also needed to support complex geospatial analysis to identify cross-agency synergies and gaps. Most importantly the solution had to present the integrated data and analysis results in the form of an easy-to-use, map-driven web application, accessible by USDA staff from multiple agencies and the general public.

KYF2 Compass Map is designed to break down barriers between federal agency databases and other public datasets. It combines the data in a seamless, innovative cloud database and map-driven web application. The solution enables agencies to effectively share GIS resources, coordinate efforts, and share the results with the public. This unique solution empowers the public to take further action by getting involved with USDA-sponsored programs and improving their own regional and local food systems.

The web map application uses the ArcGIS 10.1 platform to deliver a customized JavaScript application that provides the public with a powerful yet easy to use mapping interface for exploring information on USDA-funded programs, food hubs, farmers markets, hoop houses, meat inspection facilities, and much more. The KYF2 Compass map not only assimilates what was once disparate information, it also provides powerful local search capabilities to help users easily understand the data. Farmers and ranchers can locate USDA resources, consumers can find local farmers markets, and the general public can learn about the importance of strengthening local and regional food systems. The application was developed with public outreach and support as a priority and was designed

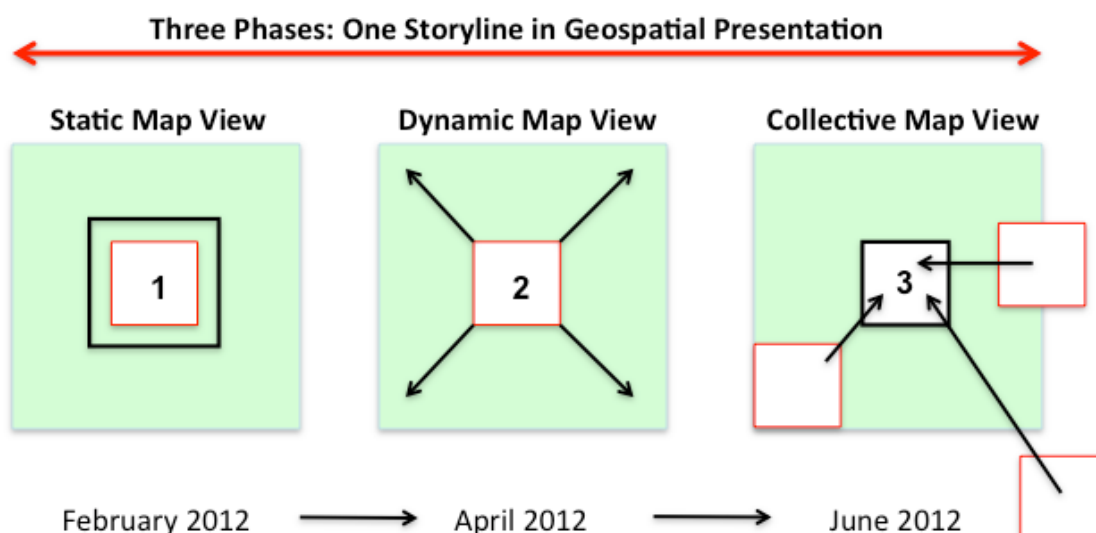
from the ground up to inform the public of how USDA helps strengthen local and regional food systems.

USDA and its business partners worked as an integrated team to help optimize the delivery of the KYF2 application. Despite aggressive schedules, as well as complications such as browser incompatibility, CPU processing speed, and geometry challenges, all planned launches occurred on time. The KYF2 application also took advantage of Managed Services on the Amazon Cloud to host the map services and database underlying the KYF Compass Map during both the staging and production phases.

The specialist map development consisted of seven core functions: creating static and dynamic maps to suit stakeholder segment needs; developing a reusable set of KYF icons that establish the USDA brand image; consuming web map and feature services from both internal and external provisioning sources; representing infrastructure available for local and regional food systems market stakeholders; and integrating with social media channels and tools. However, agility in the *uses* of the map visualization solution was necessary. As a contractor pointed out to counter the traditional demands for a rigorous project plan, “Trying to make things too organized takes some of the creativity away from it [value proposition].” Citizen feedback and involvement in the organic growth of local and regional food systems was a desired input to incrementally evolving the browser-based user interface and data display.

The KYF2 map views are composed of three phases: static web map services views, dynamic web map application functionality, and collective web mapping service and social media data exchange. Figure 4.3 provides a high-level model of the concept development, followed by Table 4.3, which displays the basic attributes of each phase of development.

**Figure 4.3: Model of KYF2 Web Map Functional Development**



**Table 4.3: KYF2 Map Development Attributes**

Static Map View	Dynamic Map View	Collective Map View
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unchanging data</li> <li>• Rigid map functions</li> <li>• Single base map and layer geography views</li> <li>• All push, no pull</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data updates</li> <li>• Map function selection</li> <li>• Multiple base maps and layers</li> <li>• User pull selection</li> <li>• Matching content use patterns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External data feeds</li> <li>• Template functions</li> <li>• Sourcing of all layers</li> <li>• User push into USDA framework</li> <li>• Self-empowered community</li> </ul>

Supporting the Administration’s participatory governance agenda, the KYF2 solution enabled new user capabilities, which were not previously available to USDA stakeholders. These capabilities, or design principles, include the following:

- *See the conversation:* Allow the stakeholders to tell the story from their perspective.
- *Relinquish control:* Let them organize the map information to avoid creating more noise than sense.
- *Enable metadata:* Leverage all sources to facilitate users' ability to search on their terms and make connections to map information.
- *Extend reach:* Post map information extensively across various media, channels, environments, events, etc.
- *Stop editing:* Facilitate broad community input, minimal filters.

Whereas conventional maps frequently exclude community, the KYF2 initiative seeks to ensure a display of the mixed, diverse geographies needed to articulate a place. Often, highly unstructured data and dynamic networks constrain, limit, and increase access complexity to locate government knowledge sources. The subsequent conditions create extensive equity issues around participation in mapping, and geospatial products are often constructed for those already in power. The solution, in contrast, provides a “way of opening a window into those things (benefits)... looking at USDA from the perspective of a person versus an agency or program.” Appendix G offers example of KYF2 Meeting Notes.

The initial deliverable occurred in late February 2012 with a formal launch from the Obama White House. Complimenting this public forum, the USDA Secretary and the Deputy Secretary filmed an introductory studio video of the map function, which demonstrated how people move around on maps to locate information. This is the first live application presentation by either executive during the Administration. The video employed the metaphor of a “scavenger hunt” with the map and has been used in multiple settings since its original deployment.

As a technology tool, the intended purpose of the map is simply the presentation of complex data sets. However, the map rapidly gained acceptance as a collective messaging device. The GIS specialists became adept at migrating the concepts and themes of the KYF2 narrative to the map viewer. Nevertheless, a question remained: *How do we institutionalize it for enterprise-wide leverage?* The adage “If you build it they will come” did not quite adhere — even with 100,000 unique map users who are not casual drive-by users.

Table 4.5 Specialist Map Development Process Observations

*Episode 3: Specialist Map Development*

Episode Summary	Illustrative Data	Researcher Comments	Key Emergent Themes
The Specialist Map Development processes strategically used rapid cycles to confront and eliminate barriers imposed by and embedded in traditional bureaucratic policy and administration design; employed the deliberate act of leaving the data story open with gaps for others to fill in content.	<p>"...map becoming the single most useable resource to understand how programs [local and regional foods] would work together."</p> <p>"...institutionalize agency communication in such a way so that it can never again be siloed... a vision of what management should look like."</p> <p>"...hard to do this thing with so many owners of discrete data that's not complied."</p> <p>"Push down, push out kind of thing, but needs to be a pull thing too."</p> <p>"...showing how we have lived the promises of the Administration."</p> <p>"...we have not had to confront the downside of being this transparent ...how do we storyline... how do we handle failure that is so clearly mapped...Ultimately we do not want this to be the tool that shows people this thing [KYF2] does not work."</p> <p>"...strange personality quirk that I am fatalistic...I injured myself to idea that it was not possible."</p> <p>"...now we have pathways for discovering data..."</p>	<p>Innovations in the distribution of program data content with a place-based orientation results in internal organization transformations.</p> <p>Exposes the rigid boundaries surrounding and obstructing rich government data stores.</p> <p>Innovation uniquely found a space to push through to the margin of technology potential.</p> <p>Limited knowledge of proven and tested technology solutions is present as a tension of discovery in the construction of comprehensive solution requirements.</p> <p>The ambiguity of an evolutionary application develop approach becomes a magnet which people gravitate to, or repels others.</p> <p>Channels connected to messaging in real-time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reveal the true nature of a thing</li> <li>• Find space or pathway to discover in practice</li> <li>• Change directional magnetism of perceived value</li> </ul>

### ***Episode 4: Agency Participation***

The USDA agencies work to support the American agricultural economy to strengthen rural communities; to protect and conserve our natural resources; and to provide a safe, sufficient, and nutritious food supply for the American people. The Department's wide range of programs and responsibilities touches the lives of every American every day. Faced with an ever more uncertain federal budget and more potential cuts on the horizon, USDA has taken proactive steps to reduce spending, streamline operations, and cut costs. Meanwhile, we have worked hard to ensure that USDA's millions of customers across rural America receive stronger service. USDA continues to look for ways to improve, innovate and modernize.

As part of the KYF initiative, USDA identified an initial list of over two dozen agency programs that are available to support local and regional food efforts; the KYF Compass and map provide examples of these programs. Engaging agencies in KYF2 is a "huge educational process... we started with 27 programs now built up to around 40," according to one agency Taskforce participant. The map and KYF Compass are useful as illustrations of the value of agency coordination at a time of limited government resources. Many of the efforts described in the KYF Compass have been made possible because of interagency coordination facilitated through the initiative. A member of the Secretary's staff observed the outcomes of participation "include all of USDA, thinking outside of your box, not getting bogged down by definitions, and understanding opportunities around local and regional are fairly endless..."

For example, due to the coordinated efforts of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, Agricultural Marketing Service, and Rural Development, the number of farmers markets that accept electronic data on nutrition benefits grew by more than 50 percent between 2010 and 2011. Using



limited resources, these agencies were able to coordinate to help provide access to local food at farmers markets for more than 2 million women, infants, and children and nearly 1 million seniors nationwide in 2010. The KYF Compass and map also makes it clear that strategic agency investments can have a big impact, even if resources are limited. Success, from the perspective of the Deputy's staff, "has been to pay attention to those multiple dimensions... and give them all their due and not put all our eggs in any one basket..., to have a system that pursues different approaches."

KYF is not a new Department program; it has no full-time staff, no office, and no dedicated funding. This strategy is in part because the Deputy Secretary stated that she "want[ed] to be encouraging...but not control or lead." The initiative seeks to leverage existing USDA resources, promote greater collaboration between the Department's 17 agencies and multiple staff offices, and identify processes to improve the Administration and implementation of agency programs. KYF marked the start of transformation at USDA. At least one employee from each agency and many staff offices joined the KYF Taskforce, which coordinates the initiative through regular meetings that provide an opportunity for cross agency information sharing, education and identification of program synergies. The desire is to "see the systematic whole because we are all actors in it [KYF2]." The Taskforce serves as a space to bring different perspectives and tools to bear in the service of common public goals, and this "internal piece is huge part of it [KYF2]."

An urgency surrounds the theme of agency participation. According to one program manager, local and regional food systems are "already a huge trend but still trending... the fact that it's such a huge economic driver trying to catch up to consumer trends.... I hope we do not miss it, as if somehow the integrity of local is going to deflate and no one cares anymore.... [The] "momentum is available now, which was not available

last year.” Claims such as these point to the importance of reaching the market quickly with a story of relevancy for USDA constituents and stakeholders. “Agricultural always crosses boundaries... people do not vote ag[riculture], they vote commodity,” and agendas change quickly as a special advisor observes. Appendix J affords a view of strategic management targets in the KYF2 Objectives Statement.

Currently, the KYF2 initiative is reaching out to add 10,000 USDA employees to the user population, extend the use of field success stories, and attract USDA workers outside the Taskforce. The push concentrates on new identifying participant ideas and fostering embrace of the local-and-regional-foods principles. The Appendix R USDA Update Slide Deck offers several slides to obtain a sense of the technical strategy.

Table 4.6 Agency Participation Process Observations

*Episode 4: Agency Participation*

Episode Summary	Illustrative Data	Researcher Comments	Key Emergent Themes
The Agency Participation is characterized as the cohesion and fusion of a deliberate set of legacy, heterogeneous strategies to a single emergent type; the aspect of finding fit in a new value space that is composed of entire shifts in the known landscape so former place-based values are not easily located.	<p>"Getting here and being tossed in the deep end of pool forced me to learn about various parts of the Department I otherwise would have not had knowledge of or reasons to interact with; it definitely catalyzed my growth..."</p> <p>"Coming from the science agencies, there's a limit to how much we can know or figure out in a short space of time... this initiative is taking off like gang busters because people have a lot of information that tells them there are social, economic, environmental benefit to doing this kind of work but I often feel pushed beyond the limit of what we can really document; sort of western science."</p> <p>"...have to be careful and watch for true buy-in... Trying to get them [leadership] to own the stuff, and take responsibility... getting buy-in is cumbersome, time consuming process."</p> <p>"...behind [enemy] lines at all times....slow to pick up on what a dangerous position I was in....create equities in a thin space..."</p> <p>"...real uncomfortable conversations with folks who thought if all we do is promote small farms, only rich people can buy the food... definitely a dance that became less acute as time went on..."</p> <p>"...sounder investment by looking at the composite... how does the whole thing fit together, all the puzzle pieces...great public, transformative, shared space effort..."</p> <p>"...shared mapping space that shares stories and creates pathways... gives direction, helps people navigate federal resources....All these siloed agencies over decades doing their deal, but [KYF2] did gap analysis and captured synergies among our various investments."</p> <p>"So there is that kind of tension... not me personally but putting my role in the Department in a place it doesn't belong, but also not wanting to stay in my lane too much..."</p> <p>"Who even knows where these things [legacy bureaucracy] originate, who got behind that system?"</p>	<p>Being driven out into unfamiliar space, beyond expertise, increases strategic management depth and dexterity.</p> <p>The obvious way into a discussion does not necessarily lead to obvious strategy adoption.</p> <p>Agency participation is not an exchange, or transaction, between one source of truth and another but functions more like an expedition into new territory.</p> <p>Knowing where folks are in the conversation demand points of triangulation with known and unknown objects.</p> <p>Getting caught in contrasting agency paradigms is a constant pitfall.</p> <p>Must be willing to stay in difficult middle-place between positions to reach something new.</p> <p>Seeing the strategy unfold as a single landscape of programs matures collaboration behaviors.</p> <p>Retrospective view of sunk costs, and the consequences, were bureaucratic exposure is lessened in the partnership.</p> <p>Initiative is embraced in more holistic frame, gives permission for folks to explore, and avoids getting stuck in old frames.</p> <p>An intentional, deliberate casting out of the initiative rather than building another program inside, forcing survival in the marketplace of ideas and actions.</p> <p>Understanding the value chain as more like understanding the values chain; what people believe to be true rather than say.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reposition values with the values chain</li> <li>• Cast out beyond expertise and limits to unfamiliar place</li> <li>• Take the unobvious way out to avoid old frameworks</li> <li>• Permission to explore a thin space in new territory</li> <li>• Will to stay in between to realize transition to next stage</li> </ul>

### ***Episode 5: Functional Conflict Resolution***

The KYF2 initiative faced persistent structure and agency challenges throughout the strategy planning, development, and implementation process. A Management Team member reflected that deploying the evolving strategy involved “A lot of back and forth, really a struggle to get there.” The USDA agencies’ former strategy had been to distribute data and standard written forms, tables, and charts and in some cases to locate these artifacts on a webpage. The common belief was *Publish it and they will find it*, and there was limited conceptual buy-in for presenting data in multiple forms for diverse audiences. Thinking about the communication of the initiative, a specialist recalls, “Everything did not go as planned... certain it would be continuous issue.” Appendix H demonstrates a team product in the KYF2 Communications Plan.

Subsequently, significant time- and energy-consuming challenges to strategy implementation appeared outside the management team. The mindful strategy implementation success factor is, “Be sure the people we are helping know we are helping.” However, resistance to new technologies and approaches to public engagement in governance activities arose from several predictable sources, including, first, the institution’s closed-system response. Many career bureaucrats as well as political appointees assumed a “not created here” posture toward the perceived strategy. In their behavior, such as data provision postponement, human resource participation constraints, and reference to rules, they demonstrated the tacit belief that USDA did not require program content distribution innovations in either its manner of public service or channels it employed. A special assistant concluded, “Conflict between the instinct of what she [the Deputy Secretary] wanted to have and the aspect of putting it into writing [in strategy], what you are going to ‘say’ about and what it was going to be in the end. Never really supposed to line up.” This is a

component of the internal organization transformation.

Second, the awareness and fear of exposing critical weaknesses in the programmatic function of the subordinate business units created anxiety-producing entrenchment. “Issues of boundaries came to us constantly; you could see it in their body language, you could see it their immediate responses to certain questions.” Fully competent personnel expressed confusion – even as subject matter experts and operational managers with extensive knowledge of the legacy solutions – about data submission requirements, the capacity of their own systems, and inability to find an accountable agent. This retarded the process of efficient data collection and initially refocused management team initiative on data quality rather than new service designs. To mitigate the fuzziness of the venture, the Deputy Secretary intentionally selected a vague, woolly branding. As one agency Taskforce member puzzled, “Her style of really not over-defining it: was it accident, instinct, or brilliance?”

Third, opportunistic gestures from staff functions, such as the Office of Communications and Enterprise Application Services, worked to diminish overall synergy, collective problem solving, and team and individual performance. These gestures included presumptive acts to assume control over the structure, processes, and content associated with deploying the strategy. For instance, with regard to executive leadership of the Secretary versus the Deputy Secretary, the Office of Communications “want[ed] to highlight him and manage her” as a person close to the issues noted. The perception of due credit and power distracted from the smooth integration of independent delivery functions and at some points threatened the sustainability of the entire initiative. Experience and competence in one’s opposing functional domain appeared to result in conflict rather than compliments and syphoned the capacity to reach the anticipated strategic outcomes quickly. Mediating functions were active as well; as one team

member noted, “[M]y personality flaw in all this is I like to give people what they want, I like people to be happy...” All the staff capabilities, tools, and knowledge were present, but the assimilation of these into a successful deployment seemed to be encumbered by individuals’ strategy filters, attention, and comprehension.

Fourth, as a political leadership “initiative,” there were no “program” sponsors and management capacity in place. “[The Deputy Secretary] wanted to ensure this was something amorphous; you really couldn’t find it and kill it.” Financial resources were derived from existing budget areas, which resulted in deficits to ongoing programs. Appendix K presents KYF2 Resource Alignment Decisions options. The “Senate Ag committee folks’ staff still thinks it’s [KYF2 local and regional foods] a girly issue as opposed to commodity title,” suggested one strategist. Further, there was no one designated as the formal program owner when the solution launched. This meant there would be neither structure nor processes available to assume control over the successfully deployed technologies and value performance of the KYF2 channel. The gap implied that the solution would not be supported in the formal sense among the other competing portfolio investments; this was evident in the development as well as the successive new release and maintenance phases of the initiative, as funding was incremental to the point of brinkmanship. The content in Appendix L, KYF2 Sustainability Decision Matrix, gives a sense of scope to these issues. In other respects, this led to freedom from conventions and “not being afraid of missteps... not letting them get in our way.” These initial impressions, as do the other episodes, supply an empirical foundation for further data analysis in Chapter 5.

Table 4.7 Functional Conflict Resolution Process Observations

*Episode 5: Functional Conflict Resolution*

Episode Summary	Illustrative Data	Researcher Comments	Key Emergent Themes
The requirement for continuous Functional Conflict Resolution demonstrates the demeaning nature of persistent, rigid strategy systems; initial joint planning efforts were abandoned for less direct and more effective organic strategy approaches that leveraged existing frameworks but delivered new content.	<p>"The coupling of local and regional with the KYF with the national conversation of knowing agricultural better blunted subversiveness of it."</p> <p>"... the language you [Stephen] speak in... I kind of have to flip into a frame in my mind that is more visual and associative... I have to go into a different mindset to be on same page with you."</p> <p>"...always worry people don't speak the truth to power, and asks the question how do you build up a culture among your key managers where they say 'I don't agree with that...?'"</p> <p>"My role is always to move behind the scene... more briefings in the building to ensure we were not misunderstood."</p> <p>"You see exactly where your obstacles are when some of this stuff comes out...and political boundaries not always clearly defined... at least until you cross them."</p> <p>"...simultaneous sense there were boundaries but they were not obvious, or always knowable, created a constant groping for what they might be."</p> <p>"...where the sideboards end, and trying to interpret the landscape of debate over various things... trying to lookout for pitfalls they may create."</p> <p>"Bunch of committed people fight your battles for you when you don't even know what you are fighting."</p> <p>"...coming up to these barriers or boundaries and making a decision to proceed or back off...a lot of running into the brick wall and bouncing off of it...deciding to take another route."</p> <p>"...in the end we decided to work within boundaries and not put any more energy into breaking down boundaries; just getting shit done within existing boundaries. Imperfect though they are."</p>	<p>Use of pairs or complimentary products facilitated problem resolution under certain conditions.</p> <p>Creating space for understanding; Re-characterization of conflict issues or obstacle to test them; understanding their nature.</p> <p>Others enter conflict space as way of not further defining another's position but actually obscuring it.</p> <p>Ambiguous definitions of problems and edges offered distance from issues or people as neutral space to figure it out.</p> <p>Create anchors and mental space to overcome self-doubt, and these functioned like patterns they could call forward from past events.</p> <p>Conflicts consumed excessive, unacceptable levels of energy resources in the new venture, whereas they would be acceptable under conditions of legacy strategy management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mediate between positions to create space and distance</li> <li>• Constant groping and testing for edges</li> <li>• Being present to understand right pace and see obstacles coming</li> <li>• Agile frame of mind to allow comprehension and coupling of the known</li> </ul>

#### 4.6 *Summary Observations*

I became directly involved in KYF2 as a participant when I was requested to perform a feasibility analysis regarding the use of geospatial maps to tell stories. It began for me with a late-afternoon invitation from my director, the Chief Information Officer for the Department, to speak with the Deputy Secretary. There was no agenda, no direction, and the topic of the conversation was unclear; I had previously spoken with her several months prior during a short, and seemingly informal, discussion supporting another executive's mission issue. One was not permitted in the Secretarial suite without specific business. Therefore, I was not prepared for the conversation that transpired the Tuesday before Christmas week. I was asked about the probability of developing a new method of collectively projecting all USDA projects pertaining to KYF2, representing, as it turned out, more than four dozen agency programs. Maps were a smaller part of the items we originally explored in the brief 30-minute exchange. The Deputy Secretary asked for my response and confirmation of my level of confidence within 24 hours. I accepted the unknown risk; I assumed several very murky "facts" about the likelihood of achieving this enormous goal. I was not alone.

There were designated lanes, no formal rules, no referenced footholds leading to next steps. The practice of strategy management looked and felt like spontaneous combustion; one minute yesterday's decisions were working fine, the next minute, simply a fummy residue left behind on the wall-mounted dry board. I observed the underlying, formative approach of my case study participants but naively mistook my first perspective for the real strategy. As a participant explained in reference to the study area strategy, "It has fuzzy boundaries and is complicated because of its multiple outcomes.... [That fuzziness] is inherent in the nature of the work but also why it's so powerful." It seemed that something else was being



enacted, or was formulating the enactment, that was not readily disclosed: a type of lateral invention amid the fog of daily events.

My initial thinking about the appropriate orientation or emphasis for the case study was premised on the speculative assumption that participants acted out of a place of chaos. This assumption proved false.

Contrastingly, the subjects of my study apparently employed inherently improvisational techniques for sensemaking at several levels of processes. The patterns were vague to the casual viewer but emerged as I continued to collect data through participant observations. As I compiled various data sources in a single case narrative structure, the attributes concerning minimal structures, concealed in the KYF2 strategy management processes, also began to reveal themselves when isolated in the strategic episodes.

KYF2 success seemed to become symbolically associated with larger issues and then divide and re-multiply. I observed that the “Farm-to-Institution relationship is more inspirational than real; challenge of beginning farmers and ranchers, still huge; challenges to rebuilding infrastructure for local institutions, daunting.” My observations led me to conclude there is no simple strategic management solution for which everyone has a moment of epiphany. Emotions and images embed themselves (in)conveniently into our strategy recognition filters; they fill space. As one participant expressed it,

I think the main strategy has been, Use what you have and make stone soup. It brings together existing programs and people.... [D]on't feel like you have to start something brand new if you can kluge something together from what you already have... and the power of bringing things together you already have.

Furthermore, my synthesis of the case study data opens fertile space to consider the nature of sustained productivity. “So much in creative building mode we haven’t had the courage, the breath of air, the time, the confidence to say, What does this look like two years from now, five years from now.” The Deputy reflected this may be the time for the enterprise to “allow people to expose what went wrong, how we would have done it differently...just reflectively, and we don’t do enough of that.” Of course, “there is political risk in that, but we have created risk with the compass so we better start thinking about it.”

Two tables are created to begin structuring emergent ideas, themes, and constructs for further validation and refinement in the next chapter. First, Table 4.8 unites for the reader these cross-case, diverse strategic episode data themes into a single view, which also begins to focus and summarize content to be used for further empirical analysis. The table offers initial examples of my reading of the case study narrative in relation to my research questions. Second, to push emerging theoretical possibilities into the light of analysis, Table 4.9 offers the reader an early sketch of my growing sensitivity for what the case data may be saying about strategic management. The two constructs are supported with examples of concepts still embedded in the five episodes. My experience affirms both of these attributes of minimal structures, and with interest in the surprising manner in which individual values.

Table 4.8: Alignment of Themes to Research Questions

Strategic Episodes	Q1: How are minimal structures <i>created</i> and <i>used</i> to frame strategy in practice?	Q2: How do minimal structures <i>contribute</i> to strategy coherence and sensemaking?
<b>Episode 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish an open sense of opportunity and ownership</li> <li>Cannot not see it when you are in the margin of a transition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work within structure to break down boundaries and smash barriers, then figure it out</li> <li>Make space appear, to emerge as open areas where convergence occurs</li> </ul>
<b>Episode 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify connection points outside comfort zone</li> <li>Uncertainty in a strange space, outside looking in</li> <li>Sanction off space to choreograph strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stretch to the edge of surface areas, cross boundaries to open new possibilities</li> <li>Will to act out of unknowing, to improvise and not block with others surrounding us</li> </ul>
<b>Episode 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find space or pathway to discover in practice</li> <li>Change directional magnetism of perceived value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reveal the true nature of a thing</li> </ul>
<b>Episode 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reposition values with the values chain</li> <li>Cast out beyond expertise and limits to unfamiliar place</li> <li>Will to stay in between to realize transition to next stage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take the unobvious way out to avoid old frameworks</li> <li>Permission to explore a thin space in new territory</li> </ul>
<b>Episode 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mediate between positions to create space and distance</li> <li>Constant groping and testing for edges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be present to understand right pace and see obstacles coming</li> <li>Agile frame of mind to allow comprehension and coupling of the known</li> </ul>

**Table 4.9: Consolidated Table of Emerging Theoretical Constructs**

Minimal Structure Theoretical Construct	Illustration - Episode 1	Illustration - Episode 2	Illustration - Episode 3	Illustration - Episode 4	Illustration - Episode 5
<b>Cognitive Spatial Strategy Tool</b>	Work within structure to break down boundaries and smash barriers, then figure it out	Sanction off space to choreograph strategy	Find space or pathway to discover in practice	Cast out beyond expertise and limits to unfamiliar place	Constant groping and testing for edges
<b>Structure for the inherent value system</b>	Establish an open sense of opportunity and ownership	Will to act out of unknowing, to improvise and not block with others surrounding us	Change direction and magnetism of perceived value	Reposition values with the <i>values chain</i>	Mediate between positions to create space and distance

#### ***4.7 Implications for Grounded Theory Data Analysis***

The case study is an instrumental structure used to create a textual narrative observed from real life events. This story is composed of rich data, which is now structured in a uniform style for further analysis. The thematic detail organized and considered within each strategic episode offers a basis for development of codes, and facilitates the emergence of initial propositions. The inherent stability of the case narrative allows iterative reflection and testing of propositions, leading to a mature, grounded theory-building process, previously described in my Chapter 3, Research Methodology.

In the next chapter, Data Analysis, I demonstrate the outcomes of applying the grounded theory methodology to the case data collection. The analysis steps are highlighted, but the of the emphasis of the chapter is upon showing the evolution of the propositions, which emerge from identification of concepts and constructs found in coding the data, and further review of extant literatures.

## Chapter 5: Case Data Analysis

This chapter describes the case study application of the grounded theory-building research methodology. A process strategy description and model are offered as a starting roadmap to trace my data analysis steps, which are detailed in Research Design Framework. I then describe the outcomes of each step in the execution of the research design. Further examples of the data analysis tables, matrices, and other tools are represented in the Appendix. The chapter concludes with a set of theoretical propositions and theory model, which are created inductively in successive loops of comparison of data to emerging theory.

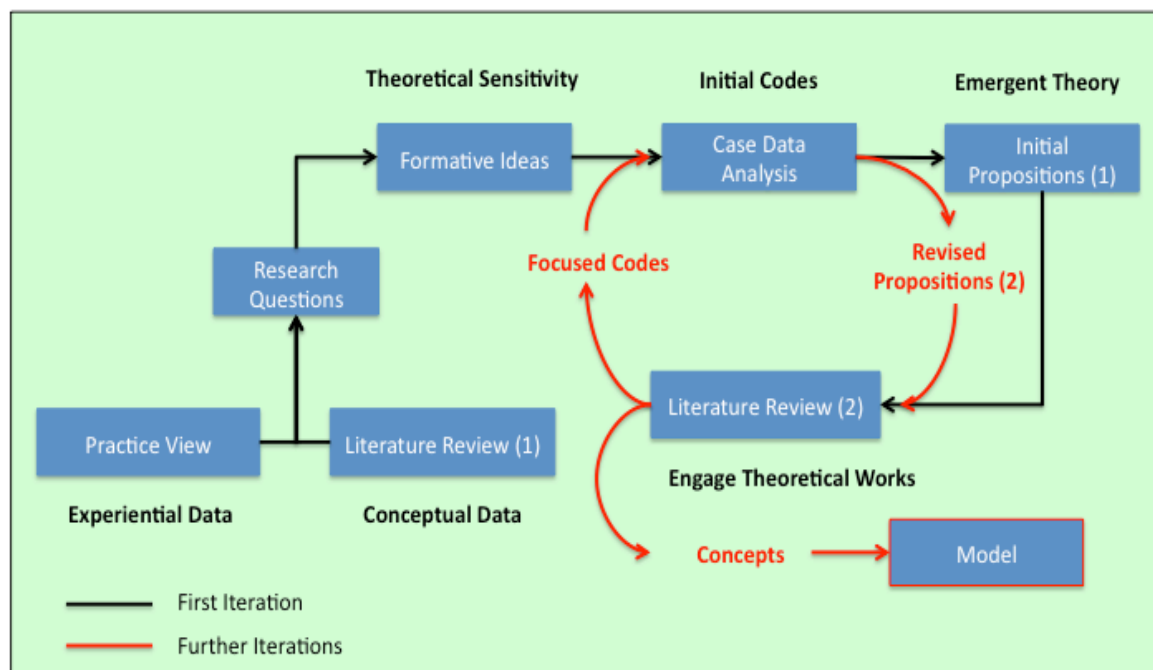
### 5.1 *Data Analysis Strategy*

Using the methods outlined in Chapter 3, Research Methodology, I develop initial propositions from a rich description of the KYF2 strategy management experience, activities, and setting, from the viewpoints of participants. This emerged naturally, inductively through textualization of data collected in interviews, participant and direct observations, working documents, emails, archival records, extant literature, and physical artifacts. Second, I use within-case analysis to help me organize text by generating thematic codes, which are compared and further engaged to reassess data in a spiral fashion to produce an empirical account of the phenomenon of minimal structures. Third, initial propositions are tested against data again, and reveal embedded themes and trends for reflection and further code development. This stage of data analysis accelerates the iterative cross-case analysis and comparisons of strategic episodes contributing to further refined theoretical propositions, and emergence of collective concepts (Eisenhardt, 1989: 540). Fourth, I employ pattern-matching analysis to build matrices and locate emerging constructs in the data. Finally, the use of models enable me to ensure logical elaboration of

constructs into theory, and development of an explanatory framework from which substantive, middle-range theory is formulated.

A general process model of the data analysis is provided to help the reader visually understand and trace the iterative, inductive flow of my research and findings in Figure 5.1: Case Study Data Analysis Strategy.

