

NEXT-STAGE ORGANIZATIONS: A TRANSDISCIPLINARY CASE STUDY

A dissertation presented to  
the Faculty of Saybrook University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Organizational Systems

by

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Approval of the Dissertation

NEXT-STAGE ORGANIZATIONS: A TRANSDISCIPLINARY CASE STUDY

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Doctor of Philosophy in Organizational Systems

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## Abstract

## NEXT-STAGE ORGANIZATIONS: A TRANSDISCIPLINARY CASE STUDY

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This study provides a heretofore absent methodological foundation and method for researching Next-Stage Organizations and the correlation between adult and organizational development. The research question related to the effectiveness of the method in ascertaining how a Founder/CEO's development informs that of an organization. The larger context was the adaptive challenges of recognizing humanity's role in the unprecedented damage wreaked on planet Earth, focusing on organizations and leaders poised to influence policy and strategy and, consequently, individual and group development.

This qualitative study employed an embedded, multiple-case study design, recruiting 3 participants from the sample of CEO's in Laloux's (2014) *Reinventing Organizations*. Data were gathered from organizational websites, interviews with each participant, and sentence completion data from O'Fallon's STAGES assessment of each participant, and sorted and analyzed using a unique combination of Nicolescuian transdisciplinarity, integral methodological pluralism, Banathy's three lenses, and O'Fallon's STAGES theory.

The findings placed 2 participants and their associated organizations at 4.0, and one at 5.5, with the associated organization at 4.5. Pattern matching showed an alignment with

McCauley Drath, Palus, O'Connor, and Baker's (2006) propositions of adult development. Further analysis generated a case-inspired Next-Stage organizational profile using thematic codes. Organizational data showed similar distributions of scores and themes to the 3 participants, implying a direct relationship between the Founder/CEO development and systems of belief and those of the organization. Results further corroborated Laloux's (2014) assertion that his research is a composite representation of an organization operating at the 4.5 level. A graphic synthesis of Nicolescuian transdisciplinarity, Integral methodological pluralism, Banathy's 3 lenses, and Laloux's 3 breakthroughs is offered as a unique contribution of this research.

This study highlighted the importance of how postformal/postconventional individuals and organizations navigate the postnormal reality, VUCA conditions, and wicked problems of the Anthropocene. Answering these challenges implies a possible path of global collaboration with the potential to lead toward a regenerative planetary populace educated as symbiotic stewards of our planet (Wahl, 2006). Although this research marks a step toward identifying organizations on the cutting edge, much more research needs to be done to ensure the survival and collective evolution of our species.

## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated in loving memory to

Russell William Volckmann, II

February 21, 1936 – August 16, 2017

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

We are now living in postnormal times (Montuori, 2010; Sardar, 2010), when wicked problems (McGregor, 2014) and peak everything (Heinberg, 2010; Heinberg & Lerch, 2010) provide the current context of the Anthropocene. This is the first geological epoch of the planet where a single species has changed the environment on a global scale (O'Brien & Selboe, 2015a). It is imperative that leaders and organizations address these postnormal times and build collective capacity to navigate the VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous) landscape of the Anthropocene (Elkington, van der Steege, Glick-Smith, & Moss Breen, 2017).

To stave off an unmitigated calamity, modern humanity must learn to collaborate toward planetary sustainability; otherwise, the world as we know it is likely destined to collapse (Diamond, 2011). Perhaps the greatest threat can be summed up in the adaptive challenge to climate change (O'Brien & Selboe, 2015b); that is, the inability of most humans to understand their part of the responsibility for these challenges. Hence, this doctoral research focused on organizations and leaders positioned to influence policy and strategy and, consequently, individual and group development.

Accepting responsibility for Anthropocene problems such as climate change, peak resources, and environmental degradation is a challenge because these problems are incredibly complex. They are called wicked problems because (a) different stakeholders have different ideas about what the problem is (or if there is a problem), (b) the consequences of any attempts to address them are unpredictable because new problems are often created, and yet (c) something must be done. Furthermore, it cannot be assumed that a previously used solution will fix the situation, meaning solutions must be custom designed by a collection of people who do not normally work together (V. A. Brown, Harris, & Russell, 2010; McGregor, 2014).

The inability of humans to appreciate their inherent responsibility for these complex problems is especially significant given the failure of conventional educational and organizational structures (and leaders) to address the dangers, let alone recognize their own complicity in sustaining them. To address this issue, this study turned to developmental research, which is focused on the progressive changes that occur as an organism or organization develops (i.e., changes, becomes stronger, or more impressive, successful, advanced, or evolved). Especially germane to this issue is postformal developmental research, which is intended to address this sort of paradigm-level shift in complexity (Commons & Ross, 2008; McGregor, 2014).

In more detail, postformal thinking refers to the ability to engage in complex and sophisticated thinking and responding, far beyond the formal operation stage of human development (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1993). In the formal stage, people can think in absolutes, make decisions based on linear logic, do things systematically (i.e., rule out things and see relationships among them), and think about things they have not yet experienced (i.e., deal with hypotheticals; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1993). On the other hand, organizations founded from a postformal perspective would be less linear (less formal) and more complexity oriented (more postformal); that is, they would theoretically be more sensitive and adaptable to their potentially transformative role in business social ecosystems.