**Figure 5.1: Case Study Data Analysis Strategy**



Stephen Costello Lowe

### 5.1.1 Analytic Structure

Leveraging the grounded theory-building elements, I work through a sequenced, five-step discourse with the case data and extant literature. The structure provides empirical boundaries and lanes, while permitting discovery of emerging theory. Results are here summarized with a description of my empirical findings, and the contribution to theory derived from each step:

## ***5.2. Gather Rich Data (Step 1)***

The content area of KYF2 was selected as a critical, revelatory case because it offered intimate access to strategic management phenomena not generally available to researchers and demonstrates unique levels of success among institutional strategies. This sampling stage was followed by the subject sampling of members of the KYF2 Management Team, who possess particular acumen in the use of improvisational skills in practice, and the artifacts of the project, which mirror these qualities. Finally, theoretical sampling was performed to develop conceptual and theoretical categories matching the data, from which to analyze and understand the experiences of participants. The sampling strategy helped me to progressively sort, construct ideas, and examine these ideas more carefully through coding in the empirical inquiry.

### ***5.2.1 Construction of Case Study Research Questions and Formative Ideas***

The original data sources used to formulate the research domain boundaries of the topic of strategic management improvisation using minimal structure are gathered from two perspectives: 1) theoretical-oriented conceptual data derived from reading the organization strategy, improvisation, and behavioral geography literature; and 2) experiential data discovered in practice-oriented business problem-solving. The original pre-case study key research questions, and development of formative hunches or ideas, emerged as the conceptual literature sensitized me to concepts, gaps, and inconsistencies in the theory, and in reflection upon experiential practice insights, puzzles, and dilemmas. In turn, these same sources helped shape the design and content of my semi-structured interview questions.



My review of early and recent organizational improvisation literature revealed five core thematic groupings for minimal structure formative ideas. The groupings are trust, pace, conflicts, ambiguity, and spatial. These provide distinctly separate tracks to create preliminary observations, and from which I developed the semi-structured interview protocol questions. Whereas other interesting themes were present, such as power, values and aesthetics, I elected to initially delve into data collection with the strongest apparent groupings evident in the literature, and evidentially focus on the spatial minimal structure phenomena, though my experience and readings corroborate the potential validity of these other salient themes. A refined set of formative ideas definitions emerging from the literature reviews includes:

*Trust* - researchers define trust in minimal structures as the demonstration of mutual respect over agreement, where tacit rules are rarely articulated and consensus building is minimized. Extensive interaction enables processes to proceed without controls, or reliance on a single plan for future action. The implicit use of credos, stories, myths, visions, slogans, mission statements, and trademarks also allows actors to coordinate and mutually adjust to circumstances from basis of common symbols. Acceptance among players fosters space for creative imagination, and inspires innovation as individuals are encouraged to take multiple at bats. Trust is composed of a small set of big rules.

*Pace* - researchers do not generally describe minimal structures in respect to pace as specific units of measure, but allude to attention to ongoing temporal coordination, and linking products together over time through rhythmic transition processes from present projects to future ones, which creates a relentless pace of change. This theme is relative weak in the literature, but the close association of time and process warrants further investigation.

*Conflict* - researchers reflect on the use of minimal structures as positive means of defusing, or allowing the tension to sustain changes, through conflict. Conflict is perceived in terms of allowing diversity to thrive rather than suppress it; certainly diversity over homogeneity. This suggests a high degree of paradox among actors who enact minimal structures so as correspondence between intentions and interpretations is not necessary, and this characteristic preserves inter-determinacy. A key contribution of minimal structures is they reflexively reinforce our notice of how others are listening and responding.

*Ambiguity* - researchers identify the absence of explicit rules with the freedom to improvise current products. The preferably loose versus tight coupling of minimal structures seems to promote ambiguity of meaning over clarity, yet within the scope of general assumptions and incomplete expectations. The limited prescription guides rather than constrains action, offering a high degree of flexibility in practice.

*Space* - researchers define the characteristics of minimal structures as spatial mental constructs rather than concrete forms that create a continuous sense of cohesion and coordination. These elementary, partially ordered structures of place support but do not specify, and present a great deal of room to depart and deviate. In the music metaphor, structures are nonnegotiable, impersonal limitations providing just enough structure for collective confidence to play together; playing what is not explicated by one structure permits the creation of another, not related to the first, but rather displaying both continuity and discontinuity with the original. Players know where everyone is at any given moment, and a simple backdrop of rules and roles enables players to innovate and collaborate on ideas with the assurance that they are oriented to a common place. There is the sense of requisite arriving, which is emergent, not embodied. Actors elaborate basic structures in complex ways and coordinate action rather

than seek alignment of cognitions with minimal disclosure, minimal site, and simple structures. Practitioners purposefully omit contextual cues to allow for multiple interpretations by others, or encourage instances of changing the context so as to save the situation. Minimal structures allow us to adaptively accomplish tasks even as the context is changing because spatial constructs are instantiated in recurrent social practice; there is no need to stop to create agreements long way. Not planning structures engenders the creation of improvisational space and produces the framebreaking attitude. This spatial theme seems to be the most obvious and least explored attribute of minimal structures.

### ***5.2.2 Collection of Data***

A comprehensive volume of case data was compiled to thoroughly investigate the phenomenon, establish empirical research credibility, and provide adequate content for analysis (King, 1994: 52). Data collected during the study produced enormous data stores - over 160 pages of summarized data - which required the disciplined analytic process, modeled previously, to further distill the meanings in these data and create manageable packages and aggregations. A diverse set of matrixes, tables, and techniques were employed, enabling me to process and make sense of the data, which consisted of the following sources:

- Twelve *Focused, Semi-Structured Interviews* produced 52 pages of summary interview transcripts and themes
- Sixteen *Documents* produced 8 pages of summary notes and themes
- Sixty *Emails* produced 10 pages of summary notes and themes
- Thirty-four *Participant Observations* produced 28 pages of summary notes
- Fourteen *Direct Observations* produced 16 pages of summary notes and themes

- Three *Physical Artifacts* (Web Application; Blog; YouTube) produced 8 pages of summary notes and themes
- Over 130 *Extant Literature* sources produced 46 pages of critical review

### ***5.2.3 Elicit Fundamental Meanings of Experience from Participant's Perspective***

My use of the case study approach elicited experience-based data through focused, semi-structured interviews. Theoretical constructs arise out of the interview analysis, which are further validated against vignettes of practice available in documents, participant observation, direct observations, artifacts, public news and social media. An interpretive case study naturally attempts to understand phenomena through the participants' interpretation of their context (Klein and Myers, 1999), which the interviews accomplished. The questionnaire was designed to balance the greatest possible freedom in an open format with the appropriate level of boundaries to focus the discussion topic (Appendix A). Participants were asked to reflect on their direct experience, to go beneath the surface of ordinary conversations (Charmaz, 2006: 26), as well as their understanding of those experiences, and associated feelings, in relation to KYF2 strategic management, but not to attempt a full recounting of all the initiative details; not a memory test. I asked them "what" and "how" questions to encourage them to reconstruct and narrate a range the essential elements of the experience (Seidman, 2006: 17). Their responses became the core foundation of my case study narrative produced as a text for further analysis.

During formal and informal meetings, and phone conversations, I also collected scratch notes in my business journal, which was a common tool used by many of the KYF2 team members. These notes are very brief and written down as short phrases, quotes, keywords, gestures, and textual

models (Lofland and Ofland, 1995: 90) to help my memory of the event when written up later in more structured field note memos. I generally wrote these reminders out of sight of participants, with my journal in my lap and not in front of people so as to avoid making them feel self-conscious; though in other respects, some participants also used journals in practice, thereby allowing me to fit into the behavioral norm (Brymand and Bell, 2003: 333). The field notes provided a space for me to reflect about what I was observing and feeling about the research in progress (Table 5.1: Field Notes Memo Example), and contributed an emergent list of impressions about minimal structures.

**Table 5.1: Field Notes Memo Example**

Field Notes Memo Summary	
<b>Topic:</b> Backdrop for Improvisation	<b>Date:</b> July 2012
<b>Description:</b> Literature discusses minimal structures in terms of a simple backdrop of rules and roles. This strongly suggests the concept of figure-ground, where the actor is set against a much larger space; sort stuck in a landscape either of their own making, or thrust upon them in some way.	<b>Puzzles:</b> The phenomenon of experiencing one's place amid a significant, indifferent space is unsettling for many; if minimal structures offer a backdrop for local improvisation, why is this perceived as more acceptable to some rather than others, and generates innovations, for instance? Is this really about rules? Or the place of roles?
<b>Illustration:</b> "I said it was like you were standing on the beach on a windy day with a little tiny candle in a dixie cup in your hand keeping that flame alive in this wind storm... tears came to her eyes and she said I can't believe that you saw that; that's exactly how it felt." - Interview (PD)	<b>Interpretation:</b> Response in the context of "Trust" question on interview protocol seemed at first out of place. However, the story demonstrates the cognitive frame of figure-ground in which the individual is alone on a vast surface with no anchors or connections but is assuming enormous responsibilities to keep something precious alive; the sense of radius of trust when enacting aspects of strategy, even when no one recognizes the effort and at great proportional expense to other activities, efficiencies, respect,

	etc. I think it is in contrast to rules and roles; the backdrop is actually free space in which to arrive, create a play of tensions, experiment, sort of the Gumby of localized strategy - can't break it but it breaks frames around it.
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#### **5.2.4 List of Minimal Structures Impressions**

My initial observations recorded in memos indicate people could somehow think about strategy in terms of space; personal space. Minimal structures may be thought of as cognitive spatial tools or devices used to improvise within various settings. The congruent practice of the organization routines and rituals I studied depend on a locally experienced sense of place. This is apparently a reflection of the pervasive materiality and spatiality of work life, and early analysis appears to support a spatial turn. A summary list of first impressions of spatially elaborated minimal structures include:

- People identify with strategy in terms of mental maps or spatial structures
- Strategy management involves placement of oneself in relationship to strategy
- Theoretical (strategic) space is interpreted in terms perception of place
- Enactment is the action of the will to make spatial sense of strategy
- Perception of role in spatial relationship dominates rules in strategy performance
- Personal sensemaking includes use of spatial rapport and repertoire with rationality
- Space provides a forum for dialectic discourse of ethics and values
- Spatial charrettes engage social dialogue in situated context
- Strategic sensemaking may operate independent of the material world

- Spatial interpretation of strategy is not a transaction; it is a critique of kind and degree of patterns association
- Place is an experience based sense of spatial relationship

#### ***5.2.5 Understand Social Processes within the Context of the Phenomenon***

The development of a case narrative, composed from multiple data sources and observations, facilitated the theory-building reporting design approach, which is followed with a cross-case explanation-building case data analysis. This design helped me illuminate single instances of phenomena through examination of individual case examples to produce a detailed story of social process descriptions. Content is derived from observing people in their own space and interacting with them in their vocabulary and context of understanding. Furthermore, the insights are derived from each mini-case episode separately, as stand-alone entities (Eisenhardt, 1989: 540), and at the greatest depth appropriate to satisfy the research objectives. The researcher's closeness to, and experience of, subject observations supports direct understanding of the individual and their circumstances.

The case study presents a container for the classification and categorization of contextual data. This structure enables coordinated, but flexible, abstraction of content in the direction of the emerging data patterns and themes. As the textual narrative organically grows with each iterative pass through the data, the composition begins to look more like a purposeful story of the phenomenon rather than a list of chronological facts (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998: 155). A case narrative approach is particularly well suited to new research areas or research areas for which existing theory seems inadequate. This type of work is highly complementary to incremental theory building from normal science

research. The former is useful in early stages of research on a topic or when a fresh perspective is needed, whilst the latter is useful in later stages of knowledge (Eisenhardt, 548-549).

### ***5.3 Create the Text as a Foundation (Step 2)***

#### ***5.3.1 Reconstruct Case as Text of Phenomenon***

To reconstruct data as a written text of the phenomenon, I employed several analytic devices. First, the interview participant responses to each interview question were reviewed and analyzed thoroughly in a formal, uniform table format so as to align participant statements for further development into apparent themes emerging from the case study. Second, I went back to early field notes and memos to reconsidered these in light of emerging participant interview themes, and classified them in a similar thematic structure. Third, data content collected across various documents, emails, and artifacts was likewise subjected to analysis under the evolving themes. Finally, extant literature, critically reviewed previously, was reassessed in relation to the empirical derived case data evidence.

I normalized multiple, disparate data sources in a single case study narrative to create an evidential synopses of the minimal structure phenomenon represented in KYF2. Units of analysis were introduced in the initial processing of case study data as a general guide for interpreting the case narrative. Working from the strategic episodes as units of analysis I observed the “sequence of communications structured in terms of a beginning and end” (Hendry and Seidl, 2003: 176) consisting of bounded process observations about KYF2 strategy management. This data textualization step is presented previously in chapter four of my thesis.



After the initial case data collection was conducted, I immersed myself in the data by reviewing notes and recordings compiled from interview, participant observation field book, documents, artifacts, and literature review. This analytical activity helped me acquire a feeling for the experience of strategic management improvisation with minimal structures among case study actors, and develop a written text of phenomenon.

I then revisited each participant's written, and audio recording, interview interpretation to identify significant thematic statements, which included metaphors, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs connecting directly to the participant's personal experience of minimal structures used in practice. The intention of this first phase of the analysis was to describe facets of the phenomenon as experienced by each individual in the context of other data sources such as historical records and my field journal notes. The attention to maintaining a "steady and explicit dialogue" between emerging ideas and evidence, and entering into data by means of a dialogue, was crucial (Ragin, 1987; Charmaz, 2006: 25).

### ***5.3.2 Conduct Initial Coding***

Open coding enabled me to break data down into component parts, or categories, which are were named and treated as potential indicators of propositions in iterative comparison (Bryman and Bell, 2003: 428-429). The critical approach forced me to ask more robust and focused questions related to the phenomena, and "make the participant's language problematic to render an analysis of it" (Charmaz, 2006: 47). Open coding fostered the "theoretical sensitivity" to improvisation with minimal structures provided a perspective that helped me see relevant data and abstract significant concepts from my scrutiny of the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 3).

The following table (Table 5.2: Grouping of Five Initial Codes) summarizes the first iteration of coding analysis of KYF2 case data in relation to core spatial categories:

**Table 5.2: Grouping of Five Initial Codes**

Initial Codes
<p><b>Push Envelop:</b> Redirection, stamina on points, tossed in deep end, catalyzed growth, my space, forcibly thrown, against deadlines, time constraints, abundance of time, volume of time, lack of evidence, holistic, want to be smarter, naming the edge, pushed beyond limits, role conflicts, emerging tension, putting department in a space, staying in my lane, flipping frames, jumping into group, climbing, choreography, figuring out pace, conduit of information, permission to solve problem, imagination, trusted with content, behind the scenes, shifted conversation, reverse education, head nodding, persistence, getting over own ideas, present, not by sight, watch and learn, feeling out of control, old reactions, scared of others, cognitive separation, fatalism</p>
<p><b>Stuck Between:</b> Giving and taking back, naming committee, paradigms of work, mediating, compliments of perspective, compatibility, contemplation, position versus condition, alliances, favor, clarity, survival of ideals, life of own, turnover, disagreement, authority, liability, personalization, magnitude, confusion in situ, agreements, diplomacy, confidences, tensions, interpreting for others, separation</p>
<p><b>Shared Space:</b> Physical space, intellectual space, visual space, shared narratives, mashup spaces, new spaces, single portal, common room, agility, joint problem solving, storytelling, puzzle pieces, borders, chronos, part and wholes, appreciate in value, better together, transformative, momentum, shared ownership, presence, compliments, warriors, initiative, naïve, technology obstacles, map leverage, contrasts, obsolescence, communal areas, serendipity, values, structured meetings, technology failure, off-sites, tone setting, experimentation</p>
<p><b>Boundaries:</b> Early imprint, social structure, experiment in sharing responsibility, linking the what and where, first shot accuracy, intellectual versus organization framework, created by movement or stalling, lack of uniformity, shared sense of job completion, fluid exchange, accommodation of volunteers, general boundaries, allowed permission to hold new perspective, data transgressed boundaries, boundary crossing fit, intentionally breaking barriers, predefined daily hurdles, goodness of, evident in body language, constraints on language, value conflicts, legacy paradigms, pervasive principle, smashups, elusiveness, tight patterns, early wins, play out reins, individual embodiment, splurging into new space agility, strategic ambiguity always morphing, dimensions, organically defined in context, relationship of goals to boundaries, mutual respect, not hard edges, cope expansion with success, relationships of boundaries to ownership, decentralized information, definition in working style, evolving in practice, feeling and accountability form boundaries, political ambiguity, trip wire boundaries, awareness, sixth sense, constant groping for, finding sideboards of debate, avoiding pitfalls, don't step into</p>

mess, not creating targets, ground swells, overlapping channels

**Patterns:** Formulating dialogues, reinterpreting in context, high tension, technology creates message, external critiques, process patterns, never a perfect outcome, proof points in nooks and crannies, institutionalism resistance, one way transaction, no single winning strategy, downside of transparency, creativity incubator, self-exposure, crowdsource failures, kitchen cabinet, guild-like participation, ignoring patterns, repeatable interactions, continuing to surprise with partner, voices silenced, get big or get out, testing pre-existing structures, bouncing off walls, work with boundaries, going around obstacles, self manifesting, postponement, adaptability, no focal point, ebb and flow, humor

### ***5.3.3 Create Initial Propositions***

The within-case analysis grounded theory approach facilitates the preliminary textual content reconstruction, and review process, identifying and organizing emerging data themes and locating emerging patterns from the coding process. I made these themes explicit through a disciplined process of iteratively labeling and comparing content side-by-side with source data, which resulted in the identification of 21 unique themes. The common data themes essentially formed the case structure, which is the nascent story of the phenomenon.

The analysis of the KYF2 case narrative engaged the units of analysis to concentrate on specific processes associated with improvisation using minimal structures. Applying this method to each of the five strategic episodes of the case produced a set of initial participant described meanings from within the context of the events; the emergence of Data Themes. To focus the study, I illustrate several of the most dominant, interesting, and/or exemplary data themes from each strategic episode, and linked these data to my research questions to create alignment and potentially locate patterns.

The next data analysis activity in the process employed case narrative data themes as early inductively derived evidence in the phased creation of the initial propositions, linked to minimal structures research questions. The analysis reduced the theme to four core propositions for further validation with the data and the literature.

**Table 5.3: Development of Initial Propositions, Research Question 1**

Q1: How are minimal structures *created* and *used* to frame strategy in practice?

Research Question 1: Case Episode Data Themes	*Developing Initial Propositions:
Establish an open sense of opportunity and ownership	MS enable actors to recognize spatial reference points in strategic context, obtain bearings, and act on information.
Constant groping and testing for edges	
Sanction off space to choreograph strategy	
Find space or pathway to discover in practice	
Will to stay in between to realize transition to next stage	
Cannot not see it when you are in the margin of a transition	MS embody values that actors use to interpret, indwell, and mediate strategy in practice.
Identify connection points outside comfort zone	
Uncertainty in a strange space, outside looking in	
Cast out beyond expertise and limits to unfamiliar place	
Change directional magnetism of perceived value	
Reposition values with the values chain	* Minimal Structures = MS
Mediate between positions to create space and distance	

**Tables 5.4: Development of Initial Propositions, Research Question 2**

Q2: How do minimal structures *contribute* to strategy coherence and sensemaking?

Research Question 2: Case Episode Data Themes	*Developing Initial Propositions:
Work within structure to break down boundaries and smash barriers, then figure it out	MS promote emergence of thinking surfaces and space
Take the unobvious way out to avoid old frameworks	

Make space appear, to emerge as open areas where convergence occurs	in strategy practice.  MS increase actor presence and risk taking in strategy enactment.  * Minimal Structures = MS
Stretch to the edge of surface areas, cross boundaries to open new possibilities	
Will to act out of unknowing, to improvise and not block with others surrounding us	
Reveal the true nature of a thing	
Permission to explore a thin space in new territory	
Be present to understand right pace and see obstacles coming	
Agile frame of mind to allow comprehension and coupling of the known	

#### ***5.4 Compare Findings Against Proposition (Step 3)***

In this section I am placing the initial propositions beside the literature to assess relationships, gaps, and opportunities. The cross discipline field is unique and unfamiliar, yielding reveal

##### ***5.4.1 Revisit and Enfold Extant Literature***

The analysis of the case study data produces several strong themes, represented in an initial set of four propositions. Based on the experience of various actors, minimal structures are expressed as 1) strategic tools for traversing space; 2) containers for articulating values; 3) thinking overlays or space; and 4) enablers for engagement and risk tolerance. The emergence of a spatial turn is of particular interest with respect introducing potential cross-disciplinary insights and contributions. On the surface, it appears to offer a consistent thread from which to illuminate and embellish the concept of minimal structures; to move beyond the early definitions, descriptions, and distanced concepts bound to Jazz performance.

Whereas the initial propositions shall be verified and validated against the case data during further iterations of analysis, an intermittent review of

distinct, relevant literature sources provides preliminary corroboration and evidence of the spatial turn. I introduce these perspectives based in human and behavioral geography in response to the study participant's overtly symbolic and ethical interpretations of space. These views correspond faithfully to my phenomenological leaning, interpretivist research position, but I also sense there is further literature to investigate that illuminates the cognitive versus a materialistic, object oriented viewpoint of spatiality.

Prior to exploring promising literature comparisons, contrasts, and integration opportunities, two intermediary steps are helpful: a brief introduction to key definitions as well as an overview of spatiality. The literature in this field is dense and theoretically diverse, so a basic vocabulary, and grammar, provides beneficial grounding for the general discussion of each proposition that follows.

First, humanistic geography is described as an approach to understanding human geography focusing on human creativity shapes their world and develops meaningful places. Concentrating on human consciousness as the basis of being in the world, humanistic geographers pioneer qualitative methodology techniques, and highlight issues of subjectivity in their research. Place, or a *sense of place*, is a central concept in humanistic geography, which describes the unique ways in which human beings endow their particular surroundings with meaning. Finally, *spatiality* refers to how space and social relations are created through each other; how space is constructed through social relations, and how social relations are shaped by the space in which they occur. A pilot listing uncovered close to 5,000 terms that could be classified as referring to space; there is an unconscious geometry of human space (Hall, 1969: 93). These views indirectly reflect the principles of Structuration Theory; the idea there is a discrete, reciprocal relationship between human agency and structure, which can be

observed and understood through study of social practices, rather than focus on individual actions, or broad social patterns (Hubbard and Kitchin, 2011: 499).

Second, place and space occupy similar, complimentary topological positions. Yet their independent nature is an important attribute of interpretation, which can also be the source of great complexity due to the extraordinary range of metaphorical meanings (Harvey, 1993: 3). Space and place are basic components of the lived world, which are frequently taken for granted leading to conditions of experience where the meaning of space often merges with that of place (Tuan, 1977: 3). Yet place attends as the *condition* of all existing things... “to be is to be in place” (Casey, 1993: 16). Furthermore, Foucault states a whole history remains to be written of spaces, which occupy power relations as well as “little tactics of the habitat” (Foucault, 1980:149). This is a hint at the diversity of thought among spatiality theorists.

This complicated blending of perspectives is partially demystified by the observation that what starts as undifferentiated space becomes place as we grow familiar with it and endow space with values; to influence the mood with a sense of place (Tuan, 1972: 535). Space is generally conceived as expanse into infinity and place as a particular locality, where the significance associated with place emerges with acquaintance and fluency. Creations task is to convert pre-existent spaces, a receptacle, by means of the configuration of passive medium, into places; bounded implacement (Plato, 50c). Therefore, in this construct, place is an empty container to be filled, and space is an inert environment (Aristotle, 208b: 12-18). Space is fundamentally conceived as a “practiced place” (De Certeau, 1984: 117)

Casey notes that place focuses on the inner contents - of the container, dwelling, or vessel - where space expands outward, “explodes” beyond the placing-in function of place (Casey, 1997: 77). The tendency of modernism to diminish the importance of place in experience results in the subordination of place to space in our rational thinking (Casey, 1997: 77, 107); “extension is substituted for localization” (Foucault, 1986: 23). This is felt as a loss of place when “preoccupations with the logic of space tend to suppress the feeling of place;” to separate the feelings, symbolic meanings, moral sentiments, and intuitions of a place from the intellectual rational features (Walker, 1988: 2). This subordination is represented by several profound transitions:

- Illustrative spatial stories about particular places transition into a surveyed presentation of space on a grid as a “formal ensemble of abstract places”
- Itineraries tracing a place narrative are replaced with a state of rationalized, homogeneous knowledge of space divided into identical units
- Movements and practices of people in place is subsumed in a spatial view where everything and everyone occupies its’ proper, mutually exclusive space and the entire space is seen simultaneously (Cavanaugh, 1999: 183).

A reigning perception is to extract meaning and understanding from place is extremely difficult due to its’ “subjectiveness and occasions, immediate perceptions and instant cases” when separated from its’ materializations (Geertz, 1996: 259). The shifting preference toward space over place is driven most notably by our desire and disposition to conquer space (Harvey, 1990: 205), which appears more accessible than place as a phenomenon that can be successfully abstracted. “Spatial representation essentially consists in a primary coordination of given sense experience.”



“To have a spatial ordering of things is to be able to situate them differently...” the space beyond what we see is still the same space; it repeats itself (Durkheim, 1995: 10, 82). Moreover, Harvey points out that social theories typically and broadly assume the presence of some “pre-existing spatial order within which temporal processes operate, or the spatial barriers have been so reduced as to render space a contingent rather than a fundamental aspect of human action” (Harvey, 1990: 205). Space is devalued and treated as dead, fixed, undialectical, and immobile (Foucault, 1980: 70).

This short overview provides vivid a profile of the potentially important contributions of concepts such as space and place to strategy management, and in particular, the understanding of minimal structures. For instance, the classical description of spatiality brings into view the relationship between structure and actors, physical places and social situations (Meyrowitz, 1985: 308). Placement of strategy is strongly inferred; though in respect to spatiality as a means of discourse shaping our perceptions. The idea of endowing space with place-based values, and shifting the mood intrigues further explanation; as does the notion of configurable space.

These combinations suggest Martin Hiedegger’s elucidation about place as dwelling in which the “fundamental character of dwelling is this sparing and preserving. It pervades dwelling in its whole range... to save really means to “set something free into its own presencing.” In the life world, the person is a dasein, literally a “being there,” indicating placedness is an essential attribute of engagement and enactment of strategy (Heidegger, 1971), and an “authentic attitude toward places” (Relph, 1976: 90). Lastly, Buttmer sees periods of emergent interest in place synchronize reasonably well with periods of relatively abrupt change either in the social or physical environment, or the world of ideas (Buttimer, 1980: 170).

The ostensive exclusion of spatiality in strategy studies, as well as the apparent preclusion of place generally, suggests an important role for minimal structures as spatially oriented tools, which I seek to discover and test with ongoing proposition development. In the following section, I introduce specific spatiality literature references into the developing meaning and explanation of minimal structures in strategy management. There are numerous concepts and construct to investigate, but I select a sample to stimulate ideas at this step, and the activity will be repeated again as the propositions are further refined throughout the formal process of applying the grounded theory methodology.

**Initial Proposition 1: Minimal structures enable actors to recognize spatial reference points in strategic context, obtain bearings, and act on information.**

References allow us to find our immediate location. Find our way. The ability to form an opinion or judgment regarding our situation, and then steer a course of decisions, seems to require significant spatial awareness. This spatial awareness enables us to understand that the “inventions and construction of geographical space go beyond a physical territory, which constructs boundaries around our very consciousness and attitudes, often by inattentions to or the obscuring of local realities” (Said, 2000: 181).

*Minimal structures may help us accurately identify non-physical, limiting boundaries and select the appropriate application of our place-based orientation in choosing successful strategic paths forward.*

These spaces we encounter may be understood as connected places composed of “porous networks of social relations” (Massey, 1994: 121), which are difficult to interpret rationally and often changing. To address this condition, space is therefore conceived as a “practiced place” (De

Certeau, 1984: 117) where actors are involved in piloting a course amid mental constructs, rather than solely material objects. We see this state in terms of narrative, where the structure is like a spatial syntax with places forming a linear or interlaced series of scenes, and every story is a travel story - a spatial practice (De Certeau, 1984: 115).

*Minimal structures could enable the cognitive mapping of social networks strategy in practice, which are composed of discrete episodes of local stories rather than viewed as a single, homogenous space.*

Territoriality provides a frame that coordinates the activities of the group and holds the group together (Hall, 1969: 8). Social distance is not always rigidly fixed but is determined in part by the situation (Hall, 1969: 15), and fixed features may be hidden, represented via internalized designs that govern behavior as we engage activities (Hall, 1969: 104). Subsequently, some aspects of fixed feature space are not visible until one observes human behavior (Hall, 1969: 106). The important point about fixed featured space is that it is the mold into which a great deal of behavior is cast (Hall, 1969: 106). Man's feeling about being properly oriented in space runs deep. Such knowledge is ultimately linked survival and sanity; to be disoriented in space is to be psychotic (Hall, 1969: 105). Our concept of space makes use of the edges of things. Every organism has a detectable limit which marks where it begins and ends; a nonphysical boundary appears that exists outside the physical organism's territory (Hall, 1973: 162). If there aren't any edges, we make them by creating artificial lines (Hall, 1973: 178).

Our culture has tended to play down or cause us to repress and disassociate the feelings we have about space (Hall, 1973: 164). Since none of us is taught to look at space as isolated from other associations, feelings cued by the handling of space are often attributed to something else... cues

release responses that are already established as mental constructs and spatial memory is exceedingly persistent (Hall, 1973: 165). Moreover, Americans treat space as highly personalized, and visualize the relationship between places we know by personal experience. Places that we have not visited or experience in some way, and with which we are not personally identified, tend to remain confused in our thinking (Hall, 1973: 168). American sense of place is diffused, so the center, or one's identity, may be ambiguous (Hall, 1973: 169).

*Minimal structures may provide an agile, improvisational posture toward spatial fixedness, or the lack thereof, by introducing mobile edges to define unfamiliar space with place-oriented ability to rapidly interpret cues.*

**Initial Proposition 2: Minimal structures embody values that actors use to interpret, indwell, and mediate strategy in practice.**

The fundamental character of dwelling [placedness] are the acts of sparing and preserving. It pervades dwelling as a concept, and implies the general idea of spatial ethics (Heidegger, 1971), which is an attribute of what Emile Durkheim referred to as the “moral density” of society (Durkheim, 1926).

Kenneth Boulding offered the concept of cognitive maps of reality, or images, that tend to “shape the way we think, inquire, perceive, value, and act in accord with our internal knowledge structure” they govern. As events occur, however, they can alter our image knowledge structure and we may behave accordingly (Boulding, 1956: 5-6). Images are themselves resistant to change. The values that are attached to our images also affect the change that an incoming message has on our image. One of the most important components of this idea is the claim that the “value scales” of

any individual, or organization, are perhaps the most important element determining the effect of the messages it receives on its' image of the world.

Part of our image of the world is the belief the image is shared by people like ourselves who also are part of our image of the world (Boulding, 1956: 12-14). Conversation or discourse is the process that allows these public or shared images to become real and actionable. However, an image need not be conscious, and the group need not be conscious that they are sharing it (Boulding, 1956: 132). Subsequently, the "basic bond" of any society, culture, subculture, or organization is a public image, that is, an image with essential characteristics that are shared by the individuals participating in the group; a transcript that is handed down from generation to generation (Boulding, 1956: 64). An image may grow strong in isolation from other images, or when a particular subculture is isolated from others, but limited contact with other cultures "frequently reinforces the value system" represented in the image (Boulding, 1956: 147).

The concept or term of image describes objective knowledge an individual believes to be true, and identifies multiple dimensions of an individual's operating image (Boulding, 1956: 47-48). Aspects of these dimensions are listed as follows:

1. Spatial; the individuals location in space.
2. Temporal; the individuals place in time.
3. Relational; the picture of the universe as a system of regularities. This includes concepts of causality, randomness, and personal effectiveness,
4. Personal; the place of the individual in the universe of persons, roles, and organizations around them.
5. Value; the ordering by means of better or worse of the various parts of the whole image

6. Affectional or emotional; the feeling or affect attached to various items in the image.
7. Consciousness; the division of the image into conscious, subconscious, and unconscious areas.
8. Certainty; the degree of certainty or uncertainty, clarity, or vagueness attached to parts of the image.
9. Reality; the image of the correspondence of the image itself with some outside reality.
10. Public; the degree to which the image is shared by others or is particular to the individual.

However, this is an “image of the dream house as opposed to the childhood home, where the “state of impermanence” sustains the dream, rather than finality (Bachelard, 1969: 61). It is not a matter of going back, but leveraging the imagination indwelt with certain values. “Miniaturization stimulates profound values” and “values become engulfed in miniature” as the “power of immensity is revealed in a value” (Bachelard, 1969: 150-151). The imagination gains momentum as “the moral world opens up vast perspectives filled with new clarities (Bachelard, 1969: 175, 191)

*Minimal structures sustain the value sets of actors that function as highly persistent filters, or a lens, for strategy management.*

**Initial Proposition 3: Minimal structures promote emergence of thinking surfaces and space in strategy practice.**

If minimal structures provide space for thinking about strategy in practice, what are the attributes of these spaces? Two metaphors are helpful answering this question: a home and a city.

Strategy management may include deliberate, intellectual engagement and elaboration at many levels of social interaction. Space as a likeness of home commonly connects with our fundamental impressions and memories, in fact, it is conjectured that all “inhabited space” has essential linkages to home. A house powerfully enables integration of thoughts, memories and dreams, and “without it, man would be a dispersed being.” (Bachelard, 1969: 5-6). For most of us, our home is not experienced as an “inert box” but is filled with intimate values, subjected to multiple “dialectics,” and is an “embodiment of dreams” that co-penetrate and retain important allusions of stability (Bachelard, 1969: 14-15, 17).

Clearly, an image of the home as an inhabited space transcends geometrical space (Bachelard, 1969: 47). It is a miniaturization of what one writer depicted as “social space” that supports a relational concept intermingling “subjective dimensions, such as attitudes, perceptions, and experiences the place, and objective spatial elements on a variety of scales” (Buttimer, 1969). Dwellings, such as homes, and building are related as end and means. “For building is not merely a means and a way toward dwelling -to build is in itself already to dwell” (Heidegger, 1971). All great, simple images reveal a psychic state. The house, even more than the landscape, is a ‘psychic state,’ and even when reproduced as it appears from the outside, it bespeaks intimacy (Bachelard, 1969: 72). Strategy practice could be understood as a process of indwelling a landscape of constructs with the lives of actors.

*Minimal structures interject the sense of place in unfamiliar settings to provide connections between abstract spatial strategy and inhabited place.*

Next, the city is a construction in space similar to strategy. It is perceived over long spans of time, and yet resists temporal controls such as those

used in the arts like music. The entire experience of perception is always in relation to the surroundings, the sequences of events leading up to it, and the memory of past experiences. Every citizen [actor] has had ongoing associations with aspects of the city, and their image is saturated in memories and meanings. The people and activities as moving elements of a city are as important as the immobile physical parts. “We are not simply observers of the spectacle, but are ourselves a part of it, on the stage with other participants” (Lynch, 1960: 1-2). The emergence of cities reflects many attributes of strategy management conceived as a social practice, where actors use minimal structures to engage strategy from deeply personal places in their experience.

However, our independent insights about this construction process are limited, and there is no final product, only a perpetual string of phases. Frequently, “our perception of the city is not sustained, but rather partial, fragmentary, and mixed with other concerns.” Not only is the city an object, which is perceived, but much like strategies in organizations, it is the “product of many builders who are constantly modifying the structure [planned strategy] for reasons of their own.” Therefore, only fractional control can be exercised over its evolution and form (Lynch, 1960: 2). We seldom retain any sense of what the setting can mean in terms of its energy, as an uninterrupted anchor, or as an “extension of the meaningfulness and richness of the world” as a social space (Lynch, 1960: 2). This view suggests we should account for the strengths of diversity from alternative perspectives about strategy utility, which may be embedded in minimal structures.

Strategies, reflected in this city metaphor, have certain qualities in helping to interpret the “legibility of the cityscape” [organization environment]. A legible city would be one whose districts, landmarks, or pathways are easily identifiable and are easily grouped into an overall pattern “being



perceived by its inhabitants.” These cues are fundamental to the “efficiency and to the very survival of free moving life” (Lynch, 1960: 3). The prompting in this idea of movement is we can become disoriented even when progressing in a deliberate direction. The word “lost” in our vocabulary means “much more than simple geographical uncertainty; it carries overtones of utter disaster.” When individuals employ a “way-finding” process, they use an environmental image or mental picture of the exterior world, which depends on practical and emotional internal values as a “broad frame of reference” to organize activity, beliefs, and knowledge. “A good environmental image gives its possessor an important sense of emotional security,” and increases the depth and intensity of the experience (Lynch, 1960: 4-5).

An environmental image may be analyzed according to three components: identity (distinction), structure (spatial or pattern relation of the object to the observer), and meaning (practical or emotional) (Lynch, 1960: 8). These viewpoints correspond to congruent strategy management. Additionally, if an image is to have value for orientation in the living space, it must have several qualities: it must be true pragmatically to allow operation; economical as a mental map; it should be safe; surplus of clues to allow alternative actions and reduce risk. The image should preferably be open-ended, adaptable to change, allowing the individual to continue to investigate and organize reality; there should also be blank spaces where actors can extend the model for themselves. Finally, the successful image requires the ability to communicate across space with other individuals (Lynch, 1960: 9). These attributes of the image align well to the spectrum of strategy management enablers, and may be summarized under three constructs:

- Imageability: high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer

- Legibility or visibility: sharp and intense to the senses
- Apparency: vivid comprehensible appearance; first step toward the expression of inner meaning (Lynch, 1960: 9-10)

*Minimal structures establish an instrumental image of strategy, which allows spatial emplacement.*

**Initial Proposition 4: Minimal structures increase actor presence and risk taking in strategy enactment.**

Another human geography researcher addresses the inclusive perspective of civility and social literacy in a “vertical community,” where membership is locally situated and involves give-and-take conversation (Oldenburg, 1989: xxiv). The idea of a “third place” explains the characteristics of space where people gather informally to be themselves, which is neither home nor workplace. The space allows people to get to know one another in nonthreatening structure, to create connections, a place where strangers feel welcome, and socialize us to the community rules; it is also a “staging area” (Oldenburg, 1989: xvii). Third place settings are really no more than a physical manifestation of people’s desire to associate with those in an area once they get to know them (Oldenburg, 1989: 290). The features of these locations in comparison with most organization settings demonstrates a general spatial contrast; often such places are ignored or overlooked as tools for strategy management empowerment among actors.

Eight characteristics of a third place include:

- Neutral ground: Everyone must feel welcome at a third-place. No one is the host and no one is the guest. People can come and go as they please.

- Leveler: Social distinctions that exist outside the third-place should have no place within. There should be no distinction between management and workers, upper class and lower class in a third-place.
- Conversation: An ongoing and lively conversation is the focus of a third-place. Therefore, no one voice should dominate, the art of spirited conversation should be paramount.
- Playful mood: Humor, joy, and winsomeness are paramount. People who tend to take themselves too seriously learn to adapt or they won't feel comfortable third place.
- Accessibility and accommodation: A third-place should have relatively long hours and a steady stream of patrons, so that one can go alone at any time and be reasonably sure of finding others there.
- Low profile. Good third places are often plain and do not generally impress the newcomer. They are the opposite of slick.
- Regulars: A group of regular patrons gives each third-place its distinctive character. But there should be enough openness that a newcomer can become a regular over time.
- Home away from home: A third-place is very different from my home but it is similar in the sense of comfort and support one feels in the third-place. (Oldenburg, 1989: 21-40)

Two core benefits of participation in Third Places, among others, are novelty and perspective. From a strategy management orientation, these may be prime enablers of innovation. Novelty offsets the frequently narrow routine of work, and stimulates diversity of thought in a facilitating atmosphere of acceptance, loose schedules, and fluidity. Conversation is animated by the predictable changes, but unpredictable direction of topics, which “emerges out of the collective ability of that assembly to create it.” The most satisfying and beneficial diversions are those that invite participation that is both social and active. “The Third Place is a world of its own making, fashioned by talk and quite independent of the

institutional order of the larger society... and great deal more fun” (Oldenburg, 1989: 44-48).

Perspective in Third Places reflects our need to clarify our connection to others. High specialization and compartmentalization “brutalizes many of the relationships we have with one another,” discourages association, and leaves us ignorant of the human condition around us, though we remain dependent. Cynicism and isolation are the result. A counterbalancing experience is required that embraces human association which is “both pleasurable and gratifying *because* of the presence of others.” However, there is a paradox: acceptance in this social space demands an ability to self-efface and laugh at oneself. Third Places offer an outlook on life evolving from a “disinterest” impossible to gain elsewhere, fostered by the persevering of collective wisdom; “a wisdom compatible with experience dominates over an vision at odds with it” (Oldenburg, 1989: 48-55). The lesson to obtain from this idea of Third Places include the notion we can show up at many strategy management events and gathering but never really connect with those other participants; until we jointly enter the flow of conversation as ourselves, rather than from our assigned role. “...by changing space, by leaving the space of one’s usual sensibilities, one enters into communication with a space that is psychically innovating (Bachelard, 1969: 206).

*Minimal structures provide cognitive place of collective acceptance and confidence building in regards to strategy management in practice.*

#### *Summary Literature Review Implications for Proposition Refinement*

- Minimal structures may help us accurately identify non-physical, limiting boundaries and select the appropriate application of our place-based orientation in choosing successful strategic paths forward.

- Minimal structures could enable the cognitive mapping of social networks strategy in practice, which are composed of discrete episodes of local stories rather than viewed as a single, homogenous space.
- Minimal structures may provide an agile, improvisational posture toward spatial fixedness, or the lack thereof, by introducing mobile edges to define unfamiliar space with place-oriented ability to rapidly interpret cues.
- Minimal structures sustain the value sets of actors that function as highly persistent filters, or a lens, for strategy management.
- Minimal structures interject the sense of place in unfamiliar settings to provide connections between abstract spatial strategy and inhabited place.
- Minimal structures establish an instrumental image of strategy, which allows spatial emplacement.
- Minimal structures provide cognitive place for collective acceptance and confidence building in regards to strategy management in practice.

#### ***5.4.2 Conduct Focused Coding***

In the third step of inductive data analysis, I deliberately employed more directed, selective, and conceptual focused coding to synthesize and explaining large chunks of data. The most frequent and significant early codes were filled in, extended and/or surfaced to create a valid analytic structure for development of concepts and categories. Focused coding empowers selective coding allowing me to scan across interviews and

observations to compare participant experiences, actions, and interpretations at a more detailed level (Charmaz, 2006: 59), and led to a second round of reviewing all collected case data sources. Focused Coding, provides a summary of the second iteration of re-engaging case data for greater understanding about minimal structure attributes as perceived by strategy practitioners (Example in Appendix: N).

### 5.4.3 *Revise Initial Propositions*

The iterative process of inductively reformulating the initial propositions included the review of new insights from the data elicited from more directed, conceptual focused codes (Charmaz, 2006: 57). The selected categorical codes enabled fresh mining of data, which produced validating evidence to shape the evolution of my propositions. Though a comprehensive, one-for-one correlation between codes and propositions is not satisfied, the constant comparison grounded method helped confirm general relationships that were otherwise difficult to determine. This refining process is expressed in the following Table 5.5, Focused Codes Categories Supporting Revised Propositions:

**Table 5.5: Focused Codes Categories Supporting Revised Propositions**

Initial Propositions	Focused Codes	Revised Propositions
Minimal structures enable actors to recognize spatial reference points in strategic context, obtain bearings, and act on information.	Finding Spatial Direction and Course, Discernment of Future Events, Constructing Spatial Dialogues	Minimal structures enable actors to <i>navigate</i> spatial reference points in strategic context, obtain bearings, <i>imagine possibilities</i> , and act on information.
Minimal structures embody values that actors use to interpret, indwell, and mediate strategy in practice.	Determining Spatial Compatibility, Enabling Spatial Cohabitation, Assigning Spatial Values	Minimal structures embody values that actors use <i>relationally</i> to interpret, indwell, and mediate strategy in practice.

Minimal structures promote emergence of thinking surfaces and space in strategy practice.	Interpreting Dimensions of New Space, Strategy as Play, Constructing Spatial Innovations, Identifying Spatial Disruptions	Minimal structures promote emergence of <i>spontaneous</i> thinking surfaces and <i>interpretive</i> space in strategy practice.
Minimal structures increase actor presence and risk taking in strategy enactment.	Shifting Between Frames, Crossing Boundaries, Original Energy, Staying in Tension	Minimal structures <i>empower</i> actor presence, <i>diversity</i> , and <i>origination</i> in strategy enactment.

#### 5.4.4 Search for Relationships and Patterns in the Data

I compared the thematic statements from each person's account with other's accounts, and sought to isolate commonalities across interview participants. The purpose of this cross-case analytic approach is to compare the experience of all participants, and identify categories of significant statements that were common among them. Once the categories were identified, I reconnected each significant statement to its original context and validated the categories; I wanted to be certain to account for everything that was significant from the original accounts without introducing ideas not represented in those original accounts. I was looking for a telling phrase, sentence or paragraph that links across the case episodes and helps the story coalesce (Charmaz, 2006: 158), "anchored in concrete empirical instances." The outcome of analytic immersion in text is an assembly of significant statements for comparisons across all case episodes. The summarized emergent categories are described with evidential quotes in Table 5.6.

**Table 5.6: Emerging Relationships and Patterns Forming Categories**

Category	Description	Evidence
Isolation	Experience or perception of being	"Getting here and being tossed in the deep end of pool forced me to learn..."

	<p>alone, cut off, outside, beyond one's capacity</p>	<p>"...try harder and harder to become less tone deaf about what sort of things get what sorts of actions."</p> <p>"Slow to pick up on what a dangerous position I was in..."</p> <p>"You don't see it while you are sitting in it to realize this is what is going on."</p> <p>"...wanted to ensure this was something amorphous; you really couldn't find it and kill it."</p> <p>"...roles were kind of fluid and vague, telepathic to certain degree..."</p> <p>"Within a few months of the whole thing starting I went from the bowls of obscurity to sitting in Deputy Secretaries office..."</p> <p>"...it was like you were standing on the beach on a windy day with a little tiny candle in a dixie cup in your hand keeping that flame alive in this wind storm</p> <p>"There were many people who had been essentially exiled from Whitten Building... you should not be in the building unless you had business here; and you didn't have business here, by the way."</p> <p>"Many example of people getting in trouble for talking to peers housed in different agencies."</p> <p>"Which was not clearly sanctioned... not altogether safe, so where do you put people in a room with out reprisal."</p> <p>"At very, very uninformed understanding of the issues, and they wanted to communicate it at such a shallow level. Came down to coming off a Presidential campaign where messages were hope and change versus experience and fear."</p> <p>"Became a central conflict... the issue was always "...when do you bring these people in, supposedly like they are on your team when they are so much not on the team."</p> <p>"If you do not have definition, how do you even know what you are promoting... destabilizing questions in a way."</p> <p>"No clear structure... one of the conflict management strategies with respect to Capital Hill... made it harder to pin down in order to make it harder to attack it."</p>
Fabrication	<p>Impromptu construction of solutions in practice</p>	<p>"Shared space of bring together all the agencies in Department was underlying theme, and subversive in breaking down the silos."</p> <p>"Sometimes need to sanction off space to have a deeper dive discussion."</p>



		<p>“Interested in moving while we were putting the wheels on as we go.”</p> <p>“Boundaries defined organically in context.”</p> <p>“Simultaneous sense there were boundaries but they were not obvious, or always knowledgeable, created a constant groping for what they might be.”</p> <p>don’t feel like you have to start something brand new “...if you can kluge something together from what you already have</p> <p>to ride the wave as it were that we were not directing or producing but very clearly happening.”</p> <p>“...started using us as her own kitchen cabinet...”</p> <p>“In the end we decided to work within boundaries and not put any more energy into breaking down boundaries; just getting shit done within existing boundaries. Imperfect though they are.”</p> <p>“How do you navigate around new constituencies without the old guys feeling threatened.”</p> <p>“I wanted to see work plans, timelines, deliverables, but it just did not happen.”</p> <p>“You adapt... even if it seems what she is doing is somewhere between crazy and bad management, you are willing to go along with it.”</p>
Ethics	Influence of values over decisions, processes, relationships	<p>“...trusted us with this content which was so valuable to her.”</p> <p>“Definitely a dance that became less acute as time went on...”</p> <p>“Value community sharing; credit my Quaker background.”</p> <p>“Walking this razor line between transparency and stealth.”</p> <p>“...if the Deputy Secretary wanted my supervisor in her office, she would have invited her.”</p> <p>“Adding social values to the group... never strickly work... kind of having the celebration element...”</p>
Persistence	Relentless or unwavering pressing past personal obstacles	<p>“I often feel pushed beyond the limit of what we can really document; sort of western science.”</p> <p>“I inured myself to idea that it was not possible.”</p> <p>“Just keep putting it together and things get unstuck...”</p> <p>“Persistence and last man standing have been good strategies...”</p> <p>“Go smash some walls for awhile...”</p>

		<p>“Not being afraid of missteps... not letting them get in our way.”</p> <p>“...affirming place for likeminded people to come together, but there has always been another reality</p>
Experiments	Testing ideas in new domains to understand substance	<p>“I kind of have to flip into a frame in my mind that is more visual and associative...”</p> <p>“Takes a life of its own when its outside-in... this was not a Washington go out and do it initiative.”</p> <p>“Boundaries defined by certain things stalling out and others moving forward... which is probably not the most explicit way to define them but it works.”</p> <p>“... evolves each time (phase)... evolving in practice.”</p> <p>“Where the sideboards end, and trying to interpret the landscape of debate over various things... trying to lookout for pitfalls they may create.”</p> <p>“Finding a structure, or the idea of a structure and putting it in place and finding out the structure wasn’t going to work because of the boundaries; pre-existing structures.”</p> <p>“There was a lot of work, particularly early on, in figuring out how to say things safely.”</p> <p>“Repackaging or filtering the communication in order to not trigger the allergies.”</p> <p>“We act outside our roles...”</p>

The next activity involved comparing category relationships and patterns with the revised propositions, and then third, with the extant literature review themes presented previously. The first process demonstrates category mapping to case interview participant data; the second to the literature core ideas, and note that both persistence and experiments could not be directly mapped to literature data. These tasks are represented in Tables 5.7 and 5.8 below.

**Table 5.7: Emerging Category Relationships and Patterns to Revised Propositions**

Revised Propositions				
Categories:	Minimal structures enable actors to navigate spatial reference points in strategic context, obtain bearings, imagine possibilities, and act on information.	Minimal structures embody values that actors use relationally to interpret, indwell, and mediate strategy in practice.	Minimal structures promote emergence of spontaneous thinking surfaces and interpretive space in strategy practice.	Minimal structures empower actor presence, diversity, and origination in strategy enactment.
Isolation	"If you do not have definition, how do you even know what you are promoting... destabilizing questions in a way."	"... not clearly sanctioned... not altogether safe, so where do you put people in a room with out reprisal?"	"Getting here and being tossed in the deep end of pool forced me to learn..."	"...roles were kind of fluid and vague, telepathic to certain degree..."
Fabrication	"How do you navigate around new constituencies without the old guys feeling threatened."	"Boundaries defined organically in context."	"Sometimes need to sanction off space to have a deeper dive discussion."	"Interested in moving while we were putting the wheels on as we go."
Ethics	"Walking this razor line between transparency and stealth."	"Adding social values to the group... never strictly work... kind of having the celebration element..."	"...trusted us with this content which was so valuable to her."	"Definitely a dance that became less acute as time went on..."
Persistence	"Not being afraid of missteps... not letting them get in our way."	"I inured myself to idea that it was not possible."	"Just keep putting it together and things get unstuck..."	"...affirming place for likeminded people to come together, but there has always been

				another reality.”
<b>Experiments</b>	“Boundaries defined by certain things stalling out and others moving forward... which is probably not the most explicit way to define them but it works.”	“... evolves each time (phase)... evolving in practice.”	“I kind of have to flip into a frame in my mind that is more visual and associative...”	“We act outside our roles...”

**Table 5.8: Emerging Category Relationships and Patterns to Extant Literature**

Revised Propositions				
<b>Categories:</b>	Minimal structures enable actors to navigate spatial reference points in strategic context, obtain bearings, imagine possibilities, and act on information.	Minimal structures embody values that actors use relationally to interpret, indwell, and mediate strategy in practice.	Minimal structures promote emergence of spontaneous thinking surfaces and interpretive space in strategy practice.	Minimal structures empower actor presence, diversity, and origination in strategy enactment.
<b>Isolation</b>	<i>Minimal structures interject the sense of place in unfamiliar settings to provide connections between abstract spatial strategy and</i>			<i>Minimal structures establish an instrumental image of strategy, which allows spatial emplacement.</i>

	<i>inhabited place.</i>			
<b>Fabrication</b>	<i>Minimal structures may help us accurately identify non-physical, limiting boundaries and select the appropriate application of our place-based orientation in choosing successful strategic paths forward.</i>	<i>Minimal structures provide cognitive place for collective acceptance and confidence building in regards to strategy management in practice.</i>	<i>Minimal structures may provide an agile, improvisational posture toward spatial fixedness, or the lack thereof, by introducing mobile edges to define unfamiliar space with place-oriented ability to rapidly interpret cues.</i>	<i>Minimal structures could enable the cognitive mapping of social networks strategy in practice, which are composed of discrete episodes of local stories rather than viewed as a single, homogenous space.</i>
<b>Ethics</b>		<i>Minimal structures sustain the value sets of actors that function as highly persistent filters, or a lens, for strategy management.</i>		
<b>Persistence</b>				
<b>Experiments</b>				

Based on this analytic process of identification and comparison of data relationships and patterns, a second proposition revision occurred, which is presented in these changes:

- Minimal structures enable actors to navigate spatial reference points by interjecting the sense of place in unfamiliar settings to reduce isolation,

accurately identify boundaries, and fabrication of accurate strategy management paths forward.

- Minimal structures embody actor values providing cognitive filters for the spatial fabrication of interpretative value sets in strategy practice.
- Minimal structures promote the emergence of spontaneous thinking surfaces and agile edges as templates for developing interpretive cues in strategy practice.
- Minimal structures empower actors with instrumental storytelling images for increased emplacement and presence in strategy enactment.

## ***5.5 Identify Integrated Themes and Trends in Data (Step 4)***

### ***5.5.1 Write Analytic Memos***

Analytic memos were frequently used to record observed events and function as reminders about the participant meanings of in vivo. These formal tools provide organized building blocks for my reflection regarding participant practices and statements, and provided space and place for exploration and discovery (Charmaz, 2006: 81). Memos also helped me ground my ideas in the case data, and not lose track of emerging themes, elaborations, puzzles, and relationships on various topics, which led to evolving propositions (Bryman and Bell, 2003: 432).

My approach provided a traceable means of maintaining a close connection between data and evolving, inductive conceptualization, so that the correspondence between proposition, concept and construct indicators was not lost. I engaged a process of constant comparison of the phenomena illuminated in memos to produce the theoretical elaboration of emerging

propositions (Bryman and Bell, 2003: 429). Analytic Memos demonstrate the use of this activity to produce detailed dialogues around evolving propositions (Examples in Appendix: O).

### ***5.5.2 Revisit and Enfold Extant Literature***

The section that follows provides a summary of the final, iterative spatial literature review. It introduces further perspectives regarding the potential relationships between minimal structures and spatiality research and concepts, which will be incorporated into the final set of theoretical proposition in Step 5 of my inductive analytic process.

**Revised Proposition 1: Minimal structures enable actors to navigate spatial reference points by interjecting the sense of place in unfamiliar settings to reduce isolation, accurately identify boundaries, and fabricate accurate strategy management paths forward.**

Dale and Burrell introduce ideas concerning organization space that promote conceptualization of space that is specific rather than abstract, embedded rather than symbolic. They encourage an analysis of the organization that is more aware of space, and a social theory that is more “aware of the significance of organization as a social form or institution that facilitates collective action,” and as a “social ordering process” that facilitates meaning and structure. “The spaces and places around us construct us as we construct them.” The post-industrial era of extended consumption and rapid growth of the service sector, implies workspaces for most people are increasingly diverse and not bounded by the traditional separation of domains of production, consumption, and reproduction. “Organized spaces are at once intensely personal and intensely political; they are material, social, and imaginary,” and knowing one’s place is a

part of this relationship to contemporary space (Dale and Burrell, 2008: 1-6).

The idea that people enter the work place with their identities already fixed and determined, in their opinion, is transitioning to a processional view of the identity as an ongoing negotiation between the social actor and their social relationships. “Enactment, or the lived experience of social spaces,” and “fluidity of spaces” are critical to the formation and negotiation of identity (Dale and Burrell, 2008: 106-108, 118). The approach they adopt seeks to take the organization out into the world, rather than seeking to bring the world to organization (Dale and Burrell, 2008: 33). Furthermore, the authors consider the implications of increasing organization colonization of the social and spatial world (Dale and Burrell, 2008: 137). Consumption is another side of workplace social identity construction in late capitalistic societies that has come to be seen as of equal, “sometimes of more importance to identity than that of the relations of production” (Dale and Burrell, 2008: 106). Reflecting this turn, perhaps one of the most important aspects of modern identity, which cuts across social relations of production and consumption, is the act of self-reflexivity. Individuals are animated to live as if “running a project of themselves, they are to work on their emotional world ...to develop style of being that will maximize the worth of their existence to themselves” (Rose, 1996: 157).

Dale and Burrell attempt to make conceptual connections between the spatial and identity practices of the redesigned organization, which depend on cutting across boundaries among social spheres. Theory-building, according to their view, frequently operates to abstract social constructs while “ignoring a wider social-material embeddedness” (Dale and Burrell, 2008: 206). Research treats space as an empty container that has no relevance to social interactions. They argue that organizations, and



organizing, are as embedded within the material world as they are within the social (Dale and Burrell, 2008: 34). Practical, applied outcomes of their “social-materiality” ideas include, for example, opening space where it was previously a closed site and rendering it open to the population whose movement through it is encouraged; and creating alternative space in which the radical reconceptualization of space might be possible, and where possession and ownership disappear as defining concepts (Dale and Burrell, 2008: 206, 234).

This conceptualization of new social space also implies alternative organizations, new modes of organizing (Dale and Burrell, 2008: 233). Their list

- Margin spaces, that exist at the ends of the envelope in which humans might live.
- Liminal spaces, which exist at the margins of the Orthodox but a but to other conventional spaces.
- Alternating spaces, where the same space is used differently at different points within a short cycle.
- Alternative spaces within mainstream uses of space where an area is cordoned off in some way or another and nonstandard uses are put to that enclosure.
- Opening Space were previously closed sites are rendered open to the populace whose movement through them is encouraged
- Alternative space in which the radical reconceptualization of space might be possible where possession and ownership disappear as defining concepts (Dale and Burrell, 2008: 234).

*Minimal structures efficiently orient and embed actors in the social construction of space as a reflexive strategy management practice.*

**Revised Proposition 2: Minimal structures embody actor values providing cognitive filters for the spatial fabrication of interpretative value sets in strategy practice.**

Agents employ different frames of reference for their orientation in the physical, subjective, and social worlds. The idea of spatial position cannot be condensed to physical measurement alone (Werlen, 1993: 125), and “space is frequently fetishized and endowed with the capacity to cause particular events” (Werlen, 1993: 142). Establishing the meaning-context of the social world can only be grasped if we regard the activities of members of society as intentional mental processes and not merely as responses (Werlen, 1993: 13). The subjective perspective should take into account the position of meaning for the actor in relation to the frame of reference of the subjective world (Werlen, 1993: 167). Actors use spatial frames to determine their own positions and the positions of their goals and objectives, as well as establish their pathway for strategy management. The probability of mobilizing an organized social movement, for example, is inversely proportional to the distances in the social space (Werlen, 1993: 154). Decision processes of most agents searching for the best action positions must take spatial factors into account (Werlen, 1993: 143).

The spatial ordering of artifacts has varied consequences for the social world. But if artifacts are analyzed solely with regard to their materiality, and their physical position in the world, and “if their positions are not determined on the basis of adequate frames reference in subjective and social worlds, major difficulties arise for research and action-oriented social geography” (Werlen, 1993: 165). For instance, the meaning of an experience demands comprehending the “place of an experience-having past...” (Schutz, 1982: 48). Social researchers require a reference pattern

of orientation; these are provided in “patterns of spatial frames of reference” (Werlen, 1993: 143-144).

*Minimal structures enable the expression of values in strategy management through cognitive frames, which are endowed with place-based patterns of the actors.*

**Revised Proposition 3: Minimal structures promote the emergence of spontaneous thinking surfaces and agile edges as templates for developing interpretive cues in strategy practice.**

The positive values of legible surroundings include emotional satisfaction, a framework for communication or conceptual organization, and the new intensities to everyday experience. Yet, there is value as well in mystification, labyrinth, or surprise in the environment under several conditions: no danger of losing basic form or orientation; the surprise must occur in an overall framework; the confusions must be small regions in a visible whole; the observer himself should play an acting role in perceiving the world and have a creative part in developing his own image. The imagination allows us to explore ourselves reflexively as the being of a surface; of the surface that separates the abstract region of space from the identity of place... through meaning it encloses, while through poetic expression it opens up (Bachelard, 1969: 222). The actor “should have the power to change that image to fit changing needs” and endowing it with meaning (Lynch, 1960: 5-6). If the environment is visibly [conceptually] organized and sharply identified, the citizen [actor] can inform it with his own meanings and connections. Then it will become a true *place*, remarkable and unmistakable (Lynch, 1960: 92). Therefore, the image of a particular reality can vary significantly between different observers, and different environments resist or facilitate the process of image making. This perspective offers an interestingly applied warrant for strategic

improvisation in practice.

Nevertheless, while acknowledging individual and environment differences, the focus on public images held by large numbers of a city's inhabitants suggest common agreement within the formal types of image elements, which do not exist in isolation, divided by: path, landmark, edge, node, and district (Lynch, 1960: 47):

- Paths: network of habitual or potential lines of movement along which the observer customarily, occasionally, or potentially moves; most potent means by which the whole can be ordered
- Landmark: external points of reference which single out one element from a host of possibilities; distant or local;
- Edge: linear elements that act as boundaries between two phases, linear breaks in continuity; barriers, seams, joins
- Nodes: points that are strategic spots into which an observer can enter and which are the intensive foci to and from which he is traveling; junctions, breaks, crossings or convergences of paths moments of shift from one structure to another; or simple concentrations or condensations of use; cores
- District: them to large sections conceived of as having two dimensional extent, which the observer mentally enters inside a and which are recognized as having some common, identifying character. They are used for exterior reference if visible from the outside.

*Minimal structures bring vitality to strategies through the ability to improvise in practice with intimately developed knowledge of the contextuality of images.*

**Revised Proposition 4: Minimal structures empower actors with instrumental storytelling images for increased emplacement and**

**presence in strategy enactment.**

The status of space as a mental thing, or mental place, requires an approach to analyze not things in space but space itself, “with a view to uncovering the social relationships embedded in it” (Lefebvre, 1991: 6, 89). Space may be said to embrace a multitude of junctures, each with its assigned location (Lefebvre, 1991: 33). Each activity occupies a space; “it also engenders and fashions that space” (Lefebvre, 1991: 77). The notion of a space as void, which is initially empty, and later filled with a social life to be modified and socialized by it, is “actually merely a representation of space.” Space here is conceived as a being transformed into “lived experience by a social subject” (Lefebvre, 1991: 190).

Conversely, “ideologies [values] relate to space in the most significant way... they intervene in space in the form of strategies” (Lefebvre, 1991: 105). Therefore, space is neither a mere neutral frame, nor a form or container, designed simply to receive something from outside. Space is intimately bound with the social function and structure of lived experience. “To picture space as a framework container into which nothing can be put in unless it is smaller than the recipient, and to imagine that the container has no other purpose than to preserve what is been put into it; this is probably the initial error” (Lefebvre, 1991: 94). Contents and container do not “impinge upon each other,” they are indifferent to each other (Lefebvre, 1991: 170). In fact, space may be evident abstractly, by means of discourse, by means of signs where it acquires symbolic value and “imply an emotional investment, and affective charge” (Lefebvre, 1991: 141).

“Spatial practice” consists of the projection onto a spatial field of all aspects, elements and moments of social practice (Lefebvre, 1991: 8). Spatial practice ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. “Social

space is a social product and space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and action...” (Lefebvre, 1991: 26), and in terms of social space, each member of society maintains a relationship toward that space that “implies a guaranteed level of competence and a specific level of performance.” Social relations as concrete abstractions have no real existence except in and through space as their foundation is spatial (Lefebvre, 1991: 404). There is also the Marxist perspective concerning power relations demonstrated in the instrumentality of space as a means of controlling voices (Lefebvre, 1991: 51). “Every discourse says something about a space... the contrast between absence and presence, and margins, hence networks and webs, have a *lived* sense...” (Lefebvre, 1991: 132).

These relationships may be situated and observed according to four primary demarcations. The various kinds of space include:

- Accessible space for normal use: routes; such use is governed prescriptively, by established rules and practical procedures
- Boundaries and forbidden territories: spaces to which excess is prohibited either relatively or absolutely
- Place of abode: whether permanent or temporary
- Junction points: these are often places of passage and encounter; often access to them is forbidden except on certain occasions the ritual (Lefebvre, 1991: 193).

*Minimal structures instrumentation is strengthened as actors engage the strategy image as a lived experience across diverse spatial context.*

#### *Summary Literature Review Implications for Proposition Refinement*

- Minimal structures efficiently orient and embed actors in the social construction of space as a reflexive strategy management practice.

- Minimal structures enable the expression of values in strategy management through cognitive frames, which are endowed with place-based patterns of the actors.
- Minimal structures bring vitality to strategies through the ability to improvise in practice with intimately developed knowledge of the contextuality of images.
- Minimal structures instrumentation strengthened as actors engage the strategy image as a lived experience across diverse spatial context.

The inductive grounded theory approach derived new spatial literature implications described above, and I presented these in the following Table 5.9. This demonstrates another iteration of the emerging propositions. Note the Fabrication category produces the most sustained groupings in this process, which suggests a strong relationship between this category, the literature and probability of conceptual development in the next step of the data analysis.

**Table 5.9: Emerging Category Relationships and Patterns to Extant Literature**

Revised Propositions				
Categories:	Minimal structures enable actors to navigate spatial reference points by interjecting the sense of place in unfamiliar settings to reduce	Minimal structures embody actor values providing cognitive filters for the spatial fabrication of interpretative value sets in strategy practice.	Minimal structures promote the emergence of spontaneous thinking surfaces and agile edges as templates for developing interpretive cues in strategy	Minimal structures empower actors with instrumental storytelling images for increased emplacement and presence in strategy enactment.

	isolation, accurately identify boundaries, and fabricate accurate strategy management paths forward.		practice.	
Isolation				
Fabrication	<i>Minimal structures efficiently orient and embed actors in the social construction of space as a reflexive strategy management practice.</i>	<i>Minimal structures enable the expression of values in strategy management through cognitive frames, which are endowed with place-based patterns of the actors.</i>	<i>Minimal structures bring vitality to strategies through the ability to improvise in practice with intimately developed knowledge of the contextuality of images.</i>	<i>Minimal structures instrumentation strengthened as actors engage the strategy image as a lived experience across diverse spatial context.</i>
Ethics				
Persistence				
Experiments				

### 5.5.3 Identify Core Concepts

The observations and analysis of study participant experiences using minimal structures produced several concepts, which remained consistent in the data throughout my research processes. These included:



- A sense of being isolated is frequently expressed by strategic management actors
- Strategy fabrication is an important tool employed by all actors
- Attention to values is often experienced in strategic management practice

#### ***5.5.4 Develop Emerging Constructs***

Constructs are created in combinations of concepts logically forming theoretical propositions. The previously developed concepts were evaluated for unique attributes and clustered within two fundamental minimal structure constructs as follows in Table 5.10:

**Table 5.10: Concepts Transformed into Constructs**

Concepts	Constructs
A sense of being isolated	Strategists employ minimal structures aggressively when perceptions of identity are unclear
Strategy fabrication	
Attention to values	
	Successful strategy management integrates fabrication and values through minimal structures in practice

#### ***5.6 Represent Theoretical Propositions in Strategy Practice (Step 5)***

The emerging concepts, constructs, and theoretical propositions explaining minimal structures are brought into a single view in this section. The continued saturation within the case study data and extant literature helped thoroughly elaborate the theoretical propositions through multiple iterations of analysis.

### 5.6.1 Refine Theoretical Propositions

My research methodology supports the evolution of constructs and the reduction of each proposition into four theoretical propositions. I aligned the propositions to address the key research questions driving my investigation, and these are represented in the following Table 5.11. The characteristics of the spatial minimal structures are described in more detail to close this section.

**Table 5.11: Development of Theoretical Propositions**

Construct	Theoretical Propositions	Research Questions Addressed
Strategists employ minimal structures aggressively when perceptions of identity are unclear  Successful strategy management integrates fabrication and values through minimal structures in practice	Minimal structures enable actors to reflexively construct and navigate spatial reference points using the sense of place as a social practice in strategy management.	Q1: How are minimal structures <i>created</i> and <i>used</i> to frame strategy in practice?
	Minimal structures enact values as place-based cognitive frames for the spatial fabrication of interpretative value sets in strategy practice.	Q2: How do minimal structures <i>contribute</i> to strategy coherence and sensemaking?
	Minimal structures facilitate the emergence of spontaneous thinking surfaces and contextual images for interpretation of cues and improvisation in strategy practice.	Q1: How are minimal structures <i>created</i> and <i>used</i> to frame strategy in practice?
	Minimal structures empower actors with a living instrumentation for storytelling with images to increase emplacement and presence in strategy enactment.	Q2: How do minimal structures <i>contribute</i> to strategy coherence and sensemaking?

First, minimal structures are employed by actors through a cognitive sense of place to reflexively construct and navigate spatial reference points in the strategy context. One may think of actors dwelling within an ideological landscape of strategy principles or goals, and determining ones relationship to those strategy features from the anchor of personal place. Place becomes the strategy frame of reference, rather than the object within strategy space.

Second, minimal structures provide actors with a representational frame from which to conduct spatial discourse and enactments of place-based values. This frame allows agile fabrication of personal scenarios, narratives, and social equities, which may be tested for resonance against the normative strategy. In those instances of continuity, the actor may endow the strategy with a sense of place through improvisational implementation; for the spatial incongruent, the actor may also improvisational infuse the strategy with personal values. In either case, actor meaning and understanding are acquired through the indwelling of the strategy in practice.

Third, minimal structures facilitate spontaneous improvisational thinking surfaces, which have the framing characteristics of openness, fluidity, and permeability. Here the spatial strategy frame is a dynamic or dialectic embodiment of place for the interpretation of real life practices. A strategic conversion has taken place; the deterministic attributes of strategy space are unfolded into the actor meaning of the landscape.

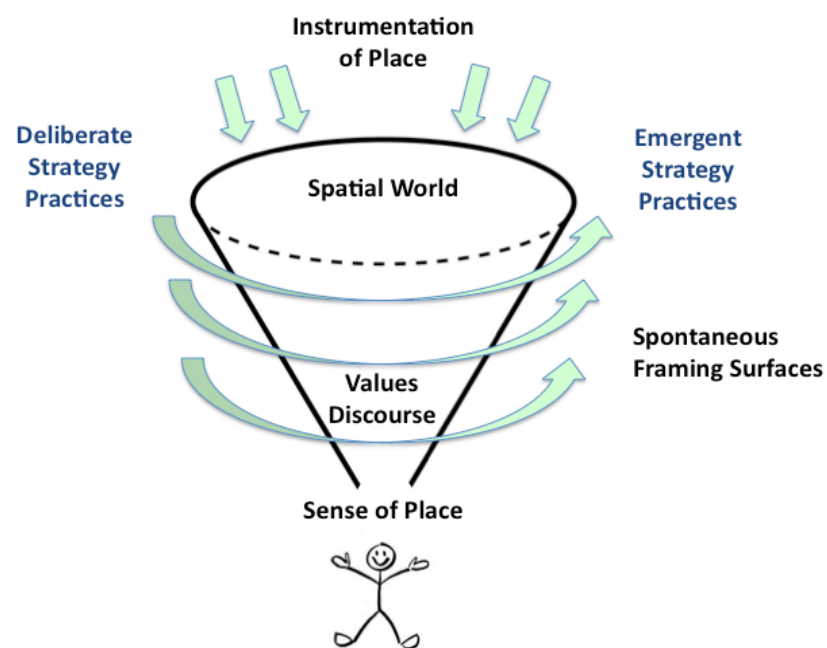
Fourth, minimal structures empower actors with a living instrumentation. The empowerment is embedded in the absolute sense of place, which is personally emplaced in the strategy context. This is embodied engagement in strategy; an opportunity for actor presence as identification with the strategy. It stabilizes the persistence of place as an ongoing socially

constructed experience, and pervades the strategy space with actor authenticity, and moral and ethical identity.

### 5.6.2 Explanatory Framework Model

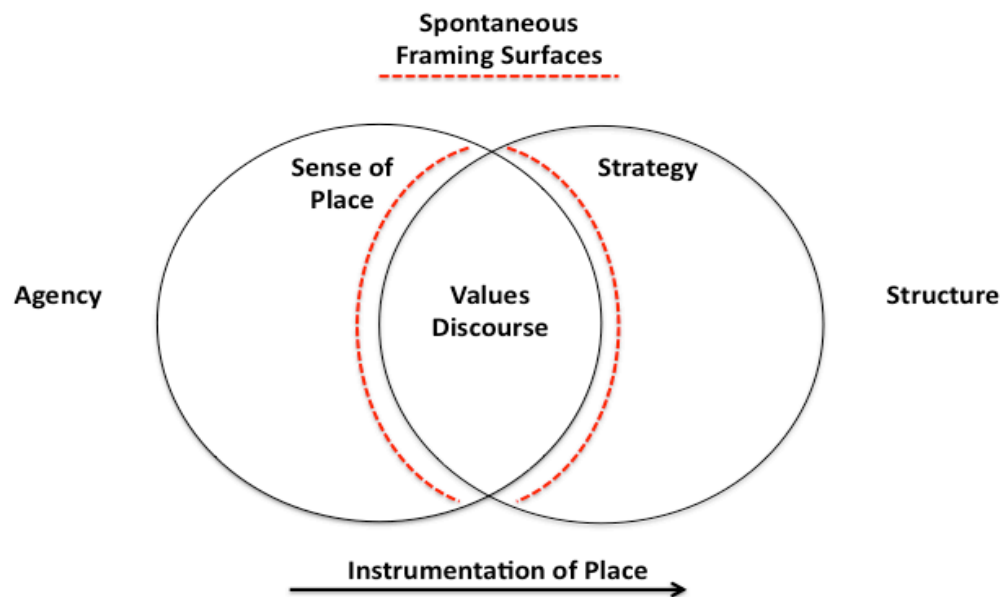
The high-level framework model, Figure 5.2, is intended to convey the theoretical aspects of spatial minimal structures.

Figure 5.2 Theory Model



The high-level model demonstrates the affect between deliberate and emergent strategies exists across the spatial field, which is influence by agent use of spontaneous framing surfaces. The minimal structure may reflect each of the four propositions, or fewer, depending on the sensemaking demand of the strategic management context. Figure 5.3 presents a basic view of the propositional relationships.

Figure 5.3: Venn Relationship Diagram



### 5.6.3 Formulate Substantive Theory

Minimal structures are situated, emergent, and socially constructed. The nature of these actor structures is place-based, that is, experienced as living entities as opposed to the image of a container or a set of rules. The strategy frame constructed with minimal structures is articulated or networked in space through social interactions. The spatial structures are constituted by the embedded sense of place agents experience tangibly as the vitality of the structure. The embodiment in lived experience is a-historical and spontaneous.

## Chapter 6: Theory Comparison

This chapter presents and reviews my research in light of key theories. The comparisons help to further interpret and elaborate my own theoretical findings and to demonstrate possible linkages or extensions where appropriate. I focus the comparative analysis in three areas of existing theory: Frames, Structuration, and Habitus. The chapter concludes with a discussion of my theoretical contributions to the Strategy-as-Practice perspective.

### ***6.1 Research Findings***

I developed four theoretical propositions during the analytic process of conducting grounded theory method research. Chapter 5 presented these empirical statements with an explanatory model of the emergent middle-range theory. The four propositions are as follows:

- Minimal structures enable actors to reflexively construct and navigate spatial reference points using the sense of place as a social practice in strategy management.
- Minimal structures enact actor values as place-based cognitive frames for the spatial fabrication of interpretative value sets in strategy practice.
- Minimal structures facilitate the emergence of spontaneous thinking surfaces and contextual images for interpretation of cues and improvisation in strategy practice.

- Minimal structures empower actors with a living instrumentation for storytelling with images to increase emplacement and presence in strategy enactment.

Because these theoretical propositions in their current format are thick and cumbersome for theoretical comparisons, I will simplify them, making each more accessible, in the next section. Similar to the processes I used in the case study, I textualize the propositional statements as narrative for the reader, and present essential elements as a logical description of the minimal structure phenomena. In the following paragraphs I organize, or classify, the narratives in relation to the research questions that I introduced earlier in the thesis.

**Q1: How are minimal structures *created* and *used* to frame strategy in practice?**

#### ***6.1.1 Cognitive Sense of Place***

First, actors employ minimal structures through a cognitive sense of place to reflexively construct and navigate spatial reference points in the strategy context. One may think of actors dwelling in an ideological landscape of strategy principles or goals and determining their relationships to those strategy features from the anchor of personal place. Place becomes the strategy frame of reference rather than the object within strategy space.

#### ***6.1.2 Spontaneous Framing Surfaces***

Second, minimal structures facilitate spontaneous improvisational thinking surfaces, which have the framing characteristics of openness, fluidity, and permeability. Here the spatial strategy frame is a dynamic or dialectic embodiment of place for the interpretation of real life practices. A

strategic conversion has taken place; the deterministic attributes of strategy space are enfolded into the actor interpretation of the landscape.

**Q2: How do minimal structures *contribute* to strategy coherence and sensemaking?**

### **6.1.3 *Values Discourse***

First, minimal structures provide actors with a representational frame from which to conduct spatial discourse and enactments of place-based values. This frame allows agile fabrication of personal scenarios, narratives, and social equities, which may be tested for resonance against the normative strategy. In those instances of continuity, the actor may endow the strategy with a sense of place through improvisational implementation; for the spatially incongruent, the actor may also improvisationally infuse the strategy with personal values. In either case, actor meaning and understanding are acquired through the indwelling of the strategy in practice.

### **6.1.4 *Instrumentation of Place***

Second, minimal structures empower actors with a living instrumentation. The empowerment is embedded in the absolute sense of place, which is personally emplaced in the strategy context. This is embodied engagement in strategy; an opportunity for actor presence as identification with the strategy. It stabilizes the persistence of place as an ongoing socially constructed experience and pervades the strategy space with actor authenticity and moral and ethical identity.

Table 6.1 summarizes for comparison these narratives of the theoretical propositions relative to my research questions.



**Table 6.1 - Summary of Theoretical Propositions**

Q1: How are minimal structures <b><i>created</i></b> and <b><i>used</i></b> to frame strategy in practice?	Q2: How do minimal structures <b><i>contribute</i></b> to strategy coherence and sensemaking?
<i>Cognitive sense of place</i>	<i>Values discourse</i>
<i>Spontaneous framing surfaces</i>	<i>Instrumentation of place</i>

## 6.2 Comparison of Three Key Theories

Herbert Blumer (1969) conceived the idea of "symbolic interactionism" to label a field of inquiry that emphasizes research about how people create meaning in social interactions, how they present and construct self identity, and how they define situations of co-presence with others. One of the perspective's central ideas is that people act in particular ways because of how they define situations, such as with cognitive spatiality. Blumer articulated a set of three basic premises to his theory:

- Humans act toward things on the basis of the meanings they ascribe to those things.
- The meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with others and the society.
- These meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he/she encounters." (Blumer, 1969: 2)

The ideas of symbolic interactionism provide a means of connecting the diverse conceptual streams of frames, structuration, and habitus, which I individually compare with my theoretical findings in the following sections.

The structure of each of these comparisons follows a similar approach, where I outline the theory, link the unique theory elements to my theoretical propositions in a summary table, and critique existing theories' relationship to minimal structures by concisely defining key associations and contrasts.

### **6.2.1 Frame Theory Comparison - Goffman**

Frames may be thought of as formative cognitive structures, which guide one's perception and depiction of reality. Goffman describes a frame as situational and basic elements accessible to identification in the organization of experience (Goffman, 1974: 11). These frames are not consciously fabricated, but rather unconsciously adopted during the interaction and communication processes; they are not constructed or improvised spontaneously, but consume previously existing cultural codes and norms. "Frames are principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters" (Gitlin, 1980: 6). Frames structure those aspects of reality to be observed.

According to frame theory, people often order experience by linking it to a known pattern, which guides perceptions through reference to the pre-existing cognitive structure. Frames may be defined as symbolic-interpretive constructs or schemes that include beliefs, images, or symbols shared among people in a specified society or organization to make sense of the world. "[To] frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient...in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (Entman, 1993: 52). Frames do not place *limits* on reality, but rather *enable* the perception and communication of socio-physical reality.

Individuals persistently project into their environment their interpretive, sensemaking frame. When individuals recognize a particular event they imply in this response one or more frameworks [frames], or schemas, of interpretation called primary.

[p]rimary because application of such a framework or perspective is seen by those who apply it as not depending on or harkening back to some prior or 'original' interpretation; indeed a primary framework is one that is seen as rendering what would otherwise be a meaningless aspect of the scene into something that is meaningful. (Goffman, 1974: 21).

Primary frameworks vary between highly organized systems of entities, postulates and rules, and others with “no apparent articulated shape, providing only a lore of understanding, an approach, a perspective.”

Each primary framework allows its user to locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its terms. He is likely to be unaware of such organized features as the framework has and unable to describe the framework with any completeness if asked, yet these handicaps are no bar to his easily and fully applying it. (Goffman, 1974: 21)

Primary frameworks of a social group constitute a central component of its culture, an image of its belief system. There are also implications of “sitedness,” where an individual “generates a series of points beyond which he cannot obtain the evidence to what is going on. He will find barriers to his perception, a sort of evidential boundary.” What occurs beyond this evidential boundary is essentially out of frame (Goffman, 1974: 215-216).

Goffman identifies two general classes of primary frameworks. First, *natural frameworks* identify events deterministically, such that they are not directed, unwarranted, unanimated, unguided, purely physical. Second, *social frameworks* offer a backdrop for understanding an event incorporating “the will, aim, and controlling effort of an intelligence, a live agency, the chief one being a human being.” All social frameworks involve rules, but during any particular moment of an activity the individual may apply several frameworks (Goffman, 1974: 24-25). Moreover, there are at least two positions regarding the fundamental discursive nature of framing structural levels: surface frames and deep frames. A surface frame is the mental structure associated with specific words or phrases that creates the context for meaning for those words or phrases. A deep frame is more basic, defining a moral or philosophical worldview and conceptualizing values; deep frames include narrative or storyline structures, plots, and ideologies. Surface frames make sense only given deep frames (Triandafyllidou, 1995:3; Donati, 1994: 20).

Finally, the idea of “episoding conventions” introduces the framing of activities in a particular way. This approach is essentially associated with collectively organized social activity and is often demarcated from parallel events by a “special set of boundary markers or brackets of a conventionalized kind. These occur before and after the activity in time and may be circumscriptive in space; in brief, there are temporal and spatial brackets” (Goffman, 1974: 251). The markers are metaphorically similar to a wooden picture frame, which is

[n]either part of the content of activity proper nor part of the world outside the activity but rather both inside and outside, a paradoxical condition already alluded to and not be avoided just because it cannot easily be thought about clearly. One may speak, then, of

opening and closing temporal brackets and bounding spatial brackets. (Goffman, 1974: 251)

Table 6.2 compares the themes of Frame Theory with my theoretical propositions regarding minimal structures.

**Table 6.2: Comparison of Frame Theory with Minimal Structures**

	Frame Theory Themes		
Minimal Structures	Known Patterns	Enabler	Sensemaking
Cognitive Sense of Place	✓		
Spontaneous Framing Surfaces			✓
Values Discourse	✓		
Instrumentation of Place		✓	

Working from my proposition descriptions, I identified four apparent associations and relative contrasts with Frame Theory, identified by checkmarks in the table cells. First, the minimal structure use of a cognitive sense of place may be associated with known patterns as references employed to navigate and order experience. The contrast exists in that minimal structures are not temporally retrospective, as are frames, but rather reflexively present and immediate in situ. Second, spontaneous framing surfaces are observed as sensemaking devices in frames, where interpretation of meaning is achieved by gathering frame-based evidence. This concept contrasts with minimal structures with respect to the finding that improvisational minimal structures emerge as a consequence of the unique synergies of the spatial context versus acting as a memory stimulus, which is culturally embedded. Third, the concept of a values discourse in minimal structures is reflected in known patterns of deep frames. Values and morals are indirectly expressed through framing behaviors. There is a

simple difference between this view and spontaneous framing surface; minimal structures involve agent spatial negotiation of personal place-based values rather than attempting to find fit with rules. Fourth, the instrumentation of place as a practice of imprinting strategy with a sense of place may be correlated with the frames as enablers. By increasing actor perception, frames enable or facilitate a greater degree of actor presence in a particular context, which is defined in social frames as activation of the will. A key contrast is the minimal structures are understood in my findings to draw on a singular place of reference as opposed to a collection of episodic framing ideas. In summary, minimal structures are distinguished from framing in respect to their immediacy, spatial emergence, values dialogue, and orientation to individual space.

### ***6.2.2 Structuration Theory Comparison - Giddens***

The creation of Structuration Theory principles is driven by the desire to span the structure-agency divide. Structuration focuses on eliminating the duality of structure and agency by recognizing their mutuality, as dynamic practice attributes in constructing and enacting processes. It attempts to develop a theoretical structure that restores the human agency of social actors, acknowledging that human agency and structure presuppose each other (Sewell, 1992:1-4). Structuration includes rules and resources recursively caught up in social reproduction, and institutionalized features of social systems have structural properties. Structures shape people's practices, but it is also people's practices that constitute (and reproduce) structures. (Giddens, 1981:27). The theory of structuration does not view the experience of the individual actor, or the existence of any form of social entity, exclusively, but rather as "social practices ordered across space and time." Social activities are heavily recursive, and "are not created by social actors but continually recreated as an expression of themselves *as* actors. In and through their activities agents reproduce the

conditions that make these activities possible” (Giddens, 1984: 2).

Human actors are able to reflexively attend their monitoring behaviors in “discursive consciousness.” “‘Interpretive schemes’ are the modes of typification incorporated within actors’ stocks of knowledge, applied reflexively in the sustaining of communication.” Communication of meaning incorporates aspects of the contextuality of action. Agents habitually incorporate the spatial features of their encounters in those processes used to create meaning (Giddens, 1984: 29).

The idea of “contextuality” of space instructs that spatial configurations of social life are “just as much a matter of basic importance to social theory as are the dimensions of temporality” (Giddens, 1984: 363). Identifying the constraints of an actor’s “knowledgeability” in the changing context of time and space is fundamental social inquiry (Giddens, 1984: 328).

However, structuration resists the concept there can be a unique science of space because “spatial forms are always social forms.” (Giddens, 1984: 367). Moreover, the “term ‘place’ cannot be used in social theory simply to designate a point in space... the concept of presence or rather, of the mutuality of presence and absence, has to be explicated in terms of its spatiality as well as its’ temporality” (Giddens, 1984: 118). For this theorist, the fundamental problem is to clarify how the “limitations of individual ‘presence’ are transcended by the stretching of social relations across time and space” (Giddens, 1984: 35).

Giddens employs the phrase “locales” to refer to the use of space as settings of interaction, and the settings of interaction are critical for delineating its contextuality. “Locales are typically internally regionalized, and the regions within them are of critical importance in constituting contexts of interaction” (Giddens, 1984: 118). Space is not an empty dimension along which social groupings become structured, but it must be

considered in terms of its involvement in the formation of systems of interaction (Giddens, 1984: 368).

The analysis of strategic conduct focuses on modes the actors use to draw upon structural properties in the constitution of social relations. (Giddens, 1984: 288). Relative to the spatiality of these modes, a sense of place seems of major importance in the sustaining of ontological security because it provides a psychological connection between the biography of the individual and the locales that are the spatial settings of individual flow. "Activity takes place in definite locales, but this is not to be understood just as the passive localization of such activity within particular situations. Human activities 'take place' by appropriating and transforming nature" (Giddens, 1984: 367). "As knowledgeable human agents their actions may have the consequence of transforming the very structures that enable them with the capacity to act" (Giddens, 1976:161).

Under this view of structures, they maintain a virtual existence, thereby having "no reality except as they are instantiated in activity" (Whittington, 1992:696). Social systems, according to Giddens, have no existence apart from the practices that constitute them, and these practices are reproduced by the recursive (repeated) enactments of structures. Structures are not the patterned social practices that make up social systems, but the principles that pattern these practices. Structures, therefore, have only what he terms a virtual existence (Giddens, 1984:17).

Table 6.3 compares the themes of structuration theory with my theoretical propositions regarding minimal structures.



**Table 6.3: Comparison of Structuration Theory with Minimal Structures**

	<b>Structuration Theory Themes</b>		
<b>Minimal Structures</b>	<b>Duality</b>	<b>Contextuality</b>	<b>Knowledgeability</b>
Cognitive Sense of Place		✓	
Spontaneous Framing Surfaces			
Values Discourse		✓	
Instrumentation of Place		✓	

Referencing my propositions to develop my critique, I identified three associations, and respective contrasts, with Structuration Theory. First, cognitive sense of place is evident within structuration as the contextual awareness of spatial configuration of social life and personal security. The contrast between minimal structures is found in the idea of place-dwelling instead of creating. Second, the comparison of values discourse demonstrates some similarities linked to contextuality. The idea of locales as places of interaction, of discourse, suggest associations. Contrasts may be recognized in regard to minimal structure concept of place projected by the agent versus leveraged as a collective object. Third, the structuration attribute of contextuality presents an association with instrumentation of place, where the embodied sense of place drives activities in locales as means of formation. However, in this respect, minimal structures are enacted through inhabiting spatial activities with personal place. To summarize the high-level comparisons, minimal structures are unique in the facets of dwelling, tangibility of structure, project of place, and inhabiting spatial activities.

### 6.2.3 *Habitus Theory Comparison - Bourdieu*

Although the concept of Habitus is explained in the context of power, position, and economic control, the subjective structure offers insights about the nature of social order. This characteristic “functions as a sort of social orientation, a ‘sense of one’s place,’ guiding the occupants of a given...social space towards the social positions adjusted to their properties, and towards the practices or goods which befit the occupants of that position” (Bourdieu 1984: 466). Habitus may be described as an arrangement of dispositions that reflect persistent ways of perceiving, thinking, and actions, which the individual constructs in response of events, but also instantiates objective social structures. The mental models influence objective reality as a subconscious embodiment and reproduction of the social order.

To operationalize the attributes of Habitus, the idea of social space, or fields, is enacted through individual agency. These “cognitive structures...are internalized, ‘embodied’ social structures,” that become natural objects to the individual” (Bourdieu, 1984: 468). These spaces of possibility are also structurally composed of a variety of historical experiences that an agent brings to a situation. Yet the different modes of attainment result in variances in the nature of agent preferences (Bourdieu, 1984: 65). A habitus essentially represents the emplacement of objective structures of a given field in the subjective structures of thought and action of the agent. The relationship is a two-way exchange, however, and “the truth of any interaction is never entirely to be found within the interaction as it avails itself for observation” (Bourdieu, 1989: 16). The field depends on the agent’s predisposition to constitute the field of meaning in practice, and the Habitus reveals the underlying structures of the field. An agent is “inclined to introduce into the object the principles of his relation to the object” (Bourdieu, 1977: 8). The position of a given agent within a social space can best be defined by the positions he

occupies in different fields, that is, in the distribution of the powers which are active within each of them (Bourdieu, 1984: 197).

Though social space and geographic space are not directly correlated, one may “compare social space to a geographic space within which regions are divided up. But this space is constructed in such a way that the closer the agents, groups or institutions, which are situated within the space, the more common properties they have; and the more distant, the fewer.” Spatial distances and segregation are key attributes for Bourdieu, as he observes that “people who are very distant from each other in social space can encounter one another and interact...in physical space” (Bourdieu, 1989: 16). The social space is constructed and defined by points of view, where the “vision that every agent has of the space depends on his or her or her position in space” (Bourdieu, 1989: 18). As a mental structure, the Habitus represents the internalization of world constructs based on one’s position relative to these impressions of distance, segregation, and point of view. Nevertheless,

The search for invariant forms of perception or of construction of social reality masks different things: firstly, that this construction is not carried out in a social vacuum but subjected to structural constraints; secondly, that structuring structures, cognitive structures, are themselves socially structured because they have a social genesis; thirdly, that the construction of social reality is not only an individual enterprise but may also become a collective enterprise. (Bourdieu, 1989: 18)

The premise of social position as a hard-wired fact of existence suggests that the schema in which we perceive and enact practices, our various individual Habitus, are themselves a particular blindness to other dimensions of experience. Agents and groups of agents are thus defined by

their relative positions within that space (Bourdieu, 1984: 196). Bourdieu states, “Failing to construct the space of positions leaves you no chance of seeing the point from which you see what you see” (Bourdieu, 1989: 19). This is not an overtly deterministic notion, but it does not account for the embodiment of one’s normative social position as a limiting factor in what positions are appropriate for seeing anything.

The “Habitus thus implies a sense of one’s place but also a sense of the place of others” (Bourdieu, 1989: 19), and presumably, in this theoretical construct, serves to keep the common sense social order intact. The sense of one’s place may be described as residing in a multidimensional space of positions, where these place-based positions can be understood as coordinates of values with individually intrinsic properties (Bourdieu, 1984: 197). “Social space tends to function as a symbolic space,” and the spaces have a “specific logic which endows them with a real economy from the structures in which they are rooted” (Bourdieu, 1989: 20-21). However, aspects of chaos found in the nature of spatial indeterminacy and vagueness demand a certain degree of “semantic elasticity,” which reflects a requirement for the “art of necessary improvisation” (Bourdieu, 1977: 8).

Taking the idea of spatiality another step further, Bourdieu has formulated the concept of Habitus as a social practice that incorporates principles very different from the “highly ambiguous vocabulary of rules, the language of grammar, morality, and law” (Bourdieu, 1977: 19).

The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment produce habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively regulated

and regular without in any way being the product of obedience to rules. (Bourdieu, 1977: 72)

The habitus also produces practices, which are determined by one's history as a "strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations." These practices may appear as a string of movements, which are objectively organized socially as strategies, yet no formal strategy is actually involved. As a producer and reproducer of objective meaning, an agent is engaged in "regulated improvisation" (Bourdieu, 1977: 72-73; 79). Because they are products of dispositions, practices are "unitary and systematic, transcending subjective intentions and conscious projects whether individual or collective." There is a dialectical relationship between the objective structures and the cognitive and motivating structures, which they produce and which tend to reproduce them (Bourdieu, 1977: 81-83). And the process infers objectively "singular intuitions of space." Any action performed in a space constructed in this way is immediately qualified symbolically and functions like a series of structural exercises through which to build up pragmatic, competency-enabled basic schemes such as "going in and coming out, filling and emptying, opening and shutting, going leftwards and going rightwards, then westwards" (Bourdieu, 1977: 91). The transitional periods between positions maintain the attributes of the threshold, "a sort of sacred boundary between two spaces" (Bourdieu, 1977: 130).

Table 6.4 compares the themes of Habitus Theory with my theoretical propositions regarding minimal structures.

**Table 6.4: Comparison of Habitus Theory with Minimal Structures**

	<b>Habitus Theory Themes</b>		
<b>Minimal Structures</b>	<b>Sense of Place</b>	<b>Embodiment</b>	<b>Disposition</b>
Cognitive Sense of Place	✓		
Spontaneous Framing Surfaces			
Values Discourse			✓
Instrumentation of Place		✓	

My minimal structure propositions are compared with three Habitus themes, and produce three topical associations and contrasts. First, the cognitive sense of place is clearly represented in Habitus. The idea in Habitus is that of a means of orientation with cognitive structures. A difference may be observed in Habitus as an agent is set to regulate their circumstances according to dispositions rather than have the capacity to disrupt them as in minimal structures. Second, dispositions are inherently value laden for the purpose of normalizing behaviors relative to social order. This is not the case with minimal structures, which work to unbound conventions. Third, instrumentation of personal place again may be located in Habitus embodiment as a means of dialectic with other's sense of place. In this respect, the instrumentation is for constituting social space within the appropriate world construct, and not for the engagement with and the infusion of the normative structure.

### ***6.3 Strategy-as-Practice Contributions***

In this section of the theory comparison narrative, I explore several theoretical implications of my research contributions to the Strategy as Practice field. My assessment addresses each minimal structure

proposition separately with excerpts from a key recent SaP literature research themes and topics. The specific SaP theoretical research most accurately aligning with my work concerns the exploration and elaboration of building and dwelling worldviews (Chia and Rasche, 2010), which I will compare with my theory and demonstrate contributions.

First, strategy as practice research is tempered by the complex “situatedness of strategy action...” (Chia and Rasche, 2010: 34). The accounting of this spatial factor is gratifying, and according to the authors, leads to a dismantling of the Cartesian assumption that “cognition and mental representation necessarily precede any meaningful action.” The idea of a deliberately designed and planned form of intervention, such as a strategy, is communicated in the metaphor of a *building*. This view is a rationalized perspective, which is contrasted with the *dwelling* world view in “which the identities and characters of persons are not deemed to pre-exist social interactions and social practices. The individual is spontaneous and self-referential within the “dualism between mind and matter” (Chia and Rasche, 2010: 35).

With respect to my research contribution, the middle range theory of spatial minimal structures clearly validate the idea of dwelling as an important descriptor of strategist orientation, but certainly takes these distinctions much further. Minimal structures, as enablers of a dwelling perspective toward strategic management, are explained as place-based interpretive schemas, which are indwelt with personal values. The concepts reflect the guidance to conduct investigations to help “...understanding of how strategists shape strategizing activity through *who they are...*” as an undeveloped strategy as practice research area (Johnson et al, 2010: 245). My work illuminates and fills empirical gaps in this concern by offering field data that elaborates the dwelling concept from within the minimal structure theory-building approach. Moreover, my

findings further confirm the use of case studies as research instruments, which “...recognize the importance of identity and that this has significant methodological implications...” (Johnson et al, 2010: 243).

Second the authors’ argument appeals to differential forms of strategy practice, where building involves a “strategy actor who is distinct and detached from situation” and imposition of plans is an abrupt characteristic of purposeful strategy. The dwelling of practice states people are “intimately immersed and inextricably intertwined with their surrounds..,” that results in people engaged in wayfinding as activities for “creating action pathways that radiate outwards from their concrete existential situations; ...decisions and actions emanate from being *in situ*...” (Chia and Rasche, 2010: 38). The creation of this worldview is acquired through the “immersion and internalizing of embedded social practices... learned unconsciously and unintentionally” (Chia and Rasche, 2010: 39). The authors explain the pursuit of common goodness necessarily involves subjective value judgments.

The evidence emerging from my study supports the combined dimensions of spatiality and values. This contribution has tremendous potential for development as cross-disciplinary research theme. Minimal structures, as a living instrumentation, employ a sense of place to practically embody persistent individual value for wide variety of sensemaking encounters. My contribution appears to help develop one answer to the question, “How are micro-level strategies and processes in a given organization interacting with interacting with organizational-level strategies and visa versa, how are organisational processes and strategies affecting micro-level activities?” Huff, Neyer, and Moslein, 2010: 204).



Third, with specific regard to the strategy as practice research agenda, the authors present several clarifying observations about integrating these views of building and dwelling in future studies. For example, a useful focal area for consideration includes “decision-makers cognitive frameworks yield their sense of the context; how these frameworks inform their actions” (Chia and Rasche, 2010: 41). The delineation of contextual attributes of one’s framework suggests an improved understanding of doing strategy from a particular orientation to both the context and the strategy itself as a spatial construct. This concept progresses to another idea of discover found in exploring the immanence of strategy; the aspects of internalization or embedding choices. Here Chia and Rasche recommend seeking “less conscious and more tacit elements...” of strategy related to strategic episodes. Most importantly, research should not be limited to “visible doings” alone. One way to facilitate a disruption in research practice is to go to the periphery of decision-maker experiences to develop recognition that at the local context, strategy making is largely improvisational (Chia and Rasche, 2010: 42). The “dwelling worldview leads to an intimate, engaged and involved comprehension of the local mindsets and proficiencies required to skillfully perform everyday practices of strategy” (Chia and Rasche, 2010: 44).

Since humans always externalize themselves in activity (Berger and Luckman, 1966: 70) a spatial dialogue around sense of place is an obvious source of rich strategy as practice research data. I was fortunate to locate a site where local observations of strategic management dwelling behavior could be conducted. My successful approach shows that one must go “...beyond talking to or observing strategists, to being with them. This implies a cohabitation of a set of meanings and exploration of intended and unintended, conscious and unconscious, actions and consequences” (Johnson et al, 2010: 247). Like other researchers who have contributed to the conceptualization of the spatial minimal structures construct, and

advanced its' potential connection to strategy management (Sorokin, 1964; Massey, 2005; and Dale and Burrell, 2008), I have argued there is an act of placement in the system of meanings. These spatially located meanings may be conceptualized as situated ethics expressed in articulated forms improvisation through spatial minimal structures; the reflexive interpretation of strategy with the sense of place held by an actor. Space can be conceived as part of the social ordering process for the facilitation of strategic meaning in organizations. Not as with social segregation, and power plays, but by enfolding the strategic spatial goals within the individual sense of place in enacting those same goals.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

In this final discussion, I reflect on the KYF2 initiative as an example of the potential value of adopting a minimal structure strategic management approach, and explore the meaning minimal structures may hold in my own work. The contributions and limitations of my findings will then be proposed in the strategy field. The benefits of using of grounded theory are explained from my experience as well. I close with a short discussion of the future research necessary to affirm and enhance my theory.

### *7.1 Discussion of the Case Study Example*

The goal of my inductive case study was to discover the meanings different minimal structure activities have for people, and how their understanding and use of improvisation with minimal structures is impacted and defined by these meanings. My findings help to explain the processes of social phenomena of minimal structures as spatial frames in the context of human sensemaking. This work produces a cognitive perspective associated with the spatial way of thinking about strategic management: the spatiality of strategy.

After approximately two years of observing and participating in the KYF2 deployment, and the ongoing strategic management, I am encouraged with the sustained patterns of success. The theoretical propositions regarding spatial minimal structures represented in my research findings have remained congruent with the positive strategic outcomes. The KYF2 solution was adopted by the USDA Secretary as a core public communication platform for agricultural and natural resource management programs, which credits the value of the solution as a vehicle and process for delivering higher political agendas. The Taskforce continues to meet regularly with new members being added, and more detailed public policy

and program design issues related to topics beyond local and regional food systems are discussed, such as training beginning farmers and promoting urban agriculture.

Moreover, the KYF2 implementation strategy has been embraced within several other Secretarial level initiatives, including Strikeforce, a community-based organization partnership to foster higher participation in USDA programs among minority farmers, and Office of Tribal Relations with the introduction of horizontal land title mapping project to orchestrate improved deliver of public services to Native Americans. A culture of strategic management is organically expanding as a result of exercising proven elements of spatial minimal structures. Both leaders and staff are now found to exhibit greater use of improvisation to resourcefully create identification to place; their personal stories are now much more deliberately used to help connect to policy agendas. This shift is tangibly expressed in the current emphasis on ensuring employees sense of place, the conscious sense of emplacement of personal values and dwelling in USDA strategy, is addressed in innovating, executing, and building capacity to execute strategic public solutions.

From the aspect of my own vocation, I am aware of the relevance my research has brought to conceptual and applied strategic thinking. My development and use of various frames now often focus on my orientation to the taken for granted spatial structures proliferating our mental landscape. For instance, how do I, and others, interpret strategic intent? From inside the proposed goals and objectives, or working outside them? What kind of resources are consumed to sustain these relative positions? I am now recognize an attentiveness in my observations to recognize place-based strategic management principles as a means of building consensus for the content of a new Departmental policy my office is drafting. When engaging other executives in the discussion of policy, I talk in with them in

terms of *where* they will be if they participate, describing pragmatic vantage points as a future outcome to determine influence from this point. I may not agree with the values they wish to impose, but the contrast of place to space is something that certainly resonates with leaders.

Second, if my sense of place is inherently instrumental, in what ways am I present - indwelling - those work activities for which I am responsible? There are numerous, complex problems associated with my role, and I suspect many of those problems are a result of cognitive conditioning to live dualistic existence, where I separate myself abstractly in space from the reality of who I am - my sense of place - in that very same space. I do not engage in the space of possibility because it is an unsanctioned space. Yet I live my life as if looking into this same space with the very capacity necessary to affect the nature of its order.

My relationship reinforces the conclusions of this research, and indicates we know that underneath the branding things are murky and unsettled, and will remain so outside a spatial perspective. Our sense of place is a necessary ordering element for the larger enterprise.

In the varied topography of professional practice, there is a high, hard ground which overlooks a swamp. On the high ground, manageable problems lend themselves to solutions through the use of research based on theory and technique. In the swampy low lands, problems are messy and confusing and incapable of technical solution. (Schon, 1983: 54)

Third, I want to bring my values into discourse with strategic management. Not in the sense of business ethics, staying out of jail, and behaving, but rather from the perspective of acting out of my will to be morally attentive to the space I inhabit. To come into dialogue with the cognitive topology

of strategic space, and transcend constructs that intimate and confuse my full hearted participation.

## ***7.2 Contributions and Limitations of Research Findings***

Strategic management, whether observed from a deliberate or emergent paradigm, often assumes materiality. This is particularly true with structuralist perspectives. The content of strategy becomes an object possessing peculiar powers to idealize concepts and transform the material world. Strategy is perceived to realize its potential as an embedded, pervasive inhabitation of space. These preferences, however, mask the cognitive spatial order, which appears to be an important factor for strategy contextualization, interpretation, and operationalization. Moreover, when strategists elevate the dominance of a “time” orientation, including emphasis on goals such as accelerated time to market, rate of adoption, and increased quarterly customer conversion, the inherent, rich spatial orientation of actors can be ignored or lost. My contribution unveils a more practiced sense of place.

I did not anticipate my research findings, though the ideas of spatiality fit naturally with my life experience; based on my study, this is apparently the case for others too. Moreover, the explanation of these structures corroborates their viability as agile place-based value systems, competencies, and instrumentation, used interchangeably to spatially comprehend the meaning of strategy for personal and contextual fitness. Minimal structures may endow those strategies with a sense of spatial discourse with the agent-oriented practice perspective. The benefits of the spatiality view can be interpreted within the organization strategy research community as fresh paradigm for understanding the meaning of strategic management.

A spatial minimal structure offers an interpretative schema naturally used when enacting strategic management in practice. These internalized, non-material devices appear to be instrumental for sensemaking, and may help to efficiently synthesize the structural attributes of strategy boundary objects, rules, and cultural norms. Minimal structures facilitate strategy improvisation through spatially orienting and reconfiguring strategic ideas, plans, and designs in relation to the local, place-based value system.

My substantive theory regarding minimal structures demonstrates contributions supporting my three fundamental objectives expressed in Chapter 1. First, I introduce new evidence defining a viable bridge between deliberate and emergent strategy in practice. The substantive theory of spatial minimal structures helps explain the permeable transference of agent place-based values to institutional structure. The concept of cognitive space opens the possibilities of thinking past the dualistic nature of deliberate and emergent strategy. Second, the study creates a sustainable theoretical synthesis of strategic management, minimal structures, and a cognitive spatial turn. From the perspective of instrumentation, a cognitively held sense of place links agency insights and values to endow the more abstract character of strategy practice with human presence. Third, by intentionally electing extant literature data outside of strategic management field, I examined minimal structure from a cross-disciplinary approach, which leveraged human geography to better understand strategy as practice. The maturity of geography, and its universal features, empowered my work with greater theoretical depth and substance. My basic examples leave significant unexplored terrain for further minimal structure strategy discovery.

With respect to the known limitations of my study, there are three primary critiques. First, the fact it is a single case study, which I am a participant may raise concerns. Had I developed a series of comparative cases, given

more time and resources, then my research would be based on more extensive data to be used in comparison and contrast. Additionally, a broader set of research data could have included external informants. I documented most of the dialogues and interactions I observed as part of my research role, and also personally conducted unstructured interviews to provide further evidence. This raises the potential that my observations are partial, biased, and specific to the individual case. It is therefore essential to demonstrate validity and reliability.

In order to ensure internal validity, I tested observations with a number of other observers; both during and after events, conversations, and so forth. I also discussed my emerging findings with members of the principal research group. The comparison of my observations with those of other observers gave considerable reinforcement to my iterative conclusions. This indicates my selected methodology and protocol were working as intended, and succeeded in helping me remain objective toward the data at various stages. This step was critical for the social construction of my theory in this thesis.

The question of external reliability is more difficult to determine because this was a particular situation where specific circumstances clearly influenced events. I approached this issue of confirmability by logically asking whether an alternative research study of the same events could have observed something very different. I was trying to determine if I accounted for all relevant data. The extensive use of multiple data sources, produced by a diverse set of people and for various reasons, offered me access to disconfirming information. Interviews and participant observations further validated my awareness of relevant interactions. This suggests a high degree of confidence that the scope of relevant data was well documented. Though my research data might have been enriched if I had been able to interview more staff members.



Reliability was enhanced by a grounded theory method approach to data coding. I further distilled data in to structure such as table and matrices that enabled triangulation between my data numerous sources, which spotted many gaps and inconsistencies which were then investigated and resolved. This process was time consuming but without it there would not have been assurance that the data was dependable and credible. The steps included an audit trail linking analysis to source data.

Satisfying questions about the limits of the study addresses transferability. The study has not drawn direct comparisons with other cases to demonstrate generalizability. The objective of a case study should be to provide enough data for others to make these comparisons. My study has addressed the question ‘What actually happened that was significant and what aspects of these events were generalizable?’ The analysis focused on this question by linking observations to social context and presenting this as a commentary on emerging and established theory. My research tracked a sequence of activities over a long period of time through my eyes as a participant, and created validation through repeated observation of the same actors in a series of situations. These summary observations introduce a number of limitations:

- Data collection was primarily through participant observation, and this suggests I may have missed important observable interactions.
- Events are observed and analyzed limited scope of group interactions.
- Observations included key stakeholders but neglected to observe others.
- Research observes the interactions only with those fully engaged and others may offer different views.

### ***7.3 Benefits of Ground Theory Method***

The grounded theory method yielded an empirically stronger KYF2 case study situated in the context of the observed behavior and meanings (Charmaz, 2006: 39). For example, as I participated in the textualization and iterative refinement of the case narrative and supported expression of actor voices in that story, the substantive theory gradually emerged from the analytic process. The method also enabled me to generate new data by investigating taken-for-granted aspects of strategy practice (Charmaz, 2006: 34), while helping sensitize me to concepts embedded in the text. The method remained faithful to my stated epistemological orientation, and provided a valuable reflexive device used to undercover, and rethink, my own hidden assumptions about strategic management. This narrating dimension of ground theory supports the interpretivist paradigm of research.

Narrating an experience means that the practitioner (storyteller) has to cast the self and others in roles and account for the limits and possibilities of those roles. Narrative practices are a form of identity work as they construct and represent characters as having particular identities and then make sense of those events on the basis of those identities. (Johnson et al, 2010: 248)

Second, the method was applied to successfully sustain my inductive approach. “Grounded theory is for the discovery of concepts and hypotheses, not for testing or replicating them”, and this study has confirmed the fact that “the researcher may be hard put to know which substantive field his theory is in until it has emerged sufficiently” (Glaser, 1992: 32). The fusion of human geography themes and concepts concerning space and place required a thorough yet permeable data analysis schema, which the ground theory stages empowered to help compare and ponder

spatiality concepts within the context of a focused strategic management study. Particularly complex views of minimal structure realities were illuminated with the formal techniques of writing memos, coding, constant comparison, and theoretical sampling.

Conversely, whereas the method provided me with a stable and proven research protocol, and an enormous body of supporting literature to acquire implementation guidance, there were several methodological weaknesses experienced of executing the data analysis process. These include the following observations about Grounded Theory Method:

- Data volume generated in conducting data analysis is overwhelming, and the mechanics of achieving auditability can diminish the sense of discovery.
- Abductive reasoning cycles are a very time consuming, which increases data fatigue and requires intense meta notes regarding one's process of doing the process to avoid getting lost.
- Process does not allow research design modification and changes as implicit stories and voices emerge, thereby encumbering innovative responses to unusual or dramatic evidence as it is revealed, which may suggest structural shift in the investigation.
- Introducing tables, matrices, models, and the like, assist in summarizing large amounts of data and multiple iterations, however, after reaching saturation, the regeneration and theoretical synthesis of categories, concepts, and constructs can be relatively subjective in practice without significant due diligence over how selection decisions are framed; even given empirical evidence of apparent data linkages, trends, and themes.

Based on these research method implementation challenges and possible shortcomings, I believe parallel use, or substitution, of complimentary

research methods is warranted for study of spatial minimal structures. Suggestions for future Grounded Theory work would take account of Situational Analysis (Clarke, 2005) as a means of balancing the rigorous method with diverse contributions found in discourses beyond language. Also, use of Frame Analysis may help to generate data about the structural background, boundaries, and rhetorical elements driving how conversations and meanings are ascribed to objects as a strategy tool, such as when frames are embedded in metaphors (Goffman, 1974).

#### ***7.4 Recommendations for Future Research***

The future research challenge centers around the contrasts between *place as a personal experience* and space as the container of experiences. As Langley noted, with qualitative process research “no analysis strategy will produce theory without an uncodifiable creative leap, however small” (Langley, 1999: 691). The theory I propose is such a jump into unqualified space. Fortunately, theorist’s conflicts occur not with respect to the existence of the structures themselves, but with the nature of their contents and capacity to shape meaning. Constructs of this relationship within a strategy as practice paradigm suggest the importance of forming a clear understanding of how actors interpret personal sense of place in regard to strategy as the malleable skin into which we pour an animated set of place-based values. Place activates intent.

People think about organization strategy in terms of space. The congruent practice of many organization strategy routines and rituals actually appear to depend on a locally held, and holistically encountered, sense of place. Simply walk through a field of office cubicles next Tuesday morning with a tape measure in your hand, or move function boxes around vertically on the organization chart, or exclude the emergent growth sector from the strategic marketing plan.

Each of these deliberate acts can expeditiously dismantle the psyche, or worse, of institutions. I have done it on purpose; I am the maddened recipient of someone's intentional and unintentional manipulations of *my* space. This is the pervasive spatiality of work life. We cognitively reinforce our perception of the figure-ground relationships between ourselves, for instance, and those objects in proximity to us, or we imagine near to us.

If the space we individually or collectively perceive, is actually, first of all, a cognitively entrenched construction of orientations and values we employ to make sense of our world, what research agendas would help us better understand these ways of thinking and acting? I believe spatial minimal structures present opportunities for knowledge and theory building around four core concepts, including: the creation and use of spatial heuristics of strategy; transference of strategic values in spatial constructs; the development of a spatial rapport and repertoire with others in strategic management roles; and identity as place-based dialectic discourse of strategy ethics and values.

Examples of specific topics in which evidence may be acquired to further test my theoretical propositions are:

- Strategic spatiality from aspect of virtual communities; how do agent networks express spatiality in practice to interpret messages, branding, utility, flows, etc. (Cross, Social Networks Analysis)
- Strategic spatiality integration with business ethics; what elements of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude are reflected in the spatial sensemaking and decisionmaking (MacIntyre, Applied Virtue Ethics)

- Differences in conceptualization of spatiality of strategy between agents located within either commercial, public, and social enterprises context
- Relationship and influence of strategic spatiality with respect to co-emergence of innovations and markets; blue ocean theory
- Engage more direct ethnomethodology study through large universe survey instrument, social media metrics, and/or video to surface taken for granted assumptions about agent spatiality in strategic management social situations
- Discover the nurture-nature sources of individual and/or organization spatiality of strategy; spatial emergence and innate sense of place construct
- Further elaboration of Dale and Burrell conceptual literature to create an interpretative model of cognitive spatiality of strategy (example Figure 7.1)

Figure 7.1: Notional Model of Applied Dale and Burrell Topology

		<i>Strategic Management Position</i>	
<i>Minimal Structure Values</i>	Values Position	Deliberate Strategy	Emergent Strategy
	Progressive	Opening Space "Crowdsourcing Strategies"	Alternative Space "Blue Ocean Strategies"
	Passive	Liminal Spaces "Integrator Strategies"	Margin Spaces "Dis-equilibrium Strategies"
	Regressive	Alternative Spaces "Retrenchment Strategies"	Alternating Spaces "Partnering Strategies"

These proposed studies are likely to demonstrate the spaces and places around us construct us as we construct them. Workspaces for many people are diverse and not bounded by the traditional separation of spheres of

production, consumption, and reproduction. They are not entirely material. Individual instrumentation of the spatial realm, however private that space might be assumed to be, go through the medium of a sense of place that is socially organized. Spaces are at once intensely personal and intensely public.

- End -

## Appendices

Appendix A: Plain Language Statement, Interview Guide, Consent Form, University Ethics Approval

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Appendix K: KYF2 Resource Alignment Decisions (Example)

Appendix L: KYF2 Sustainability Decision Matrix

Appendix M: KYF2 Map Supports Administration Governance Goals

Appendix N: Coding (Example)

Appendix O: Memos (Example)

Appendix P: Interview Analysis (Example)

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Appendix T: Whitehouse Update Slide Deck



## Appendix A: Plain Language Statement, Interview Guide, Consent Form, and University Ethics Approval

### Plan Language Statement

**Study Title:** Organisational Strategy: Use of Improvisation in Deploying Strategic Plans

**Purpose:** The proposed research is conducted as a component of satisfying the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree program at the University of Glasgow.

**Researchers:** Stephen Lowe, PhD degree research student ([stephen.lowe14@gmail.com](mailto:stephen.lowe14@gmail.com)/ 703 912 7975), and Dr. Donald MacLean, Senior Research Faculty, University of Glasgow, Scotland ([Donald.MacLean@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Donald.MacLean@glasgow.ac.uk)/ 44 1631 710004).

**Description:** This research seeks to answer the question, “How does the introduction and development of improvisational minimal structures influence the traditionally problematic relationship between deliberate and emergent organizational strategy?” We intend to develop explanations of how individuals reconcile deliberate and emergent designs in practice. The goals are to formulate a valid and reliable interpretation of how diverse individuals collectively influence organisational design strategy, and develop theory concerning how similar processes may occur in a variety of contextual settings. We anticipate approximately 8-12 interviews will be conducted over the course of this study.

The empirical research of improvisational sensemaking is focused on three key perspectives:

- The *nature of minimal structures* used real-time strategic action
- The *construction of minimal structures* as temporary problem frames for interpretation of strategic plan implementation
- The *development of meaning* among network participants in practice using minimal structures

**Invitation:** You are invited to participate in the above research project, which is being conducted by the investigators listed above. Your name was selected from among a group of key individuals. This project will complete part of Mr. Lowe’s doctoral dissertation, and has been approved by the University of Glasgow, College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee.

Should you agree to participate, you would be asked to contribute to this study through a personal interview. We would ask you to participate in an

interview of about one hour, so that we can get a more detailed picture of your experience and perspectives. We estimate that the time commitment required of you would not exceed one hour and 30 minutes.

**Confidentiality:** In this type of project it is normal to give the names of people who have contributed information. We would like to seek your permission to use your name in the final dissertation. If you would prefer some comments to be made off the record, you could indicate this during the interview, or when you review the transcript of the interview. If for any reason you choose not to be named, we would refer to you by a pseudonym, and remove any contextual details that might reveal your identity. We would protect your anonymity to the fullest possible extent within the limits of the law; your name and contact details would be kept in a locked cabinet separate from the data you supply.

**Risks:** There are no perceived risks outside the participant's normal day-to-day activities. This is a deliberate process, where interview participants have the choice of anonymity for professional, or other personal reasons, to protect certain material, opinions, and so forth, from public consumption. Any information that you provide can be disclosed only if (1) it is to protect you or others from harm, (2) a court order is produced, or (3) you provide the researchers with written permission.

**Voluntary:** Please be advised that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice. The researchers wish to affirm your right to contribute willingly and without pressure or sense of obligation of any kind.

**Outcome:** Once the dissertation arising from this research has been completed, a brief summary of the findings will be available to you by request for electronic copies. It is also possible that the research results will be presented at academic conferences, and/or published in academic journals. The data will be kept securely in the Department of Management for one year from the date of publication, or the anniversary date, before being destroyed.

**Consent:** If you would like to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the accompanying Consent Form and returning to Stephen Lowe. The researchers will then contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time for you to complete the interview.

**Concerns:** If you are unduly concerned about your responses to any of the interview questions or if you find participation in the project distressing, you should contact Dr. Robert MacIntosh ([robert.macintosh@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:robert.macintosh@glasgow.ac.uk)/ 44 141 330 4938). Dr. MacIntosh will

discuss your concerns with you confidentially, and suggest appropriate follow-up, if necessary. Also, should you require any further information about the study, or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either of the researchers.

### Interview Guide

This interview is conducted with the specific intention of contributing new data and insights to the completion of my research project, which will result in a written PhD dissertation. The content you share, such as facts, opinions, values, and so forth, are collected by me and will be maintained over the course of my research.

Once my dissertation is completed and my examinations are successfully concluded, I shall destroy all meeting notes, recordings, and other content provided by you during our conversations and/or through electronic files. I treat your comments and content as confidential; meaning only I have direct access to the material. Moreover, your identity as a source of information, relative to comments and content, shall be anonymous throughout the research project.

Your participation in this interview, as well as other interviewee research participants, is entirely voluntary. There are no express or implied exchanges for the information you share with me, whether financial, material, professional, and/or otherwise. I am neither receiving, nor seek, sponsorship for my research; this work is conducted with my personal resources and independent of any institution, organization, or community.

### *Interview Protocol*

This interview will be conducted in a semi-structured pattern. I will introduce topics, questions, and reflections to provide some rigor and bounds to the interview. Otherwise, you should consider your responses as open-ended, personal expressions of your particular feelings, beliefs, and values with regard to the discussion themes. The sequence of our interview conversation follows this example: I introduce topics and questions and you respond with personal perspectives and observations; I present ideas for personal reflection and you reflexively respond. Traditional questions; reflexive insights.

The interview requires approximately one hour. I will watch the time and facilitate the discussion to make good use of our time so you may focus your attention on your responses. To ensure you are undisturbed during our conversation, please turn off your mobile devices and refrain from checking email. After we begin the interview discussion, continuing through to the end of the hour is critical to allocating adequate time for gathering your responses.

In some instances I may need to follow-up with you to clarify and/or elaborate certain of your responses. I will make every effort to refrain from post-interview follow-up contact unless absolutely necessary. Likewise, I am available to you for follow-on questions or exchange of further information not covered in the interview.

Affirmation: Do you understand the interview structure and sequence? Do you have any questions before we begin?

### **Consent Form**

Study Title: Organisational Design Strategy: Individual Improvisation with Social Media

1) I understand the Plain Language Statement and interview procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

2) Please initial the statements below to best represent your choices.

I allow my name to be used in the written dissertation, and all subsequent academic publications and/or presentations:    \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

I allow my name to only be used in the written dissertation:    \_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_No

I prefer to have all information about my participation in this study to be confidential:    \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

## University Ethics Approval



CSS/REV/TEMP/V2/MAR11

### Ethics Committee for Non Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

#### Staff Research: NOTIFICATION OF ETHICS APPLICATION OUTCOME

**Application Type:** New  
(select as appropriate)

**Application Number:** CSS/2011/012  
Please add R to the end of the application number if this review is for a resubmitted application.

**Applicant's Name:** Stephen Oliver Lowe

**Project Title:** Social media improvisation as a bridge between deliberate and emergent organisational strategy design

**Date Application Reviewed:** 12/04/2011

#### APPLICATION OUTCOME

(A) **Fully Approved**  
(select from drop down as appropriate)

**Start Date of Approval:** 16 May 2011 **End Date of Approval:** 30 May 2011

If the applicant has been given approval with amendments required, this means they can proceed with their data collection, with effect from the date of approval. The College Ethics Committee expects the applicant to act responsibly in addressing the recommended amendments. **The amendments should be submitted to the Research Office** for completion of the applicant's ethics file. An acknowledgement that all requested amendments have been made will be made within three weeks of receipt.

(B) Application is Not Approved at this time ☐  
Please note the comments below and provide further information where requested. The full application should then be resubmitted to the Research Office via e-mail to [Terri.Hume@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Terri.Hume@glasgow.ac.uk).

(C) **Select Option**  
(select as appropriate)  
This section only applies to applicants whose original application was approved but required amendments.

#### Major Recommendations

None

#### Minor Recommendations

None of an ethical nature. This is a typical low risk application with just the normal issues of informed consent, data protection and where appropriate anonymity. A proof reading was suggested to eliminate syntax and spelling errors on documents intended for circulation.

Please retain this notification for future reference. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Terri Hume, Ethics & Research Secretary, in Room 104, Florentine House, 53 Hillhead Street, Glasgow G12 8QF.

University of Glasgow  
College of Social Sciences Research Office  
Florentine House, 53 Hillhead Street, Glasgow G12 8QF  
The University of Glasgow, charity number SC004401

## Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol Questions

Thank you for your participation in this interview. The contribution you are making to understand a specific episode of organization strategy will offer me significant insights in the completion of my PhD written requirements.

Process:

I will ask you a series of questions intended to help reconstruct the events, describe the meaning this event has for you, and elicit your personal observations. This interview is NOT a memory exercise. I am seeking information about how you personally made sense of the events you experienced. The interview should take approximately one hour to complete. Once I compose a written draft of the interview, I will share this with you electronically to further validate and confirm your responses to the questions.

Questions:

1. How would you describe the **concept of trust** among the various initiative participants? In what ways did it facilitate achieving goals or not?
2. What aspects of **pace setting** were apparent to you, or personally employed, to make contributions to the initiative? How was this successful, or not?
3. How were **conflicts** recognized and/or resolved throughout the initiative? Where did conflicts emerge? What means did you use to address conflicts?
4. What were the **sources of ambiguity**? How were these addressed?
5. How did you **push the envelope**, go to the edge of your capacity in this initiative?
6. Did you ever feel **stuck in between** things, people, events, etc.? What did that look like? How did that feel? How was it resolved?
7. How was **shared space** created in this initiative? What worked well; not so well?
8. How were **boundaries defined**; either in planning, in practice, or both?

9. What **patterns** emerged during the initiative? How were these patterns incorporated into the design and/or implementation process?
10. How would you briefly **define strategy** for the initiative? In what ways did you make sense of the strategy in implementation?

## Appendix C: Case Study Actors List

### *Actors*

Deputy Secretary - The KYF2 initiative began and remained sponsored by the most senior political leadership of the Department. The Office of the Secretary (OSEC) is accountable to and entrusted with the authority of the President of the United States in execution of the USDA mission for the American people. The Deputy Secretary (DS) is the second in command, after the Secretary, and assumed ownership for KYF2 from the original conceptual launch. This individual is, effectively, the executive business sponsor for the initiative. Her family of origin is of an Irish Catholic background, located in the state of Massachusetts.

Editor and Chief - The DS brought in a former graduate student as her Special Assistant to manage the content preparation and publication of the original report in summer of 2011. Functioning in the political position role as editor and chief, the delegated authority given to this person was intended to provide the necessary access to agency data, and facilitate the collection, composition, and design of the report; this responsibility did not include the map development conceived later in the evolution of the public engagement concept.

Management Team - The KYF2 Management Team of eight developed and populated iteratively as questions and knowledge gaps were identified in the strategy formation process. These individuals were generally proven, trusted representatives from across the seven core missions, and 17 agencies, who were previously recognized by the DS for certain program knowledge, emotional qualities, temperament, and elements of risk tolerance. This group also included three of the immediate staff members of the DS.

Taskforce - A cadre of approximately fifty practitioners, from across USDA



agencies, were invited to positions as KYF2 liaisons, and advocates, among career public servants. These persons represented each of the their respective agencies project interests, supported data calls, and functioned as champions of KYF2. The sufficiency and degree of program knowledge appeared less vital in selection of these individuals than personal motivation and energy.

Agency Data Stewards - Existing roles of agency program database administrators, project managers, contractors, and others were enlisted through data calls to provide KYF2 content. This period function enabled access to validated data and information, which would be ingested into the report themes and map views as factual demonstration of local foods system contributions and opportunities. Individuals in these roles assumed a stand-by posture, as well as an auditor function inside agency data stores and processes.

Office of Communications - The USDA Office of Communications (OC) was initially sought to assist in mass media and social media message development and management. The experience of OC offered an accelerated path to defining and establishing the best communication campaign tools and channels for KYF2. The three career employees selected to support this role demonstrated a diverse set of gifts; both in institutional risk management and new media public relations innovations.

Governmental Liaison - Formal communication protocols, practices, and channels were exercised with the Executive Office of the President. Though subordinate to DS informal exchanges with the Whitehouse, the junior political liaison function provided KYF2 initiative descriptions, answered content questions, and developed the business calendars for launching the phase 1 KYF2 solution; coordination with Whitehouse agenda and media events was another core contribution.

Whitehouse - Members of the Whitehouse (WH) staff were assigned to support planning and the launch of the USDA KYF2 initiative. Physical and media space was dedicated to the launch, as well as several senior WH officials committed to participating in the launch event hosted in the Old Executive Office Building in Washington, DC.

Contractors - Three sets of development and hosting teams participated in the creation of the web maps and web map services, the geospatial application, and the cloud server provisioning. These persons scaled the intensity of their involvement depending on the stage of technical development required. The functional roles varied along a system development lifecycle continuum of cartographic design, software applications, virtual infrastructure deployment, and web content management tasks.

Geospatial Information Officer - To supplement expertise in geospatial thinking and map-making for electronic media, I was identified and incorporated into the OSEC KYF2 Management Team as a career executive from the Office of the Chief Information Officer staff function. The key function of my technical role was to drive innovation and expand open government by inventive uses of those technologies supporting KYF2. This embedded role is the source of participant observations throughout this case study.

## Appendix D: Secretary's Key Strategy Priorities

### KEY STRATEGY PRIORITIES - 9/11/09 (KYF2 Alignment)

#### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

*Every Day, Every Way*

**1. Rural communities create wealth so they are self-sustaining, repopulating and thriving economically.**

#### Strategies:

##### A. Regional Collaboration (KYF2 Alignment)

1. Integration of all USDA investments with Rural Development investments
2. Integration with other federal investments, e.g. transportation
3. Integration of public, private and non-profit sectors

##### B. Targeted Sectors - Infrastructure for high-paying jobs with strong analytics and metrics

1. Expand Broadband to un-served and underserved areas
2. Aggressive outreach for and implementation of Energy Title provisions of the 2008 Farm Bill
3. Local and regional food systems for local wealth creation (KYF2 Alignment)
4. Value-added local commodity agriculture
5. Community facilities investments to have great places to live, raise families and provide recreational opportunities (KYF2 Alignment)

##### C. Production Agriculture

1. Aggressive implementation of the Farm Bill provisions
2. Crop insurance reform
3. Maintenance of appropriate farm safety net
4. Strengthened competition and market access (KYF2 Alignment)

##### D. Leadership Development

1. Rural Development support of education and training (KYF2 Alignment)
2. Office of Advocacy and Outreach cultivate leadership in rural areas (KYF2 Alignment)
3. Extension Service leadership development

#### Proposed Metrics:

- Rural migration rates
- Percentage of families with livable wages
- Percentage of rural areas where GDP growth rate is equal to or greater than national GDP rate
- Annual farm income
- Number of mid-sized farms
- Percentage of food dollars spent on local and regional foods
- Number of business start-ups and new occupational licenses

- Number of people moved off of food assistance programs

## **2. National Forest and private working lands are conserved, restored and made more resilient to climate change and are managed to enhance water resources.**

### **Strategies:**

A. Implementation of an agricultural and forestry offset program for any adopted cap and trade system.

1. Ensure environmental integrity of offsets
2. Ensure broad landowner participations so offsets can be brought to scale.

B. Restoration and management of ecologically sustainable forests and private working lands.

1. Conservation of water resources & improved water quality
2. Restoration and conservation of national forests
3. Conservation of working lands

### **Proposed Metrics:**

- Tons of carbon sequestered and GHG emissions avoided
- Improvement in water resources - quantity and quality - coming from national
- Forests and from private working lands, especially in nationally important watersheds
- Acres of National Forests lands restored to improve ecosystem health and resilience and to lower fire hazard conditions
- Improved targeting of Farm Bill conservation programs to landscape scale conservation efforts
- \$ Value of environmental services traded in markets
- Percentage participation in environmental markets by farmers, ranchers and forest landowners

## **3. America leads the world in sustainable crop production and biotech crop exports.**

### **Strategies:**

A. Expanded trade promotion through coordinated strategy for exporting of biotechnology crops

B. International advancement of food security worldwide based on availability, accessibility and utilization principles focused on:

1. Afghanistan
2. Pakistan
3. Sub-Saharan Africa

C. Promote research which supports economic and environmentally viable agriculture systems

D. Effective outreach utilizing extension science & research products

E. Expand interagency cooperation to strengthen the Department's activities connecting American agriculture to consumers

**Proposed Metrics:**

- "Agricultural Dow Jones Index:" Price/quantity of a basket of new & emerging products - domestic and international
- Number of countries with approved biotech and regulatory frameworks
  1. Removal of restrictions on import of GM Commodities
  2. Removal of restrictions on cultivation of GM Commodities
- Percentage of agricultural GDP from products and services that didn't exist 10 years ago
- Number of instances of co mingling GMO and non-GMO AG products
- Percentage of growth of organics

**4. America's children and the world's children have access to safe, nutritious and balanced meals.**

**Strategies:**

**A. Nutrition Participation. (KYF2 Alignment)**

1. Reduce stigma and increase participation rates in USDA nutrition programs through aggressive and creative outreach, earned media activities and public-private partnerships, and dialogue with State, local, and community leaders.
2. Obesity Reduction. Remove junk food from schools. Ensure that nutrition education investments have the greatest possible impact. Aggressively expand number of schools participating in US Healthier Schools Challenge. Require training for school food service directors. Provide greater transparency and information to parents on school meal performance. Pass a comprehensive Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act. Use federal efforts, such as cafeteria upgrades and federal wellness efforts to demonstrate effective strategies.
3. Food Safety. Reduce number of incidents of food borne illness. Implement regulatory changes to increase testing, tighten standards, and enhance penalties for facilities that fail to meet pathogen level goals. Pass legislation to modernize FSIS statutory authorities, including codifying HACCP and establishing clear performance standard authority. Improve coordination with FDA, CDC, and State and local governments in inspection, surveillance, communication, and response. Implement key findings of Food Safety Working Group. Establish quantitative goals through the FSWG and monitor performance. Expand food safety education and consumer awareness of safe food handling.

**Proposed Metrics:**

- Food security metrics:

1. Dollar value of budget redirected from food aid towards food security/capacity building
  2. Increase in number of scientific exchanges
  3. Increased small farm output
  4. Increased infrastructure in a given region (new roads, crop storage facilities, electricity, water and irrigation projects)
- Rate of childhood obesity
  - Rate of child malnutrition
  - Rate of child hunger
  - Number of deaths and illnesses due to food borne pathogens
  - Annual economic cost of food recalls
  - Rate of world-wide hunger
  - Rate of worldwide malnutrition
  - Number of food deserts
  - Number of locations where the unavailability of food contributes to social instability
  - Number of instances of co mingling GMO and non-GMO AG products
  - Percentage of growth of organics

**5. USDA's constituents understand and appreciate what the agency can do for them every day in every way because USDA employees are engaged, valued, and productively serving the people of America and the world.**

**Strategies:**

- A. USDA personnel proactively reach out to look for ways to help our constituents. **(KYF2 Alignment)**
- B. Civil Rights cultural and operational transformation of USDA
  1. Fair resolution of outstanding and longstanding civil rights cases and complaints.
  2. EEO complaint resolutions and reduction in new complaints.
- C. Provide clear, concise and consistent messages to Capitol Hill and decision makers
- D. Be responsive to requests and concerns from decision makers and Capitol Hill **(KYF2 Alignment)**
- E. Seek opportunities to be more proactive in our outreach activities rather than primarily reactive **(KYF2 Alignment)**

**Proposed Metrics:**

- Percentage of customers who report satisfaction with USDA programs
- Percent of USDA programs that meet or exceed market penetration targets
- Employee Engagement
- Number of substantiated EEO complaints, both employee and program
- Public satisfaction with USDA service delivery
- Percent of Priorities' key metrics that are showing improvement

- Employee morale study

## Appendix E: Deputy Secretary Merrigan KYF2 Memo



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

**DATE:** May 11, 2009

**TO:** Agency Heads  
Mission Areas

**FROM:** Kathleen A. Merrigan  
Deputy Secretary

**RE:** *Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food* –  
A USDA Initiative for Sustainable Local & Regional Food Systems

There is a groundswell of public support and demand for local, sustainably produced food. This is good news for USDA, as people want to reengage in discussions about agriculture and learn more about where their food comes from. I know that USDA already helps facilitate local and regional food systems. I also know that there is much more that can be done.

Secretary Vilsack has challenged me to think creatively about how USDA can best address President Obama's call for a reinvigoration of local food systems. The Secretary has coined the motto of our initiative: *Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food*. This motto captures the local foods aspect and also emphasizes the need for a fundamental and critical reconnection between producers and consumers.

I am excited about beginning a dialogue within USDA to encourage larger, strategic thinking about how to coordinate our work. Some of the underlying objectives of this effort are to:

- Support the viability of small and mid-size farms, ranches, and agriculture facilities;
- Support sustainable agriculture practices;
- Reduce energy consumption;
- Promote locally produced and locally processed foods;
- Ensure equitable access to fresh and local food; and
- Promote healthy eating.

To move forward, I am requesting your help.



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#### Agency Representative

I ask each Agency to appoint a Representative to the *Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food* internal USDA Task Force, which I will chair. The first meeting of this Task Force will be on Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m., in Room 221-A of the Whitten Building. I ask that you select your agency representative based on their subject matter knowledge as well as their enthusiasm to tackle this challenge. In other words, I need worker bees.

Please submit the name and contact information of your Agency Representative to **Livia Marques** at **[Livia.Marques@osec.usda.gov](mailto:Livia.Marques@osec.usda.gov)** by cob on Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup>. If you have questions or need further assistance, contact **Livia Marques** at **720-4256** or e-mail.

#### Agency Inventory

We are in the process of developing an inventory that describes our current capacity in relation to this initiative. As a start, I would ask that your agency representative complete an on-line query by Monday, May 18. The query can be found at: [www.longport.usda.gov](http://www.longport.usda.gov) and will be live on Tuesday May 12. This query is brief – something to get us going – as it simply asks for highlights of what you are currently doing, additional things that you'd like to do, and your perspective on major barriers for advancing local and regional food systems.

## Appendix F: KYF2 Guiding Framework

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### KNOW YOUR FARMER, KNOW YOUR FOOD GUIDING FRAMEWORK

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#### OUR MISSION:

Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food (KYF2) strengthens the critical connection between farmers and consumers and supports local and regional food systems. Through this initiative, USDA integrates and emphasizes programs and policies that:

**Stimulate** food- and agriculturally-based community economic development;  
**Foster** new opportunities for farmers and ranchers;  
**Promote** locally and regionally produced and processed food;  
**Cultivate** healthy eating habits and educated, empowered consumers;  
**Expand** access to affordable fresh and local food; and  
**Demonstrate** the connection between food, agriculture, community and the environment.

KYF2 also leads a national conversation about food and agriculture to increase the linkages between consumers and farmers.

#### OUR GOALS:

1. **KYF2 improves the management and implementation of USDA programs that strengthen the critical connection between farmers and consumers and support local and regional food systems.**
  - A. Objective: Broaden and diversify program participation and utilization (to include new as well as traditional partners, and to increase utilization in support of the KYF2 mission)
    - I. *Describe programs in simpler, more engaging way and make them more accessible and relevant to KYF2*
    - II. *Establish and use a deliberate mechanism for interaction with stakeholders and partners across the supply chain*
    - III. *Ensure that USDA employees and partners (such as FACAs and Extension) are aware of and able to participate in KYF2*
    - IV. *Ensure that USDA program delivery reflects the diversity of America's food systems and USDA priorities and visions for local and regional food systems*
  - B. Objective: Report on the characteristics of America's food systems
    - I. *Develop data needed to understand and track food system characteristics*
    - II. *Analyze and report on food systems and best practices and fill knowledge gaps*
2. **KYF2 breaks down barriers and supports policies and programs that emphasize local and regional food systems and the critical connection between farmers and consumers.**
  - A. Objective: Steward cross-agency initiatives to better leverage USDA resources
    - I. *Farm-to-school and school-to-farm – Enable schools to implement local purchasing plans and develop gardens and curricula to educate*
    - II. *Local meat – Facilitate expanded meat processing and packing capacity*
    - III. *Food distribution hubs – Provide a model for food distribution within local and regional food systems*
    - IV. *Food deserts – Support USDA efforts to eradicate food deserts*
    - V. *USDA in-house operations – Improve in-house operations, such as the cafeteria, to reflect the goals and priorities of USDA and KYF2*

- VI. *Opportunities in agriculture – Support training and job opportunities in agriculture and at USDA*
- VII. *Business structures – Educate stakeholders on legal and financial models used by various enterprises to develop robust and resilient local and regional supply chains*
- B. Objective: Lead cross-department initiatives to better leverage federal resources
  - I. *Healthy Food Financing Initiative – support the Department’s efforts on the Healthy Food Financing Initiative between USDA, HHS, and the Department of Treasury*
  - II. *Farm-to-Schools in Tribal Areas – Partner with the Bureau of Indian Affairs to assist farm-to-school programs in tribal schools*
- 3. KYF2 leads a national conversation to increase understanding of how communities rely on food, agriculture, working lands and each other.**
  - A. Objective: Ensure that the appropriate tools are in place for effective external communication
    - I. *Develop and maintain a KYF2 Communications plan*
  - B. Objective: Facilitate a national conversation to increase understanding of how communities rely on food, agriculture, working lands, and each other
    - I. *Visit colleges and universities and talk to students to foster an interest in food and agriculture*
    - II. *Publish and manage a dynamic web site dedicated to KYF2*
    - III. *Distribute materials describing KYF2 and the USDA to target audiences*
    - IV. *RD or FSA state director present on KYF2 in each state*
    - V. *USDA employees speak on KYF2 at relevant conferences and gatherings*
- 4. KYF2 strengthens the capacity of the USDA to carry out this mission.**
  - A. Objective: Develop and implement systems and processes for standard KYF2 operations
    - I. *Staff the KYF2 initiative*
    - II. *Utilize 1-year and 3-year tools for planning and tracking purposes*
    - III. *Create a charter and work plan for each distinct KYF2 project*
  - B. Objective: Integrate and mainstream KYF2’s mission into USDA operations
    - I. *Integrate and make explicit KYF2 projects in the annual USDA budget proposal*
    - II. *Integrate KYF2 into the USDA Strategic Plan*
    - III. *Integrate KYF2 into the Performance and Accountability Report*
    - IV. *Integrate KYF2 into the Department’s Weekly Activity Reports*
    - IV. *Meet with USDA leadership to expand understanding of KYF2*

## Appendix G: KYF2 Meeting Notes Example



### **Know Your Farmer Meeting with Dep. Sec Kathleen Merrigan - 1.3.12 - Meeting Notes**



<b>Purpose</b>	Know Your Farmer (KYF) Meeting with Dep. Sec. Kathleen Merrigan
<b>Meeting Date</b>	1/3/2012 11:30 - 12:30 EST
<b>Attendees</b>	Dr. Kathleen Merrigan, USDA Deputy Secretary Chris Smith, USDA CIO Stephen Lowe, USDA OCIO, Geographic Information Officer Jimmy Jones, USDA, Office of the DepSec Jill Auburn, USDA REE Elanor Starmer, USDA Office of Communications Colleen Rossier, Dan Sandhaus, GIS Project Manager, VSolvit Kyle Valkenburg, GIS Analyst, VSolvit

Stephen Lowe kicked off the meeting with an overview of the phases in development of the KYF map application, moving from a Static Map, to a Dynamic Map, and then to a Collective Data Map. In a Static Map the data is fixed and is not updated. It is a snapshot of data in time. It does include some map functionality to zoom in and out, and query features, etc. In a Dynamic Map, the data are updated and the map might connect to social media. In a Collective Data Map, Live data is fed in from a number of sources, including external (non-USDA) sources.

Dr. Merrigan stated that the ultimate release data for the phase I map application is February 29, 2012. She also stated that this is a high priority project for her.

We provided a live demonstration of the KYF application using our ArcMap mock-up with the data we have collected so far.

Dr. Merrigan expressed concern that the Farmer's markets data was too prominent in the application. Actually, this is because the Farmers Markets is the primary dataset that we have available at this time, and we made a bold icon to demonstrate that any symbol can be used to represent the features on a map.

Hoop Houses by zip code is an important data set. We cannot get more specific about the owners and addresses of the hoop houses, because this would infringe on personally identifiable information (PII). That is why the hoop house data is just provided as number of hoop houses by zip code.



**Know Your Farmer Meeting with Dep. Sec  
Kathleen Merrigan - 1.3.12  
- Meeting Notes**



We would like to have a dataset showing the locations of state FSA offices with three (3) example stories or vignettes per state of producers who were helped by USDA direct loans or grant programs.

The KYF Projects data layer was classified by program in the demonstration. There was some discussion of the icons we might use to represent the projects, and how they might be classified differently, such as by USDA goals.

It might be difficult to represent projects where the administering office is in one location, but the actual project is regional or different. We stated that the location information for a project would be included in the attributes for the project and could be searched by these attributes.

We had a discussion about how the data can be queried on any of the attributes available in the datasets. Dan Sandhaus provided an example of how the KYF Projects data set could be queried for the word "goat" to find any projects related to goats.

Dr. Merrigan stated that the roll out of the KYF map application is of great national interest and will be accompanied by a strong outreach campaign. She suggested development of a 2 minute video explaining the application. She also cited the philosophy that the data should be publicly available, possibly by inclusion in Data.gov, and we should encourage the extended use of the data, supporting the President's agenda of openness in government and democratizing data. She cited the hackathon as an example of encouraging expanded use of data.

Dr. Merrigan indicated that her expectation was for the data in the application to be updated quarterly.

Several people were identified that might be helpful to the project but their names and roles were not clear.

- Erin (or Aaron) Levalley – Lead on KYF Website?
- Wendy Wasserman – Social media expert in Office of Communications
- Garth ?



## Appendix H: KYF2 Communications Plan

### Communications Plan

Know Your Farmer Know Your Food Almanac & Map release  
February 29 2012

#### **Background:**

The Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Almanac is a document cataloging the current state of USDA investments and support in local and regional food systems. The report highlights 27 programs that have been working together under the KYF initiative and illustrates how these programs have been implemented in local and regional food systems across the country. The Almanac also describes what the KYF initiative is (and isn't) and how it has successfully organized a more efficient system for USDA to invest in local and regional food systems.

The Almanac was compiled to document KYF's work to date and the impact this initiative has had on America's community-based local and regional food systems. It also will fulfill a congressionally mandated reporting requirement on KYF as put forth in the 2012 Ag Approps bill.

#### *Primary Products*

The Almanac will primarily be a web-based document with lots of interactive elements like links, images, videos, etc. The vision is to have the layout allow the reader to both follow the central narrative about USDA's investment strategy in local/regional food systems and how the KYF initiative has helped facilitate these investments, while also being able to explore more about the case studies, specific examples and details about the USDA programs the Almanac highlights.

A companion interactive map is also being developed that maps many of the USDA investments made via programs identified during FYs 2009-2011. The map will be housed on the KYF website and be navigable down to the zip code level and be layered for multiple search functions (like the Food Atlas functionality). The map will be released in phases with the first being a static representation of direct USDA investments in local/regional food systems via many of the identified programs. The second phase will overlay additional data sets like Farmers Markets (from the USDA Directory), People's Gardens and identified Food Hubs and other data sets. The data will also be made publically available to outside developers to create their own maps and other products. The schedule and specific communications tactics for the map phased release will be worked into the overall comms calendar.

As the Almanac satisfies a Congressional reporting request, one audience is Congress and relevant policymakers. It, along with the mapping feature, will also inform additional USDA activities and actions like College tours, speeches, communications about the featured programs, field events, etc. Top line target

audiences include farmers/ranchers, economic developers/investors and entrepreneurs; students; and wholesale buyers (including schools, hospitals, retailers, food pantries, etc). Through these channels, we will also reach consumers interested in USDA's investments and leadership in local/regional food, in knowing more about where their food comes from, and in leveraging the economic opportunities local and regional food investments may yield.

### **Message Frame**

- Through 'Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food' seeks to create additional economic opportunities, to promote local and regional food systems that help keep wealth in rural communities, and to encourage a national conversation about what we eat and where it comes from in order to benefit all of agriculture.
- 'Know Your Farmer' is not a program. It is a USDA initiative that promotes collaboration, coordination, innovation and efficiency among existing USDA.
- 'Know Your Farmer' supports local and regional food systems that complement the national and international systems already in place. It seeks to provide farmers and ranchers with the information and support they need to take advantage of growing local and regional markets.
- As USDA helps develop and support these additional markets we are giving producers of all sizes opportunities to diversify their incomes and take advantage of new opportunities, keeping American farmers and ranchers on the farm, and strengthening the American agricultural economy – while helping consumers access healthy food.
- Supporting producers' bottom lines is just part of the initiative. For most of American history, people knew where their food came from and its important role in the social and environmental fabric of a community. However, today there is too often a disconnect between the public and the less-than 1 percent of the population that produces their food. Strengthening the connection between consumers and producers means helping Americans understand what agriculture and rural America do for them. Direct marketing is often the public face of farming, so encouraging these and other local food marketing options can help consumers gain an appreciation for agriculture generally.
- Producers can earn more when the agricultural infrastructure they rely on – processing, aggregation and distribution, shipping and sales – is accessible and can serve their needs. As these local supply chains grow, they create more jobs and more prosperity in rural America.
- The Almanac itself represents a watershed moment in the discussion about local and regional foods by comprehensively cataloguing the breadth of USDA's leadership and investments on this issue in a living document that will be continually updated and refreshed. The Almanac also becomes a benchmark from which to expand and extend USDA's investments in local and regional food systems.

### **2012 KYF Goals (first 3 months)**

1. 2 million touches to the report and/or map (in first month) – WHY?
2. Develop and deploy 25 KYF ambassadors in each of the target audiences to talk about the value of USDA's investments in local and regional food and how those investments contribute to the national understanding of local and regional food system's impacts.
3. Increase the applications for 6-8 undersubscribed programs by 15% [this is a year-long goal] (i.e. CF. Will require going back to the programs to identify programs and capacity)
4. Increase participation in Ag Census among local food farmers by XX% [The Ag Census will now include a question about intermediate markets in relation to local/regional food distribution]
5. Reach every USDA state, regional and local office with information about KYF and the Almanac so that they can answer questions about local/regional food resources at USDA
6. Train XX (12?) grant or loan recipients featured in the Almanac to act as spokespeople with local media
7. Identify USDA in-house experts in all 50 states on the opportunities in local/regional food systems.
8. Expand public knowledge about USDA's investments in local and regional food systems and make KYF concepts and vision part of a larger national conversation.
9. Familiarize USDA field staff with KYF and USDA resources related to local/regional so that they can better serve local stakeholders
10. Inspire, track and highlight over XX (100?) community organized KYF events via meetup and other tools
11. Publish XX (15?) local or state op-eds using state directors and agency leads as spokespeople

### **Communications Objectives**

1. Reframe the local/regional debate to a jobs and economic opportunity issue
2. Illustrate USDA's ongoing leadership and investments in local and regional food systems, highlight their importance and impact, and institutionalize USDA's commitment to local and regional food systems
3. Stimulate national conversation on local/regional food systems through the use of surrogates, amplifiers, ambassadors and thought leaders.
4. Promote the variety of opportunities and benefits local and regional food systems offer for farmers of all sizes
5. Meet Congressional reporting deadline and demonstrate that all activities relating to KYF initiative occur within existing Congressional authority
6. Collect additional data from the field about local and regional food system development (could be stories, testimonials, data)



7. Demonstrate need for additional field based data on local and regional food system development and collect that data (via Census, testimonials, USDA field representatives, etc)

### **Communications Strategy**

To leverage the best outcome and impact around the release of the KYF report, a multi-element communications approach is recommended. The communications strategy will be comprised of both a national push and a long-term local effort. The strategy includes:

Traditional Press/media

Community, Stakeholder, and advocacy group outreach and engagement

Social and interactive media

Internal communications and training for USDA

Using surrogates to amplify and appropriate KYF concepts into their own channels

Events

The communications plan will have a top line national component to set the tone and proffer the top line messages. The top line messaging will also include outreach to stakeholders who have previously shown support for this issue.

A complimentary plan will echo these themes with emphasis on specific targeted audiences by leveraging identified surrogates and stakeholders. Each targeted audience will be reached via strategic surrogates, stakeholders, press outlets and other vehicles with the intent to ultimately reach consumers via these channels. The targeted audiences are:

- Farmers/ranchers and infrastructure businesses (including packers, distributors, etc) who might be inclined to participating in local food systems, but are either new to the concept or just recently exploring the opportunity
- Local economic developers, state/local officials who reaped the economic benefits of regional food systems/direct marketing in their communities.
- Wholesale buyers like food retailers (i.e. grocery stores, farmers markets, etc) and institutional buyers (schools, hospitals, etc) to directly communicate with local shoppers and consumers to demonstrate how local food systems are good for business and local economies. Note: this audience is key for reaching consumers especially at point-of-sale opportunities.
- Students (high school – college) who are interested in F2I and potential careers in agriculture and/or community economic development.

A dedicated outreach plan is in development to educate USDA field staff who can integrate KYF concepts into the community based services they offer.

### **National Press**

Targets for press:

National papers: AP (Steve Karnowski), McClatchy, USAToday, WSJ (Scott Killman), NYTimes (Willy Neuman), Reuters etc

Magazine:

Parade, Bloomberg Businessweek, Fast Company and other business journals, Economist, Time

Radio:

NPR (April Fulton), NPR Market Place, CBS Radio

New Media/Online Outlets:

Huffington Post, AOL News, The Daily, Mashable, TechCrunch

Key editorial placements:

McClatchy News Service, St. Louis, Charlotte Observer, LA, Orlando, Denver Post, Pittsburgh, Michigan, etc

TV

Newsmagazines: CBS Sunday Morning, CBS Morning (with Charlie Rose)

Daytime: The Chew, Rachel Ray and other food network shows

Press Club Roundtable with national media partner focusing on economic impacts of local and regional food systems (Bloomberg Business Week) [March event?]

### **COMMUNITY/ADVOCACY GROUPS**

Target groups: civic orgs (i.e. county & state associations, mayors, community development orgs, etc); agricultural advocates (NSAC, PMA, NRA, etc etc); retailers and institutions (hospital/health groups, grocery chains and food retailers, schools,); economic developers (CDFIs, CDCs, economists, etc), National Conference of Mayors, National Associations of States, Counties, etc.

- Identify key surrogates in advocacy community to do opeds and other surrogacy etc

- Newsletter reachouts

- Key speaking opportunities

- Advocate briefings

- Field Events

- Other opportunities as appropriate

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

### Twitter

- Introduce #KYF2works hashtag to highlight success stories from Almanac and also community based impacts of local and regional food systems.
- Fast Facts – ongoing twitter push highlighting key facts and stories from the report
- Twitter chats about Almanac (either through existing frameworks like #agchat and #meatup, or as own vehicle)
- Create downloadable graphic for twitter avatar use
- Plan or Encourage TweetUps with Co-Ops, Markets, Farms, etc to stimulate use of our hashtag, awareness of the Almanac, etc.
- Meetup.com. Use platform to encourage organization of community based events which can be mappable and trackable.

### Blogs

- Blog post series on USDA and KYF blogs
  - Demonstrating Economic Impact and Benefits of local/regional food systems
  - Vignettes from the Almanac illustrating USDA's support and investments in local/regional food systems
  - "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food, Know Your USDA" on governance structure of KYF (emphasizing gov 2.0) and featuring USDA employees using KYF to make their work more efficient.

### Videos to be developed

- D/S Merrigan or Secretary Live Video and/or Twitter chat week of launch using "whiteboard" model

([www.usda.gov/live](http://www.usda.gov/live))

- Executive summary/introduction to Almanac
- Demo of how to use map
- "I am KYF" montage of photos and testimonials from the field (can be made from stills)

*\*Video and Streaming budget requirement TBD*

### Other

Distribute Stylized QR Code linking directly to Almanac and/or Map – provide to Farmers Markets, People's Garden participants, other program areas for quick navigation and promotion

Pursue partnerships with key social media groups to develop relevant products (i.e. Food and Tech connect hackathon for Infographic or App development? Foursquare – check in campaign? (*contract/payment requirements TBD*) Release API Library and promote to App developers, etc) [coordinating with Food&TechConnect]

Thematic content on “ERS Charts of Note” and other Agency based social media communications.

### **INTERNAL USDA COMMS**

A dedicated campaign to educate internal USDA staff, especially in the field, will be critical to institutionalizing USDA’s commitment to local and regional food. Efforts are already underway to develop training modules for USDA field staff on related issues where KYF messages could be incorporated. Examples of other internal USDA comms activities could include:

- Brief key USDA principals, including State Ag commissioners, State RD officers, Extension, FSA field officers, Under Secretaries, Deputy U/S, etc.
- All-staff email from Secretary announcing report, including one-pager with key resources and talking points
- Agency reach outs via internal communications outlets (newsletters, USDA connect, etc)
- Briefings at Ag Outlook
- internal “introduction to KYF” video and followup “training” videos by D/S or Secretary for all USDA employees, both in DC and the field

### **SURROGATE STABLE**

Surrogates will be key messengers for both state and national strategies. A major communication strategy is B2B where selected surrogates will be deployed to reach out to their own constituencies (i.e. have farmers talk to farmers, biz people communication with biz people, students reach students, etc). We also plan to use retailers to reach consumers (i.e. safeway shoppers, walmart shoppers, etc )

### **EVENTS**

- Key speaking opportunities (calendar being developed now)
- Have D/S and other USDA surrogates do field events (“KYF works” with having them work visit relevant USDA projects and showcase with local officials how local/regional food system investments have benefited jobs, the economy, etc. )

### **MATERIALS REQUIRED**

Here are some prep things that will be required:

- List of “fast facts” from report (100+ that could be used for talking points and twitter camapign)
- 2-Pagers on each top-line message
- Target audience and communiyt specific 2 pagers (i.e. each target audience as outlined above, Native American, Faith Based, African American, Hispanic, etc)

- Videos (intro to KYF, executive summary of report)
- FAQ
- Hot Topics Doc
- Tick-Tock
- Summary and TP from report that can be used for speeches, oped, posts, etc
- Map and relevant data set
- Id and prep key surrogates (including from field, inside USDA and advocacy)
- Meet/prebrief key stakeholders (both internal/external, blogger, reporters, etc)
- Media training as needed

## **State Opportunities**

Key events, opportunities, stakeholders, surrogates will be identified for these states

- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| • California     | • Michigan      |
| • Iowa           | • New Hampshire |
| • Missouri       | • Pennsylvania  |
| • Nevada         | • Colorado      |
| • North Carolina | • Florida       |
| • Ohio           | • Indiana       |
| • Virginia       | • Minnesota     |
| • New Mexico     |                 |

## **Appendix I: KYF Strategy Session - 3/27/13**

### **KYF Strategy Session – 3/27/13**

In attendance: Jill, Mark, Colleen, Jim, Stephen, Wendy, Elanor, Joani, Chris

#### **Key questions/issues to delve into with DS:**

##### **Emerging topic areas:**

- FSMA/food safety
- Farm safety net – credit and insurance issues
- Stewardship – starting subcommittee? How to get beyond high tunnels with NRCS?
- Process verification, labeling, other issues tied to AMS (and the role of this side of AMS in KYF)
- Agritourism

##### **Political/structural questions:**

- How to position KYF to maintain authority (and secure agency involvement)?
- Related – using reports to Secretary as a motivator for agencies, subcommittees
- Who is missing – tactics to secure participation from RMA, OES, OCR, FSIS, FSA (beyond Becca)
- Relationship with Strike Force – how to coordinate without conflating the two efforts
- Membership and operation of management team, succession planning

##### **Other issues:**

- Other federal representation on subcommittees?
- Secretary wants countable things – what does this look like and how do we track?

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#### **Action steps we can take immediately:**

##### **Task force:**

- Develop proposal to restructure task force meetings to create forum for brainstorming
- Include opportunity for Jim to update larger group on infrastructure issues
- Finalize job description for Task Force
- Develop phone/contact list

**Subcommittees:**

- Develop consistent asks of each subcommittee: each should [identify speakers for task force, ID infrastructure issues, ID research and data needs...]
- Ask Research and Data subcommittee to restart research tracking and reporting (both in-house and external); systematic (monthly?) report to share with the Task Force?
- Reach out to Aaron – help with FSIS representation on F2I and meat/poultry subcommittees?

**Other actions:**

- Create a list/summary of other federal agencies and programs – for use on our grants and loans site and to disseminate to the federal list and task force
- Reach out to OAO to figure out what ever happened to Poppy's materials
- Explore opportunity to develop search engine for website (I am XX recipient looking for YYY resource)

**Notes from Strategy Session****KYF Overall (Elanor)**

Mission areas involved: OSEC, MRP, RD, REE

Agencies with strong/effective participation: AMS, ARS (and NAL), ERS, FNS, Forest Service, NIFA, RD, NRCS, NASS, OCIO, FSA (though without Becca Shively, this would not be the case).

Agencies with weaker/less effective participation: RMA, FSIS, GIPSA, APHIS, FAS, OC, OCR, OBPA, OES.

- Reasons for this vary from needing more participation (RMA, FSIS) to the link with the agency's mission simply not being that strong (GIPSA, APHIS), to our perhaps not fully utilizing the people we have participating (OBPA).
- May not need OCR officially on task force but need more involvement from them
- Would like OES participation – routing inquiries, understanding who can get what done in each agency, etc.

**Accomplishments** (on issues ID'd at retreat):

- Restarting subcommittees, more structure
- Field outreach and involvement of field generally (in progress)
- Phone accessibility
- More involvement of task force in the work - through subcommittees

**How was this achieved?**

- Management team leading many of these issues
- Identifying strong leads for subcommittees that could run with the work

- DS as sounding board and guide

#### **Issues ID'd at retreat that are ongoing:**

- Subcommittee leadership and membership still needs work in some cases
- Job description (part of this is done)
- More field involvement (field outreach subcommittee exploring this)
- New member orientation (maybe part of description of initiative)
- Phone/contact list
- Monthly memos (need to transition; will continue to Elanor; need to discuss how they'll be used)
- Networking lunches

#### **New/Emerging Issues**

- Could we invite other federal reps? Extension? Academics? How open can meetings be?
- How to incubate new ideas? Restructure task force meetings to generate ideas – creating space for open forum? How to use listserv better? Identifying opportunities for collaborative efforts/projects? How to cultivate more conversation across the group.
- Making management team more transparent
- Rapid-fire space for new ideas at meetings to bring voice to new ideas
- Subcommittees are more about executing ideas rather than generating....

#### **Research and Data (Jill)**

Good agency representation, with exception of RD and FNCS/CNPP. Leadership is ERS and AMS. Is working ok.

#### **Accomplishments:**

- Data committee looked at how local/regional was being asked about – NASS and ARMS survey
- Bibliographies (was a big task... not high demand to do more, though)
- Developing research agenda – what is happening and where are the gaps (in progress; led by Mary A.)
  - Looking at gaps of what exists – not necessarily synthesizing results.

#### **Ongoing/new and emerging issues:**

- Keeping track of in-house projects and cross-reviewing pubs and projects (this used to be a task of the subcommittee, but not recently – need to restart)
- Sharing of evaluation protocols, how to systematically pull outcomes [this was raised by federal group]. Could this be done through CoP?



- Watching NIFA projects, Beltsville project, other USDA-funded research projects and CoP to pull out useful info, projects and findings [CDC model]—could this be an effort of extension
- Need topics and issues input from other subcommittees
- Joani notes that everyone wants economic data; projects indicate that economics is not the only metric. Is there support for specific ask to ERS or somewhere else about economics? Is this better via CoP or the group pulled together by Mary A. and Jeff from UCS? At the very least, could incorporate economic studies into subcommittee task to track external research (though would be useful to have them evaluate the efficacy of the studies too...)
- Stephen: using map to help inform policy issues - Can we start to understand and collect “boundaries” of specific studies to see where work is and impact is?

### **Infrastructure (Jim)**

There isn't a dedicated infrastructure subcommittee. There is institutionalization of some of the issues in-house to agencies (i.e. wholesale and food hubs at AMS). Work has been premised on Jim's personal relationships across department. Makes responsibility at individual level and not through agency. (i.e. Andy, Chad, F2S) Do we need to formalize this communication process?

Hasn't had experienced significant roadblocks. All interactions beyond AMS has been as needed; within AMS, super supportive.

### **Ongoing issues & accomplishments:**

- Surveying facility capacity on food hubs, space availability at wholesale markets
- Philly wholesale pilot project to assess local products in the stream
- Networking with different distribution networks, i.e. Transportation event in WI
- Looking at economic impact of food hubs in NY. How to evaluate economic impact is an ongoing question.
- Group GAP work on FV with Wallace

### **Wish list:**

- Better understanding of economic impacts of big wholesale markets
- Online directory of wholesale market capacity

### **Gaps:**

- Processing, packaging and value-added elements are largely missing from the current work.
- FNS resources for foodservice handling?

- How to make infrastructure part of all subcommittee discussions? Is it being integrated, given that it's one of biggest issues across KYF? Deliberate identification of infrastructure challenges. Jim to do updates to Task Force meetings?

### **F2I (Mark)**

Beyond F2S – now independent. F2H emerging “vast rich frontier.” How to converge F2S and F2H as stronger and better partners? How to create capacity? Committee has met twice. Broad attendance across 2 meetings.

Representation: FNS, AMS, ERS, RD, Cara McCarthy (RMA) called in once, nobody from FSIS

#### **Ongoing/emerging issues:**

- Farm to preschool is happening (Traci Mouw); is in RFA for F2S. Will probably scale up.
- Research and eval – F2S census will be big for data. (Will this be carried by research and data subcommittee?)
- What research and eval can USDA do around F2H model?
- Potential for cross-Fed representation: call coming up with VA and VA hospitals, farmers markets and cafeteria; HUD possibility (Karen Safer connection); could use CDC representation
- Where and how F2S should report out within subcommittee structure?
- Who will lead it? Mark is default, but will be difficult to maintain. There is talent, but not clear leadership
- Mark will summarize F2H presentation for listserv to cultivate capacity
- Interaction with access subcommittee. Joani: F2I has support at mission area level and in OSEC
- F2H doesn't really have natural home
- RD seems most logical – so much work through CF and other programs to develop rural hospitals, but no F2H connection to date

### **Waste Management (Colleen)**

Led by Matt Smith, ARS; participation from REE, NAL, F2S team (Laura Brown not as regular), GIPSA (Jennifer Hill has personal interest, not necessarily strong connection to agency work).

- Have called on RD and SARE as needed
- APHIS - Shannon Hamm has been responsive
- Sustainable development council is taking on waste management across department – don't want to duplicate, so need to clarify relationship.
- Desire to source and sync mapping of organic waste

- Waste aggregation?
- Connection to biofuels

#### **Accomplishments:**

- ID'd task force speakers
- ID'd how USDA programs have helped/relate to this issue

#### **Ongoing/new issues and Gaps:**

- For this subcommittee and others, would be good to compile a list of projects that could be intern projects over the summer and then put out call to Task Force to pair interns with projects
- Colleen is leaving; give Stephanie Ritchie more authority to partner with Matt

#### **Meat and Poultry (Elanor)**

Co chaired by Atiya (FSIS) and Elanor, but Atiya is not super engaged. Needs another strong leader. APHIS is regular and engaged; AMS from Livestock, Poultry and Seed (too many people coming, don't want subcom to move too far in their direction) and Jim; F2S; GIPSA; Colleen; Andy, RD

Need more FSIS representation (talk to Aaron). NIFA? ERS (someone who did local meat report) - Rachel Johnson, Ken Matthews? ARS?

#### **Accomplishments:**

- Interstate meat implementation (due to DS involvement)
- Economic viability for slaughter capability – ERS, thru external contract with NMPAN
- School sourcing – local meat will be topic in FNS F2S procurement guide
- Backyard birds – APHIS and SARE met to share resources.
- Cross-agency publicity around Bird health awareness week

#### **Ongoing/emerging issues:**

- Research on backyard birds, avian flu
- Financial viability of different models – how can we solicit info from grantees?
- Internal memo on resources and tools from each agency
- Integration of crops and livestock in relation to food safety
- Jim: how can USDA play a role in labeling/verification to add value to local claims? Labeling/process verified is a complicated issue – will need to think through this more.

#### **Other things to consider:**

- FSIS and how to engage Aaron to raise issues at agency level
- Using CoP/NMPAN
- Working with OTR on native meats – bison, etc

- How to best engage AMS livestock and seed folk productively. Using Joani and Sara E. as conduit
- Deficit of Certified organic and local producers and related infrastructure
- Food safety in general as emerging issue

### **Federal Agency Outreach (Wendy/Chris)**

#### **Accomplishments:**

- Federal engagement in Compass (data gathering)
- Feb 14 Federal stakeholder meeting
- Regional examples – Memphis model
- Treasury – for CDFI – put out a call for reviewers through the group list

#### **Ongoing/emerging issues:**

- What to do with Feb 14 meeting – something concrete for next steps
  - Another meeting
  - Listserv (need to find host – AMS or NIFA?)
  - Field trip in DC – some way to keep them engaged – cultivate communications
- How to engage with our structure
  - Get other Federal reps on subcommittees
  - Also get subcommittees more information on other Federal reps
  - Bring subcommittee chairs into next meeting so it's not seen as only something happening through the management team
- Creation of a brief on other fed agencies resources and programs
- Sharing Metrics and Evaluation
- Possible point of contact for each Fed Agency? (Joani: recognizing that there are already higher-level contacts for WH place-based conversations – don't want to represent our contacts as the official reps for the agency/department on these issues)
- Stephen: Use table of admin guidance/goals

### **Beginning Farmer and Rancher (Jim)**

Beginning farmer and rancher working group is separate from KYF but lots of overlap. Group agrees this does not need to change – no need for official KYF subcommittee.

Participation – Stephanie and Jori from ARS/NAL, Erica Luna are key (internal). There is also a wider participation in working group (Gary Matteson, Larry Leverentz, Etc.)

Elanor and Jim on committee to select nominees for BFR Advisory committee (external). OAO as PoC.

**Ongoing/emerging issues and gaps/needs:**

- Have internal and external advisory committee to develop ideas, recommendations and priorities
- Group agrees that existing structure is ok – we don't need a KYF subcommittee. But Jim is only temporary lead for the working group. OAO lead? Will there be a Poppy rehire? Not looking good.
- NSAC priorities (Sec via Lisa Bertelson) are an opportunity to move specific goals forward across the department
- What is the best approach to serving this issue within KYF? Having BFR as an issue across all subcommittees, like research? How to ensure that the BFR working group gives proper attention to local/regional (Jim thinks this is happening – significant overlap in membership). How to feed it back to TF?
- What ever happened to Poppy's materials?

**Healthy Food Access (Joani/Wendy)**

Weekly meeting w/ Wendy, Sara Eckhouse, Monica, Norah, Elanor, Joani – broader than just KYF, but significant overlap.

**Accomplishments:**

- Ongoing case studies and blog posts
- Development of common language for comms
- AMS/FNS coordination on farmers markets/EBT

**Ongoing/emerging issues:**

- Engage with Strike Force and OTR
- Clip service on healthy food access
- Case studies and blog
- Guest speakers for TF
- ID'ing specific projects – i.e. native foods guide
- Expanding recruitment to Jim, Jimmy Ngyuen, Alyn, Lorraine Butler, Brooke, Chad Parker, Traci Mouw, Laura Griffin (?), Johaida (Strike Force), OTR, F2S, ERS
- Link work with HFFI group

**Field Outreach (Elanor)**

Good leadership and participation. Have reps from RD, NRCS, FSA, ARS, NIFA, REE, Forest Service – both in HQ and field.

**Accomplishments:**

- Developed work plan, met with and cleared plan with DS (this was a good motivator and lent structure to our work – how to replicate without her here? Develop plans to include in reports to Secretary?)
- Webinars are in the works for the field

- Work plan – tools, administrator letters, webinars

#### **Ongoing/emerging issues:**

- How to create formal structure for field involvement based on existing structures (e.g. FAC) or new ones (e.g. POCs for each state for KYF)?
- How to leverage Administrators more, especially in absence of DS?
- Leveraging Sec's 4 pillar message
- How to interact w Strike Force and other initiatives so field doesn't feel overwhelmed, but still retain KYF's unique positioning (not equated with Strike Force)

#### **Stewardship/Colleen**

No formal subcommittee, but group agrees that one should be created  
NRCS obvious lead, but who? (Katie Cerretani is already very involved with Field Outreach). Forest Service, FSA, NIFA, AMS?

#### **Ongoing/emerging issues:**

- Other practices beyond high tunnels that could be relevant
- How to help USDA be more inclusive of hunting, fishing, foraging, etc. (especially in relation to OTR). Connection with Forest Service as well.
  - On website, going beyond farmer to include fishers, hunters, etc.
- Role of energy in LRFS and implications
- Urban ag and vertical farming
- Land use and easements (Connection to BFR)
- Connection to dialogue taking place between NRCS and NOP

#### **Other issues (All):**

- Food safety/FSMA – this is massive and we have not thought enough about how it will impact many aspects of our work (and how we can prepare/mitigate)
- Farm safety net: Credit and insurance – how are FSA/RMA evaluating economic viability of diversified farms and/or those using CSA and other unconventional models?
- Agritourism – connecting people to landscape and crossover to other ag. Topic for interagency group? There is a lot going on in other departments vis. Agritourism (farm trails, etc.)
- Revise/reissue agency memos
- Membership and operation of management team, succession planning
- Discussion about local zoning? Innovative ways that zoning is being used? (Urban ag)

- If core objective is making resources more available – potential to develop a search system on KYF website (or USDA website)? I am an XXX recipient looking for YYY type of resource...

## Appendix J: KYF2 Objectives - 4/16/13

### KYF2 Objectives [Detailed version – Draft – Not for Circulation]:

1. **Enhance USDA Service. Within our authorities, improve programs, policies and resources to serve constituents in local and regional food systems.**
  - a. *Strengthen the connection between local/regional food systems and stewardship*
    - i. Make high tunnel practice standard permanent (NRCS)
    - ii. Develop add'l EQIP practices related to local/regional food systems (NRCS)
    - iii. Encourage NRCS and AMS coordination on co-management of conservation and food safety in anticipation of FSMA; develop guidance on co-management to be incorporated into GAP audits (NRCS, AMS)
    - iv. Explore opportunities to support local/regional food businesses through REAP and other energy efficiency programs (RD)
    - v. Enhance understanding of (and use of) land conservation programs for food production near population centers (NRCS)
    - vi. Make connection between KYF and fishing, foraging, hunting, gathering communities (OTR, USFS and federal partners)
  - b. *Develop new tools to help producers access institutional and retail markets*
    - i. Develop marketing guide for producers to sell to institutional food service buyers (AMS, coordinated with FNS procurement guide) and increase tech assistance to producers interested in institutional sales (Extension, eXtension working with agencies)
    - ii. Develop tools to support buyers, including institutions, sourcing local food; customize tools for different audiences (FNS, AMS, RD)
    - iii. Improve utilization of RD Community Facilities loans for farm to institution – both direct (e.g. financing cold storage) and indirect (e.g. encouraging hospitals to participate in F2H)
    - iv. Seed Farm to Pre-K across FNS programs (FNS)
    - v. Prioritize funding and TA to help supply chain players adjust to FSMA – e.g. USDA group GAP pilot projects (AMS, others)
  - c. *Strengthen local and regional food infrastructure*
    - i. Identify ways to utilize existing infrastructure (e.g. terminal markets) for local/regional (AMS)
    - ii. Support the development of food hubs, local/regional processing facilities and distribution networks (RD, AMS)
    - iii. Support hybrid food bank/food hub models (RD, AMS)
    - iv. Intergrate transportation into the discussion
  - d. *Improve our service to local/regional meat and poultry supply chain players*
    - i. Continue implementation of interstate meat agreements (FSIS)
    - ii. Ensure FSIS small plant help desk is fully staffed



- iii. Conduct economic analysis of FSIS fee structure and impact on smaller-scale plants (FSIS)
    - iv. Conduct impact analysis of new rules and regs on plants of different sizes (FSIS)
    - v. Support meat infrastructure through RD programs such as B&I, REAP (RD)
  - e. *Strengthen the insurance safety net for local/regional producers*
    - i. NAP reform (FSA) – begin rulemaking now
    - ii. New whole farm product (RMA) – begin stakeholder consultation now
  - f. *Develop tools to fairly assess credit worthiness of local and regional food producers*
    - i. Develop centralized inventory of assessment tools for nontraditional farm businesses (RMA, NIFA RME program)
    - ii. Identify states successfully lending to local producers; share info and train on assessments (FSA)
  - g. *Ramp up our support for beginning farmers and ranchers*
    - i. Designate permanent head for BFR working group and publish their tools (OAO)
    - ii. Explore options to better support BFRs through RD programs such as VAPG, IRP and RDLG (and explore IRP and RDLG for local/regional connection beyond BFRs)
    - iii. Strengthen coordination between KYF2 and Start2Farm
  - h. *Utilize local/regional food systems as a tool to expand healthy food access*
    - i. Coordination on EBT at farmers markets (AMS, FNS)
  - i. *Clarify USDA strategy on urban agriculture*
    - i. Concisely identify programs where fund can be obtained for urban work
    - ii. Clearly explain existing impediments (regs and \$) which prevent more robust urban investment.
    - iii. Craft a Rural Urban Connections food strategy
    - iv. Engage US Council of Mayors
  - j. *Develop strategy on food safety*
    - i. Explore potential impacts of FSMA on local/regional producers and supply chains; develop work plan
2. **Communicate. Broaden and diversify program participation and utilization through effective external communication.**
- a. *Update and maintain communications plan*
  - b. *Upgrade website*
    - i. Transition Compass to web platform
    - ii. Ensure funding for regular (2x year) updates to Compass map
    - iii. Develop a mobile app for the Compass
    - iv. Update Compass text and case studies quarterly

- v. Expand reach of Compass to all food producers (including fishers, ranchers, hunters, agroforesters, and foragers)
- c. *Coordinate with mission areas and agencies/offices to highlight local/regional and KYF resources*
  - i. Update and re-issue mission area memos
  - ii. Highlight KYF2 on U/S and DUS travel
  - iii. Prioritize college/youth engagement, both with LGUs and beyond (high schools, public universities, community colleges)
  - iv. Work local/regional into agency comms plans
  - v. Coordinate with Strike Force and the Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships to disseminate KYF2 tools and resources to their constituencies while clearly communicating distinctions between the initiatives
- d. *Disseminate KYF tools to HQ, state, regional, field offices and eXtension, and Extension (at lgus and county offices)*
  - i. On a quarterly basis, circulate updated slides and talking points to all TF members and communications shops along with instructions on using the Compass
- e. *Develop webinar series for external stakeholders (partner with Wallace Center, extension)*

**3. Understand. Contribute to the knowledge base to drive our and others' innovation and effectiveness.**

- a. *Assess the state of the research base*
  - i. *Develop external document on the state of the research base, flowing from Research and Data subcommittee assessment (Research and data subcommittee), and provide recommendations to NIFA grant program leaders, NIFA/ARS/ERS administrators, and REE leadership*
- b. *Periodically reassess the scope/frame of KYF and engage stakeholders:*
  - i. Are we including the right people/organizations?
  - ii. Are we highlighting the right case studies and stories?
  - iii. Do we have the right subcommittees?
  - iv. Are we addressing the key challenges?
- c. *Gather data to inform understanding of food system characteristics*
  - i. Conduct Census follow-on survey on direct and intermediated marketing (NASS)
  - ii. Conduct ARMS for local/regional? (ERS/NASS)
- d. *Increase understanding of problems and challenges in local/regional*
  - i. Survey players in retail and distribution to ID challenges to meeting demand for local (AMS)
  - ii. Evaluate lessons learned from RD in financing infrastructure for local/regional (RD)
  - iii. Coordinate with NMPAN/eXtension local meat CoP to guide future funding and regulation on meat infrastructure (RD, FSIS)
  - iv. Develop plan to coordinate with local/regional CoP (NIFA)

- v. Expand understanding of relationship between local/regional and stewardship (i.e. special forest products permitting, waste management, energy use)
- e. *Strengthen publicly-funded research base on local/regional and which benefits local/regional food system actors*
  - i. Continue food systems focus within AFRI food security and small/midsized programs (NIFA)
  - ii. Build up BARC support for local and regional foods (ARS)
  - iii. With ARS and NIFA, highlight beneficial research for local/regional food systems (e.g. participatory plant breeding, on-farm research, food systems research,)
- f. *Increase understanding of economic and other impacts*
  - i. Conduct analysis of economic impacts of local food enterprises (ERS, AMS, others)
  - ii. Coordinate with economists' group on local food impact methods/models (ERS, AMS, others)
  - iii. Explore environmental and social indicators

#### **4. Integrate. Integrate and mainstream KYF's mission into USDA**

- a. *Integrate KYF2 into the USDA Strategic Plan*
- b. *Continue monthly memos and consolidate into reports to the Secretary*
- c. *Working with agency program leads, streamline data-gathering process for Compass map*
- d. *Continue field outreach education*
  - i. Roll out field outreach webinars to all field-based agencies
  - ii. Add KYF to cross-agency training module on AgLearn (including compass how-to)
  - iii. Work with NRCS to share info with their field employees on easements with OPAV & succession plans
  - iv. Work with FSA to identify offices working well with nontraditional businesses like CSAs and publicize to the field through webinar or other tools. Identify similar opportunities with other agencies to be highlighted through webinar case studies or on quarterly phone calls)
  - v. Coordinate efforts with Regional Innovation Team (currently staffed by RD) to explore KYF2 opportunities within regional community development strategies, etc....
- e. *Strengthen Extension/eXtension and LGU work on local/regional*
  - i. NIFA to lead effort to coordinate between Extension/eXtension and KYF with other federal and external partners
  - ii. Promote KYF2 among relevant LGU multi-state research committees (NIFA)
  - iii. Collaborate with faculty to use Compass in the classroom
- f.

#### **5. Partner. Coordinate across the federal government to better leverage federal and private partner resources**

- a. *Coordinate with federal partners*
  - i. Travel/speaking events

- ii. Resource and data sharing
- iii. Communications
- iv. Program/project evaluation methods
- v. Explore inter-agency funding effort around local/regional with HUD, EDA, etc.
- vi. Build out VA Farm to Hospital work (FNS, F2I subcommittee)
- vii. Establish bi-annual mtgs and possibly invite other fed staff to select Task Force mtgs.
- b. Leverage our own buying power*
  - i. Strengthen local purchasing at the cafeteria
  - ii. Explore opportunities with DoD Fresh and commodity procurement program
- c. Continue HFFI work*
- d. Participate as appropriate in White House place-based efforts*
  - i. Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2)
  - ii. Elevate specific activities with WH Rural Council
  - iii. Identify/nurture champions for KYF2 within White House
- e. Strengthen coordination with foundations*
  - i. E.g. Sustainable Ag Food System Funders Network
- f. Leverage partnerships to develop resources and tools*
  - i. E.g. work with Net Impact (business schools) on business plan trainings
- g. Assess private capital access opportunities via White House Impact Investing team*

**6. Monitor & Evaluate. Improve our ability to track, monitor and evaluate our progress**

- a. Track our programs and services, working through Task Force*
  - i. Dollars, projects
  - ii. Non-dollar services (TA, etc.)
- b. Track first-order impacts across agencies*
  - i. E.g. food hubs, beginning farmers trained, winter farmers markets
- c. Track broader trends*
  - i. Identify a set of external metrics to track, drawing on Ag Census, F2S Census, ERS atlases, etc.
- d. Explore opportunities to incentivize high performance*

## Appendix K: KYF2 Resource Alignment Decisions

### KYF2 Resource Alignment Decisions

Resource Alignment Options:	Sources of Funding: Value Proposition			
	Agencies	OCIO	DM	Appropriation
KYF2 Initiative	Centralized high visibility program data distribution and stakeholder feedback; create once, use many	Program spatial data stewardship, reuse and repurpose knowledge; social media integration	Proven solutions, alignment of staff function with line demand, reduced public data latency	Local economic growth, access, equity, and elimination of waste
Strengthening Services: Geospatial Center of Excellence Function	Asset lifecycle management, rapidly extend and expand value of solutions	Optimization of business analysis functions, enterprise data quality management, map innovations	Evidence-based decisions and analytic capabilities with mission data access	Common framework, performance analysis capacity
Virtual Library Technology Portal	Metadata standard, product registration, consolidated search, solution collaboration, product value measurement	Economies of scale on portal service, reduced risk, agility to meet new business requirements, shared services, cloud first, single internal source of truth	Integrated cross-functional tool and data, emergency response, real/personal property management, shared services, cloud first	Retirement of legacy technology, normalization of citizen solutions, shared services, cloud first
National Geospatial Platform (Federal)	Federal-wide, open data exchange, functional integration, reuse, transaction cost of search and acquire	Joint services, leverage, address generics, reduced platform cost, data valuation	USDA brand, process maturity	Central access, equity services, citizen participation, Single external source of truth

### Cost Factors: Phase II-III

- Application Development (C&A, design solution, construct web application service, test services, deploy) - \$65,000
- Cloud Hosting Services (server instance, configuration, testing, service delivery) - \$21,000
- Operations & Maintenance (data refresh, service patches, capacity/demand management, performance reporting, archive) - \$4,500
- Program Management (content development, monitoring, social network maintenance) - TBD
- Government and/or Contractor FTE (guidance, processes delivery, customer relations, capacity/competence building, governance) - TBD

## Appendix L: KYF2 Strategic Sustainability Decision Matrix

Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Sustainability Decision Matrix v1 (03052012)

Key Design Issues		Areas of Sustainability		
Topic	Definition	Operations Stability	Stakeholder Relationships	Innovative Solutions
<b>Structure</b>	Organization, roles, rules, relationships, etc.	<p>Standardize organization components to create stable, predictable structure that will communicate expectations, simplify complex tasks, and respond to environment.</p> <p><i>D1: Where and how to conduct Program Management?</i>  <i>D2: Who to participate and in what roles and authority?</i>  <i>D3: What policies, procedures, rules, and directives are needed?</i>  <i>D4: Who builds new technology modules and/or services?</i>  <i>D5: What and where is a quality framework needed to succeed?</i>  <i>D6: What performance measures and metrics provide insight?</i></p>	<p>Drive stakeholder product service excellence with coordinated, high touch for their expectations.</p> <p><i>D1: Where and how to interact with stakeholders?</i>  <i>D2: What information to maintain about stakeholders and behavior?</i>  <i>D3: When to conduct outreach?</i>  <i>D4: When and where to collect performance feedback?</i>  <i>D5: What kind of responsiveness is appropriate for which stakeholders?</i></p>	<p>Incentivize product and service creativity, novelty, and invention across all organization components and stakeholder segments.</p> <p><i>D1: How to stimulate diversity of ideas?</i>  <i>D2: Where to measure outputs and outcomes?</i>  <i>D3: What type of space needed for what types of people?</i>  <i>D4: Who codifies innovation?</i>  <i>D5: Who ensures, champions, and protects emerging ideas?</i>  <i>D6: What constitutes an adoptable innovation?</i></p>
<b>Process</b>	Workflows, activities, sequences, etc.	<p>Reliable and repeatable processes for conducting required and emerging tasks.</p> <p><i>D1: How are processes coordinated across enterprise?</i>  <i>D2: How to ensure visibility and traceability of transactions?</i>  <i>D3: How do agents and operators participate in decision-making?</i>  <i>D4: How are new/old processes codified and updated?</i></p>	<p>Ensuring stakeholder relationship building is embedded in both internal and external work.</p> <p><i>D1: How are experts in stakeholder business integrated into process decisions?</i>  <i>D2: How do stakeholders participate in processes?</i>  <i>D3: How will stakeholder value be identified and reported?</i>  <i>D4: How will stakeholder requirements be collected?</i></p>	<p>Continuous improvements in product and service deployment and delivery within a fluid, open setting.</p> <p><i>D1: How to conduct experiments and test new ideas?</i>  <i>D2: Where and how is talent brought in to support existing processes?</i>  <i>D3: How to facilitate learning across enterprise?</i></p>

### Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Sustainability Decision Matrix v1 (03052012)

<b>Content</b>	Spatial data, web narrative, email responses, etc.	Maintain controls over limited product variety and stakeholder segmentation. <i>D1: Where and how to manage data, information, and knowledge assets?</i> <i>D2: Where and how is content management executed with technology?</i> <i>D3: Where and when to measure content value and performance?</i>	Awareness of stakeholder content requirements, and content solutions necessary and sufficient to provide value. <i>D1: What are decision-making needs of stakeholders by segment?</i> <i>D2: How is voice of the stakeholder represented?</i> <i>D3: What level of detail is needed to share with stakeholder about solutions?</i> <i>D4: Where and when will stakeholder content requirements be codified?</i>	Deliberate management of the information value chain and lifecycle. <i>D1: What content offers the greatest contribution to sustainability?</i> <i>D2: What institutional content may be repurposed for new solutions?</i> <i>D3: Where is the most significant weakness in content management and/or content?</i>
<b>Beliefs</b>	Institutional values, norms, heuristics, etc.	Beliefs about operations contributing to sustainability. <i>D1: What do staff members believe about operations?</i> <i>D2: What and how to change negative beliefs and foster positive beliefs?</i> <i>D3: What steps are necessary and sufficient to encourage change in practices?</i> <i>D4: Where and how to ensure changes are maintained?</i>	Beliefs about stakeholders contributing to sustainability. <i>D1: What do stakeholders believe about products and services?</i> <i>D2: How do stakeholders use products and service to demonstrate their beliefs?</i> <i>D3: What would foster greater, immediate stakeholder adoption of solutions?</i> <i>D4: Who are the new stakeholder and how may their beliefs influence entire population?</i>	Beliefs about innovation contributing to sustainability. <i>D1: How has innovation been described, messaged, and incentivized in the past?</i> <i>D2: How do structures and experience influence innovative thinking and behavior?</i> <i>D3: Where and when may innovative thinking be nurtured?</i> <i>D4: Where may staff know they may improvise?</i>
<b>Resources</b>	Time, funding, capacity, competency, raw materials, etc.	Identify resources, minimize costs, and eliminate obstacles to transacting work. <i>D1: What is business model?</i> <i>D2: What is schedule of deliverables?</i> <i>D3: How much will it cost?</i> <i>D4: What and where are capabilities needed to execute?</i>	Provide product and service value to stakeholder at least cost to government. <i>D1: Where to multiply stakeholder value across segments?</i> <i>D2: How to contain stakeholder solutions cost?</i> <i>D3: Where may stakeholders contribute resources?</i>	Drive out cost with organic growth of emerging solutions. <i>D1: Where and how to develop innovation capability maturity?</i> <i>D2: What resources are needed for innovation is Design Issues?</i> <i>D3: How to leverage portfolio of enterprise solutions?</i>

## Appendix M: KYF2 Map Supports Administration Governance Goals

Table 1: KYF2 Map Supports Administration Governance Goals – Examples

Title	Codification (if any)	Issue Date	KYF2 Contribution (direct/indirect)	Sunset Date (if any)	URL Address
Developing Effective Place-Based Policies for the FY 2012 Budget	M-10-21	10 Jun 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps stimulate economic growth by extending program information (direct)</li> <li>Alignment of FY2012 Budget (direct)</li> <li>Breaks down federal program silos (indirect)</li> </ul>	None	<a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/memoranda_2010/m10-21.pdf">http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/memoranda_2010/m10-21.pdf</a>
25-Point Implementation Plan to Reform Federal IT Management	n/a	10 Dec 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exercises shift to “Cloud First” policy (direct)</li> <li>Consolidate commodity IT funding under the Agency CIO (direct)</li> <li>Uses a modular approach with usable functionality delivered every six months (direct)</li> </ul>	None	<a href="http://www.cio.gov/documents/25-point-implementation-plan-to-reform-federal%20it.pdf">http://www.cio.gov/documents/25-point-implementation-plan-to-reform-federal%20it.pdf</a>
Federal Information Technology Shared Services Strategy	n/a	2 May 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enables shared approach to IT geospatial service delivery (direct)</li> <li>Closes productivity gap by accelerating access to data assets (indirect)</li> </ul>	None	<a href="http://www.cio.gov/documents/Shared_Services_Strategy.pdf">http://www.cio.gov/documents/Shared_Services_Strategy.pdf</a>
Coordination of Geographic Information and Related Spatial Data Activities	OMB Circular A-16	10 Nov 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improves the coordination and use of spatial data (direct)</li> <li>Increases the effective and economical use and management of spatial data assets in the digital environment for the benefit of the government and the Nation (direct)</li> </ul>	None	<a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/memoranda/2011/m11-03.pdf">http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/memoranda/2011/m11-03.pdf</a>
Open Government Directive	M-10-06	8 Dec 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publishes government information online to create economic opportunity (direct)</li> <li>Improves the quality of government information through location-based views (direct)</li> <li>Creates and institutionalizes a culture of open government with data distribution innovation (indirect)</li> </ul>	None	<a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/memoranda_2010/m10-06.pdf">http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/memoranda_2010/m10-06.pdf</a>
Management of Federal Information Resources	OMB Circular A-130	28 Nov 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustains public disclosure of and right of access to government information essential to the operation of a democracy (direct)</li> <li>Creates opportunities to promote fundamental changes in agency structures, work processes, and</li> </ul>	None	<a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/Circulars_a130_a130trans4">http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/Circulars_a130_a130trans4</a>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ways of interacting with the public that improve the effectiveness and efficiency (indirect)</li> <li>Enables greater availability of government information in diverse media, including electronic formats, such as maps, and permits agencies and the public greater flexibility in using the information (direct)</li> <li>Expected public and private benefits derived from government information exceed the public and private costs of obtaining the information (direct)</li> </ul>			
Streamlining Service Delivery and Improving Customer Service	Executive Order 13571	27 Apr 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports deployment of the USDA Customer Service Plan in FNS Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) location-based benefits (direct)</li> <li>Improves the customer experience by adopting proven customer service best practices and coordinating across service channels online (indirect)</li> </ul>	None	<a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/04/27/executive-order-streamlining-service-delivery-and-improving-customer-ser">http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/04/27/executive-order-streamlining-service-delivery-and-improving-customer-ser</a>	
Accountable Government Initiative	Memorandum to SES Corps	14 Sept 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotes accountability and innovation through stakeholder participation in open government solution platform (direct)</li> <li>Closes IT gap because created as a new, efficient and economical "lightweight" cloud-delivery solution (direct)</li> </ul>	None	<a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/09/14/presidential-memorandum-accountable-government-initiative">http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/09/14/presidential-memorandum-accountable-government-initiative</a>	
Digital Government	Memorandum to Executive Departments	23 May 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver information in new ways that fully utilize the power and potential of mobile and web-based technologies (direct)</li> <li>Establish central online resources for outside developers (direct)</li> </ul>	None	<a href="http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/egov/digital-government/digital-government-strategy.pdf">http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/egov/digital-government/digital-government-strategy.pdf</a>	

## Appendix N: Coding (Example)

Initial Codes	Focused Codes
<b>Push Envelop:</b> Redirection, stamina on points, tossed in deep end, catalyzed growth, my space, forcibly thrown, against deadlines, time constraints, abundance of time, volume of time, lack of evidence, holistic, want to be smarter, naming the edge, pushed beyond limits, role conflicts, emerging tension, putting department in a space, staying in my lane, flipping frames, jumping into group, climbing, choreography, figuring out pace, conduit of information, permission to solve problem, imagination, trusted with content, behind the scenes, shifted conversation, reverse education, head nodding, persistence, getting over own ideas, present, not by sight, watch and learn, feeling out of control, old reactions, scared of others, cognitive separation, fatalism	Interpreting Dimensions of New Space  Finding Spatial Direction and Course  Shifting Between Frames
<b>Stuck Between:</b> Giving and taking back, naming committee, paradigms of work, mediating, compliments of perspective, compatibility, contemplation, position versus condition, alliances, favor, clarity, survival of ideals, life of own, turnover, disagreement, authority, liability, personalization, magnitude, confusion in situ, agreements, diplomacy, confidences, tensions, interpreting for others, separation	Determining Spatial Compatibility  Staying in Tension
<b>Shared Space:</b> Physical space, intellectual space, visual space, shared narratives, mashup spaces, new spaces, single portal, common room, agility, joint problem solving, storytelling, puzzle pieces, borders, chronos, part and wholes, appreciate in value, better together, transformative, momentum, shared ownership, presence, compliments, warriors, initiative, naïve, technology obstacles, map leverage, contrasts, obsolescence, communal areas, serendipity, values, structured meetings, technology failure, off-sites, tone setting, experimentation	Enabling Spatial Cohabitation
<b>Boundaries:</b> Early imprint, social structure, experiment in sharing responsibility, linking the what and where, first shot accuracy, intellectual	

<p>versus organization framework, created by movement or stalling, lack of uniformity, shared sense of job completion, fluid exchange, accommodation of volunteers, general boundaries, allowed permission to hold new perspective, data transgressed boundaries, boundary crossing fit, intentionally breaking barriers, predefined daily hurtles, goodness of, evident in body language, constraints on language, value conflicts, legacy paradigms, pervasive principle, smashups, elusiveness, tight patterns, early wins, play out reins, individual embodiment, splurging into new space agility, strategic ambiguity always morphing, dimensions, organically defined in context, relationship of goals to boundaries, mutual respect, not hard edges, cope expansion with success, relationships of boundaries to ownership, decentralized information, definition in working style, evolving in practice, feeling and accountability form boundaries, political ambiguity, trip wire boundaries, awareness, sixth sense, constant groping for, finding sideboards of debate, avoiding pitfalls, don't step into mess, not creating targets, ground swells, overlapping channels</p>	<p>Assigning Spatial Values</p> <p>Crossing Boundaries</p> <p>Identifying Spatial Disruptions</p>
<p><b>Patterns:</b> Formulating dialogues, reinterpreting in context, high tension, technology creates message, external critiques, process patterns, never a perfect outcome, proof points in nooks and crannies, institutionalism resistance, one way transaction, no single winning strategy, downside of transparency, creativity incubator, self-exposure, crowdsource failures, kitchen cabinet, guild-like participation, ignoring patterns, repeatable interactions, continuing to surprise with partner, voices silenced, get big or get out, testing pre-existing structures, bouncing off walls, work with boundaries, going around obstacles, self manifesting, postponement, adaptability, no focal point, ebb and flow, humor</p>	<p>Constructing Spatial Dialogues</p> <p>Conducting Spatial Innovations</p>

## Appendix O: Memos (Example)

Analytic Memo Summary	
Topic: Spatial References	Source: Data Themes
<p><b>Description:</b> Minimal structures enable actors to navigate spatial reference points in strategic context, obtain bearings, imagine possibilities, and act on information.</p>	<p><b>Puzzles:</b> The capacity to negotiate in space through objects is a critical skill in complex and frequently changing environments. Reference points allow us to understand relationships. Minimal structures offer something more than buoys but not quite like them. They are more like hull of a boat moving across current, between tides and unseen obstacles; using the natural movement of the sea to position the heading or course. In strategic management, these floating containers are highly agile, and resist capsize.</p>
<p><b>Link to Literature:</b> (Lynch, 1960)</p>	<p><b>Illustration:</b> Lynch describes sensory reference points as innate, vital abilities for “structuring and identifying the environment.” There are many kinds of cues used (shape, sound, motion...) and these are techniques of orientation, and “this organization is fundamental to the efficiency and to the very survival of free moving life.” He says that a distinctive and legible environment not only offers security but also “heightens the potential depth and intensity of human experience.” Further, the observer should play an active role in perceiving the world, and a creative part in developing an image of it through “selecting, organizing, and endowing with meaning” what they see... “while the image itself is being tested against the filtered perceptual input of a constant interacting process.” Lynch’s thesis is the process ensures the “mental picture gains identity and organization...” There are four formal types of image elements: path, landmark, edge, node, and district. (Lynch, 1960: 47)</p>

	<p>(Paths: network of habitual or potential lines of movement along which the observer customarily, occasionally, or potentially moves; most potent means by which the whole can be ordered</p> <p>Landmark: external points of reference which single out one element from a host of possibilities; distant or local;</p> <p>Edge: linear elements that act as boundaries between two phases, linear breaks in continuity; barriers, seams, joins</p> <p>Nodes: points that are strategic spots into which an observer can enter and which are the intensive foci to and from which he is traveling; junctions, breaks, crossings or convergences of paths moments of shift from one structure to another; or simple concentrations or condensations of use; cores</p> <p>District: them to large sections conceived of as having two dimensional extent, which the observer mentally enters inside a and which are recognized as having some common, identifying character. They are used for exterior reference if visible from the outside.</p>
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Analytic Memo Summary	
<b>Topic:</b> Thinking Surfaces	<b>Source:</b> Case Study Interview Coding
<p><b>Description:</b> Minimal structures promote emergence of spontaneous thinking surfaces and interpretive space in strategy practice.</p>	<p><b>Puzzles:</b> I recall the concept of using charettes when I facilitated Enterprise Architecture workshops. These were very efficient tools in practice, and enabled co-emergence in diverse settings. The revised proposition reminds me of the sense of creating or finding separate cognitive space in the conversation, and helping participants first feel it and then see it with real-time diagrams, which they were invited to elaborate in process. I think this is a similar statement; we have the inherent public capacity to tease out meaning because we can explore our selves in space together.</p>

	<p>Therefore strategy management may employ this same tool, but apparently not directly. It is unclear how or when a group, for instance, realizes it is collectively in a space, nor is it clear if individuals can be empowered to recognize the transition from a personal place of values toward a corporate space of intention.</p>
<p><b>Link to Literature:</b> (Liedtka, 2000)</p>	<p><b>Illustration:</b> Referencing Schon's idea of "reflection-in-action," Liedtka says "Design is most successful when it creates a virtual world, a learning laboratory, where mental experiments can be conducted..." where the situation talks back in local experiments, and reframes problem at hand. Liedtka acknowledges Arnheim's assertion that the image unfold in process leading to a topological shape, and she believes designs which are successful must embody both existing and new values simultaneously to be persuasive. One means of maintaining this communication link is to employ participative design "charettes" in practice, which stimulates the ongoing dialectic. The use of a design metaphor in strategic thinking "calls attention to the process of creating a purposeful space."</p>

## Appendix P: Interview Analysis (Example)

Developing Emergent Themes Matrix – Consolidated Interviews

Stephen Costello Lowe (2012)

### Example of Interview Data Analysis

#### Interview Data Analysis Process

I. Formative Ideas Derived from the Literature Review and Practice:	
<b>Formative Ideas:</b> I1: <b>Trust</b> contributes to improvisational strategy using minimal structures I2: <b>Pace</b> generates demand for minimal structures to improve strategy sense-making I3: <b>Conflicts</b> create opportunities for strategy improvisation with minimal structures I4: <b>Ambiguity</b> concerning strategy adoption demands an interpretive structure I5: <b>Spatial structures</b> are used to interpret strategy design in practice	<b>Spatial Constructs Represented in I5:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Margin Spaces – edge of envelope</li> <li>• Liminal Spaces – between worlds</li> <li>• Alternating Spaces – multiple uses</li> <li>• Alternative Spaces – bounded to use</li> <li>• Opening Space – emergence</li> <li>• Alternative Space – unbounded to use</li> </ul>

Verbatim interviewee responses were analyzed for evidence and relevancy of formative ideas in describing “minimal structures” in strategy management.

II. Interpretation of Interview Data		
Emergent Themes	Interview Question Responses – Original Transcript	Exploratory Comment
<i>“The researcher’s rational ideas or concepts lifted directly from interviewee question responses.”</i>	<i>“Interviewee responses to semi-structured interview question protocol where participants were asked to reflect on the meaning of their strategy design experience.”</i>	<i>“The researcher’s intuitive reflections about the interviewee response content and the interview experience.”</i>

Questions 1-10 were separately analyzed to provide distinctive view of phenomenon based on perspective of question.

Emergent Themes	Interview Question Responses – Original Transcript	Exploratory Comment
Redirection Stamina on points Tossed in deep end Catalyzed growth My Space Forcibly thrown	<b>5. How did you <i>push the envelope</i>, go to the edge of your capacity in this initiative?</b> (ML) This was not the primary thing I thought I would work: when I got here but pretty much right up my alley. Challenged my stamina at a number of points. Tossed into the deep end of the pool and forced to learn about other parts of the department, and this catalyzed my growth and knowledge about operations.	Direct line of sight with identities Effort to change expectations, or change values in course Where does skill and character truly demonstrate competence? Span of awareness Adaptation requires self awareness

## Appendix Q: Case Study Protocol

Step	Activity	KYF2 Case Study Content	Reason
<b>Getting Started</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of research question</li> <li>• Possibly a priori constructs</li> <li>• Neither theory nor hypotheses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial Research Questions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Q1: How are minimal structures <i>created</i> and <i>used</i> to frame strategy design problems?</li> <li>○ Q2: How do minimal structures <i>contribute</i> to strategy design coherence and sensemaking?</li> <li>○ Q3: Why may <i>reflexivity</i> play a role in improvisation with minimal structures?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A Priori Construct:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dilemma reconciling Deliberate and Emergent Strategy Design</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses efforts</li> <li>• Provides better grounding of construct measures</li> <li>• Retains theoretical flexibility</li> </ul>
<b>Selecting Cases</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specified population</li> <li>• Theoretical, not random, sampling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Organizations, teams, and individuals formulating strategy designs for new ventures</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Theoretical Sampling in case where access is available to delineate, validate, saturate, distinguish, clarify relationships, and identify variation in processes among these strategy design categories:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constrains extraneous variation and sharpens external validity</li> <li>• Focuses efforts on theoretically useful cases, that is, those that replicate or extend theory by filling conceptual categories</li> </ul>

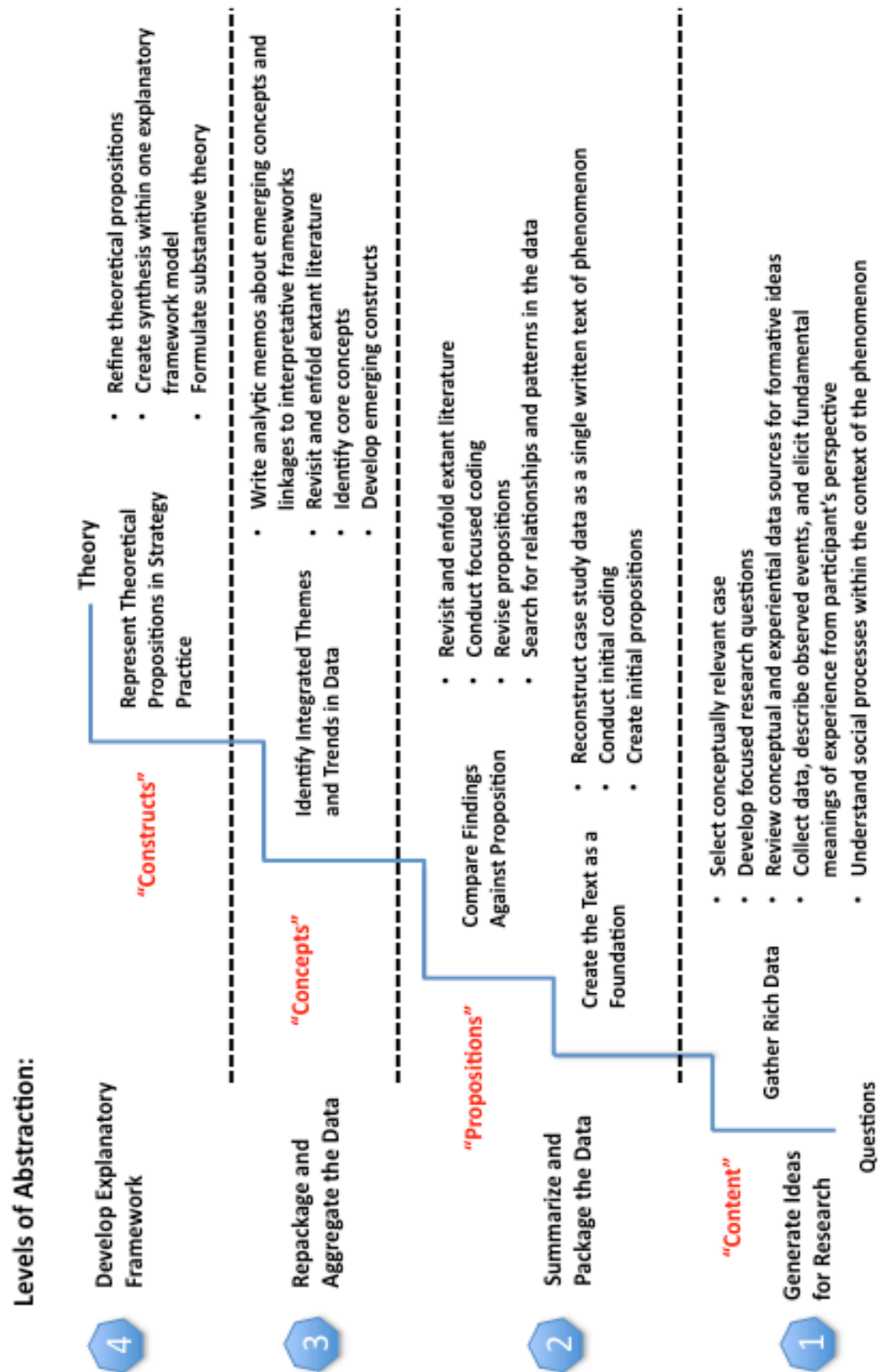


		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Trust</li> <li>○ Pace</li> <li>○ Conflict</li> <li>○ Ambiguity</li> <li>○ Spatial structures</li> </ul>	
<b>Crafting Instruments and Protocols</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple data collection methods</li> <li>• Qualitative and quantitative data combined</li> <li>• Multiple investigators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Collection Methods:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Semi-structured Interviews</li> <li>○ Participant Observations</li> <li>○ Archival Documents</li> <li>○ Email</li> <li>○ Electronic Artifacts</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Qual-Quant Data Combined: n/a</li> <li>• Multiple investigators: n/a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthens grounding of theory by triangulation of evidence</li> <li>• Synergistic view of evidence</li> <li>• Fosters divergent perspectives and strengthens grounding</li> </ul>
<b>Entering the Field</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overlap data collection and analysis, including field notes</li> <li>• Flexible and opportunistic data collection methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analytic Memos</li> <li>• Maintenance of personal “Idea Books” that record:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ongoing commentary</li> <li>○ Comparisons</li> <li>○ Anecdotes</li> <li>○ Informal observations</li> <li>○ Intuition</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speeds analyses and reveals helpful adjustments to data collection</li> <li>• Allows investigators to take advantage of emergent themes and unique case features</li> </ul>
<b>Analyzing data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within-case analysis</li> <li>• Cross-case pattern search using divergent techniques</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KYF2 case study write-up with detailed narrative and graphic displays</li> <li>• Selection of categories by coding, comparison, clustering, and process analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gains familiarity with data and preliminary theory generation</li> <li>• Forces investigators to look beyond initial impressions and see evidence through multiple lenses</li> </ul>
<b>Shaping Propositions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iterative tabulation of evidence for each construct</li> <li>• Replication, not sampling, logic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare emergence within case data</li> <li>• Formulating Concepts</li> <li>• Configure Constructs</li> <li>• Inductive iteration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharpens construct definition, validity, and measurability</li> <li>• Confirms, extends,</li> </ul>

	across cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search evidence for “why” behind relationships</li> </ul>	with data sources	and sharpens theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Builds internal validity</li> </ul>
<b>Enfolding Literature</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparison with conflicting literature</li> <li>• Comparison with similar literature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contrast and validate against theory</li> <li>• Identify cross disciplinary ideas for testing and elaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Builds internal validity, raises theoretical level, and sharpens construct definitions</li> <li>• Sharpens generalizability, improves construct definition, and raises theoretical level</li> </ul>
<b>Reaching Closure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theoretical saturation when possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhaustive search within and across case data for insights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ends process when marginal improvement becomes small</li> </ul>

Source Modified (Eisenhardt, 1989: 533)


## Appendix R: Inductive Theory-Building Framework



(Modified from Miles and Huberman, 1994:92, and Eisenhardt, 1989: 533)

Stephen Costello Lowe, 2012


## Appendix S: KYF2 Program Update Slide Deck (Example Slides)



*"Enabling Public Innovation and Service Excellence through Geographic Solutions."*

# US Department of Agriculture Know Your Food, Know Your Farmer Compass Map Decisions

Stephen Lowe  
Geospatial Information Officer  
Office of the Chief Information Officer  
US Department of Agriculture  
December 12, 2012





## KYF2 Business Drivers

- Public preference trends for locally grown foods
- Increased demand and consumption of local foods
- Changes in local producer models and capacity
- Challenges of old/new supply chain, logistics, infrastructure, etc.
- Economic obstacles for start-ups, switching products, switching market, etc.
- Knowledge gaps in use of technologies
- Establishing congruent USDA brand message




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## KYF2 Initiative Transition to Program

FY2012	FY2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate map data distribution innovation</li> <li>• Extend map with additional USDA agency data</li> <li>• Expand map to include other federal agency data</li> <li>• Establish repeatable data exchange with other federal agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consume and provision web map services</li> <li>• Manage web map services in virtual repository</li> <li>• Enhance map functions to offer common templates</li> <li>• Integrate social media with map to contextualize conversations from field</li> </ul>




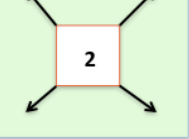
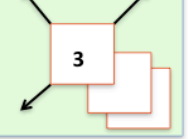
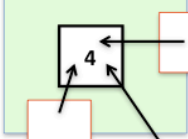
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## KYF Map User Experience Sequence

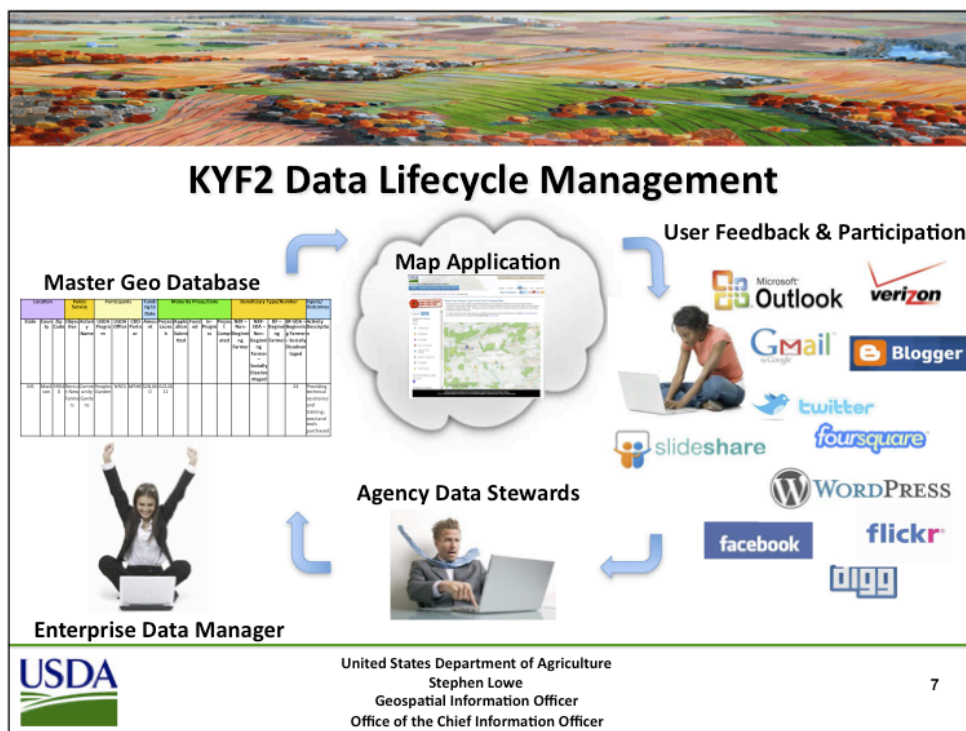
← Multiple Phases: One Storyline in Geospatial Presentation →

Static Map	Dynamic Map	Collaborative Map	Collective Map
			
February 2012	July 2012	October 2012	March 2013
Show info...	Search info...	Expand info...	Explore info...



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**Key Departmental Support Decisions**

- Formulate structures and processes for other federal agency and citizen **data exchange** supporting map refresh
- Determine scope of KYF2 **initiative transition** in FY2013 to allocate adequate resources (leadership, SME, funds, IT, etc.)
- Identify working capital **allocation** amount from recaptured of FY2012 \$6M for IT operations
- Accelerate **ASP approvals** of Geospatial Center of Excellence and/or Enterprise Geospatial Management Office as supporting structures for KYF2 program management
- Formalize Senior Agency Official for Geospatial Information (**SAOGI**) authority to oversee enterprise data

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## KYF2 FY2013 Budget

- **Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food**
  - Hosting Services for full year: \$65,000 (contract/working capital)
  - Web Application Development Phase IV and V: \$85,000 (contract)
  - Web Services creation: \$800 each layer (12) (contract)
  - Geo Database management/maintenance (internal/external): \$28,000 (working capital)
  - **Total: \$187,600 request**
  - (TOTAL APPROVED During CR \$90,048)**



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## Technical KYF2 Program Capability Changes

### Challenges:

- Web services react differently; must watch and test “live” in production
- Fragmented end-to-end visibility of and access to IT infrastructure
- Inability to reuse external cloud web services such as zip codes; firewalls
- Maturity of USDA internal data collection and geoprocessing
- No formal Departmental authorities and responsibilities for geospatial

### Risk Management:

- Create a mirror production testing environment to replicate behavior
- Establish single integrated hosting for entire IT lifecycle and assembly
- Change IT policies to consume external data through web services
- Publish enterprise policy to ensure agency capacity, increase maturity
- Formalize SAOGI role in GIO to align with best practices; agreements, standards, portfolio management, data.gov, digital strategy, etc.



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## Appendix T: Whitehouse Update Slide Deck




**Local is Hot!**

➤ Local food is a factor in grocery store choice for 83% of shoppers (National Grocers Association poll)

**Local is Big!**

➤ Retail agriculture (organic, direct-to-retail and locally-grown products combined) is 5<sup>th</sup>-largest commodity produced in the U.S. (Farm Bureau)


**Local is Healthy!**

➤ Philly, NYC success in obesity reduction due to “comprehensive strategy” including farmers markets, Farm to School (R.W. Johnson Foundation)

**Local is Jobs!**

➤ If Illinois’ demand for fresh produce were met with Illinois production = \$264 million increase in farm sales and 2,600 jobs (ISU regional study)

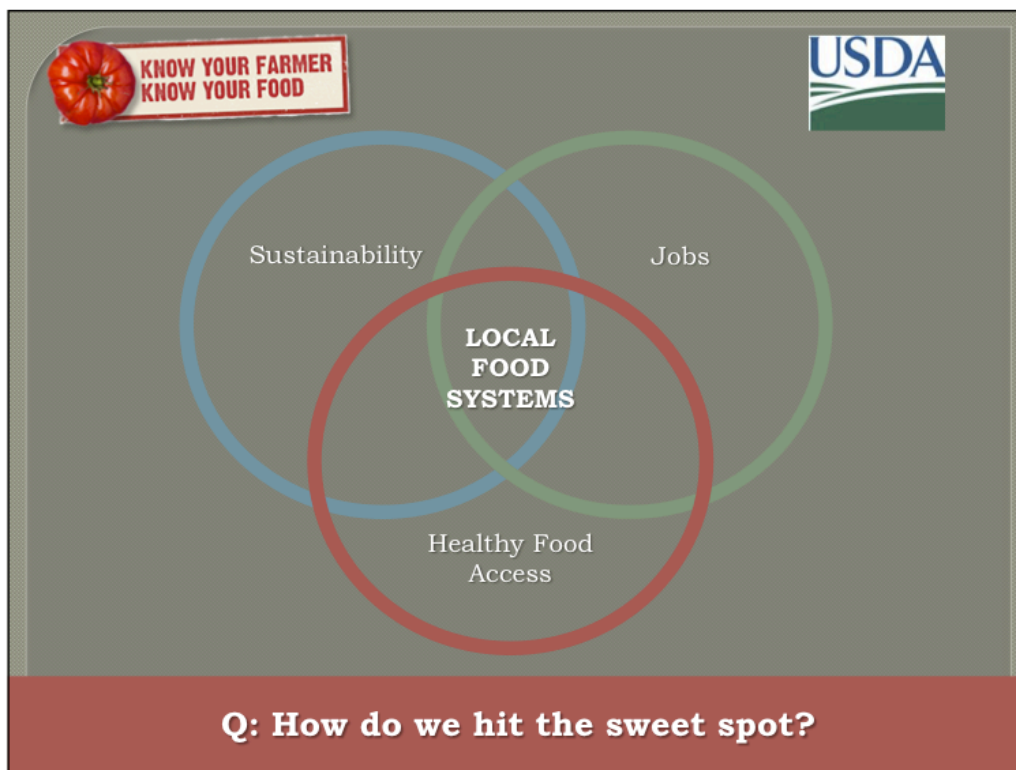
**Q: How do we utilize and facilitate the biggest food trend in decades to achieve our goals?**

Let's Move Agenda	Other Admin Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy Food Access</li> <li>• Fresh Food Capacity, esp. Fruits and Vegetables</li> <li>• School Food Improvements</li> <li>• Diet Change Through Farmer-Consumer Connections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small Business Development/Jobs</li> <li>• Family-Sized Farm Support</li> <li>• Beginning Farmer/Youth</li> <li>• Sustainability</li> </ul>

**Q: Where do local/regional food systems fit?**








## Sweet Spot Success Story: Grasshoppers Distribution








### Healthy Food Infrastructure

- Food hub established by farmers in 2007 in Louisville, KY
- Multi-farm community supported agriculture (CSA) enterprise
- Consumers receive weekly customized boxes of fresh produce, protein and value-added products
- Also serving 35 public elementary schools with 90%+ kids on free or reduced price lunch
- Works with over 75 local farmers & artisans in KY & southern IN
- 13 employees
- Over \$1.5 million of revenue to family farmers
- USDA support: VAPG (\$65k) and FMPP (\$71k)

### Innovative Farm to School Financing (2012)

- Grasshoppers aiming to become the go-to supplier for Jefferson County school system
- Wholesome Wave Foundation put in \$50k "vote of confidence" investment
- Spurred an additional \$350k total from
  - ✓ Kentucky Agricultural Development Board
  - ✓ Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corporation
  - ✓ A private investor

**Q: How do we replicate success?**



## KYF Strategy: An Initiative, Not a Program

### Structure:

- Uses existing programs and authorities
- Coordinated by cross-department Task Force; highlights 27 USDA grant and loan programs
- Institutionalizes through education & culture change
- Now coordinating with 9 other federal agencies; local/regional food cuts across sectors

### Communications:

- KYF *Compass* website and map showcase investments, facilitate gap analysis & networking
- 125,000 unique page views since March 1
- June Google+ event w/White House = 15,000 views

**Q: How do we infuse targeted dollars into an initiative that's dispersed across the Department?**

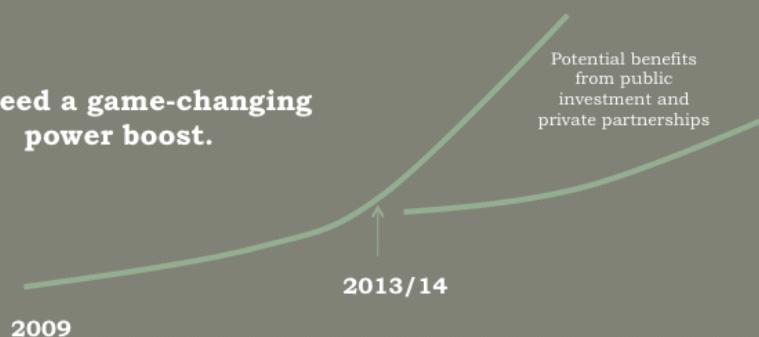


**KNOW YOUR FARMER  
KNOW YOUR FOOD**



## The Trajectory of our Impact

**We need a game-changing  
power boost.**



**Q: What would this look like?**



**KNOW YOUR FARMER  
KNOW YOUR FOOD**



## Expanding Healthy Food Access: It Takes a Food System







## How Do We Produce More Healthy Food?

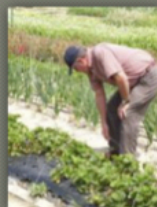
**Key lesson:** The farm population is aging, but young and beginning farmers are an opportunity to boost healthy food production.



➤ **Increase access** to farmland and credit for young and beginning farmers and returning veterans



➤ **Supercharge knowledge networks** to support local-food business viability and healthy food production and marketing – developed and disseminated through Land Grants/Extension and e-Xtension



➤ **Leverage USDA research facilities** to incubate beginning farmer businesses, providing training and innovative research on fresh-market and other healthy crops, and tap USDA expertise and university partners



## How Do We Overcome Infrastructure Barriers?

**Key Lesson:** We don't always need to build new infrastructure. Take underutilized assets and make them work better for local food systems.

### What is needed?



➤ **Capital Improvements** to renovate existing facilities for aggregation, storage, packing, processing/freezing, and distribution



➤ **Working Capital** for business management systems to coordinate supply chain logistics (e.g., grower-buyer transactions, aggregation, distribution, and marketing)



➤ **Enterprise Development Training** and technical assistance to increase grower capacity to meet buyer requirements (volume, quality, packaging, food safety, etc.)



## How Can We Use Local Foods to Expand Access?

**Key Lesson:** When kids know where food comes from, they're more excited about healthy eating.



➤ **Meet demand for Farm to School:** Increase funding for farm to school grant program. 1<sup>st</sup> year = 365 applications, totaling \$26.5 million in grant requests; awarded 68 projects at \$4.7 million.



➤ **Get kids early:** Expand scope of the farm to school grant program to include Farm to Pre-K.



➤ **Mainstream our success with direct marketing:** Target support for mobile markets, healthy corner stores, subsidized CSAs, Farm-to-Hospital and other innovative access strategies.

➤ **Tribal Health & Economic Development:** Farm/forest/fishery to schools and eldercare facilities; infrastructure and market development to take local, healthy foods to the next level in Indian Country.



## Expand Education & Marketing of Healthy Foods

**Key Lesson:** Healthy foods need a cheerleader.



➤ **Expand Food Corps:** Create a formal relationship between Cooperative Extension and Food Corps to expand healthy food education and student enthusiasm for healthy food in rural areas.

➤ **[Local Food Centers of Innovation:** Provide competitive funding for Cooperative Extension to develop local food incubators focused on scaling up healthy food access through technical assistance, market and enterprise development, buyer-grower convenings, and state and private partnerships.]

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## Accompanying Material

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

June 21, 2010

M-10-21

### MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: Peter R. Orszag, Office of Management and Budget  
Melody C. Barnes, Domestic Policy Council  
Derek Douglas, Domestic Policy Council and Office of Urban Affairs  
Lawrence Summers, National Economic Council

SUBJECT: Developing Effective Place-Based Policies for the FY 2012 Budget

This memo provides guidance on developing place-based policies for the President's FY 2012 Budget. Effective place-based policies can influence how rural and metropolitan areas develop, how well they function as places to live, work, operate a business, preserve heritage, and more. Such policies also leverage investments by focusing resources in targeted places and drawing on the compounding effect of cooperative effort. This Administration has made a priority of promoting such policies, and, last year, we issued a guidance memo laying out the principles and definitions underlying place-based policies and requesting agency proposals (see Appendix I).

For the FY 2012 Budget, the Administration aims to build on the encouraging progress made to date (see Appendix II). Our goal is to continue applying place-based principles to existing policies, potential reforms, and promising innovations, with a particular focus on strengthening *economic growth* and achieving greater *cost effectiveness*:

- **Economic growth.** Place-based policies should reflect the comparative advantages and needs of distinct regions across the Nation, both in mature and emergent economic sectors that operate in rural and metropolitan areas. Policies should help economically distressed cities and regions, for example, to transition from reliance on their anchor industry(ies) to an economic base that would spur productivity and growth in a sustainable economic trajectory.
- **Cost-effectiveness.** The American people deserve a government that spends taxpayer dollars as cost-effectively as possible. Especially in light of the fiscal challenge we face, we must eliminate unnecessary spending and focus federal resources on effectively addressing clear needs or problems. This is as true for place-based efforts as it is for other Federal spending.

#### I. More on Growth as a Priority

Economic growth should receive special focus in your FY 2012 Budget submissions. This priority is not meant to preclude agency submissions related to the Administration's other place-based priorities, i.e., environmental sustainability, community health and access to opportunity,