With this distinction in mind, this study strived to better understand postformal organizations and their leaders, recognizing the potential of the organization for social transformation and regeneration (Flaccavento, 2016; Sanford, 2017; Schwinn & Schwinn, 2015; Wahl, 2006). Because both organizations and their human leaders were involved, this investigation explored the efficacy of bringing together the two fields of organizational

development and adult development, respectively. Combining the two effectively necessitated the use of the Nicolescuian transdisciplinary methodology and integral framework, prompting the largely methodological focus and innovation of this study. It also led to a better understanding of what might be thought of as *imaginal* cells, the seeds of or precursors to a metamorphosis of global culture (Slater, 2008). Specifically, the founder/Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of organizations identified as potentially postformal were studied, focusing on the leaders' stage of adult development relative to the developmental stage of their organization. The assumption was that these allegedly more evolved leaders and organizations can play crucial roles in confronting the Anthropocene.

### **Background and Problem Statement**

As indicated in the Introduction, this study was anchored in the unmanageable complexity of wicked Anthropocene problems. On the global level, the current economic system is based on infinite growth while dependent on limited nonrenewable resources, which are now at or near peak levels (Heinberg & Lerch, 2010). In a compelling paradox, while the supplies (i.e., nonrenewable resources) are running low, demand is still increasing. This untenable situation is exacerbated because longstanding use of fossil fuels and other nonrenewable resources has fundamentally changed the global climate.

There is a consensus among scientists that “without additional mitigation efforts beyond those in place today, and even with adaptation, warming by the end of the 21st century will lead to high to very high risk of severe, widespread, and irreversible impacts globally” (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2014, p. 17). Most important, climate change affects sustainability efforts, which affects everyone and all organizations in some way. Yet, for much of the world, making sure that people can acquire safe housing, clean water, and nutritious

food means using more of the very resources that are being maxed out as the planet warms. From a postformal stance, this conundrum implies that organizations *must* tap into their evolutionary purpose (Laloux, 2014) as responsible, regenerative businesses (Sanford, 2011, 2017) to help transform the current economic model from an ego-system to an eco-system (Scharmer & Käufer, 2013).

Regarding climate change, on the personal level, people are just trying to survive. How can average persons concern themselves with the global climate effects of their consumption patterns when they are simply buying the available products and working existing jobs? Staving off a climatic catastrophe, any people and organizations offering sustainable solutions in ways that add value and meaning for all stakeholders are seen to be on the leading edge of economic and social transformation. Flaccavento (2016) argues that it is local initiatives, growing from the ground up, that will make the difference, harnessing local solutions and scaling up from there. Embracing a sustainable mindset, however, will involve cultural progress (both at large and within organizations). In fact, many solutions exist, they just need to be adopted at a global scale (Hawken, 2017).

Cultural progress in turn depends on developmental support, ideally postformal development (Commons & Goodheart, 2008). Postformal thought and, by implication, postformal organizations, “benefits interpersonal, societal, and academic endeavors by virtue of the kinds of tasks performed at each [developmental] stage” (Commons & Ross, 2008, p. 321). To that end, organizations are needed that are capable of contributing to social transformation by addressing the “systemically conditioned and socially constructed” nature of the wicked problems of the Anthropocene (O'Brien & Selboe, 2015b, Kindle Locations 10271–10272). For example, (a) deliberately developmental organizations address this issue by building adult

development into the operational structure and culture of the organization (Kegan, Lahey, Miller, Fleming, & Helsing, 2016); (b) teal organizations align themselves by the three pillars of self-management, wholeness, and evolutionary purpose (Laloux, 2014); (c) responsible businesses integrate regenerative practices for all stakeholders (Sanford, 2011); and (d) transformative workplaces focus on selfness, otherness, and/or wholeness to facilitate transformation of both humans and, ultimately, organizations and the world (Schwinn & Schwinn, 2015). These will be discussed more fully in Chapter 2.

Individuals and groups at later stages of development are thought to have both greater access to creativity and understanding leadership, which makes them better able to respond to the VUCA world we currently inhabit (Montuori & Donnelly, 2014). For example, leaders at later stages of human development are shown to be more effective at organizational sustainability change measures, appearing to (a) design from a deep inner foundation, (b) access non-rational ways of knowing, and (c) dialogue adaptively with various parts of the system (B. Brown, 2011). To illustrate, Warren Buffet's above average investment success for over 50 years has been partially attributed to continued, life-long stage development (Kelly, 2011). Rooke and Torbert's (1998) study showed later stage ego development to be a critical variable in complex organizational transformation. While such exciting inroads are being made, of concern to this research effort was the fact that the field of leadership studies and organizational development still largely lacks integration with that of adult development (McCauley, Drath, Palus, O'Conner, & Baker, 2006).

In addition to human development, stage development theory has been applied to group development (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Graves, 1981) and economic systems (Dawlabani, 2013; Scharmer & Käufer, 2013), not to mention the evolution of consciousness itself (Gebser, 1949).

But, *adult* stage development is largely absent from the literature about organizational development. The few exceptions include Torbert's (1976, 1987, 2019) descriptions of stages of organizational development, Barrett's (2002) model of corporate transformation, and the theoretical applications of spiral dynamics and integral theory (see Beck & Cowan, 1996; Cacioppe & Edwards, 2005; Edwards, 2010; Laloux, 2014; Wilber, 2001). Although Kegan, Lahey, Miller, Fleming, and Helsing's (2016) *Deliberately Developmental Organizations* approach addresses organizations in which adult development is paramount, they do not discuss what adult development would look like for organizations. This study aimed to address this research gap, appreciating that it necessitated treating the organization as a living entity capable of evolving through developmental stages when lead by a later stage founder/CEO.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of this research was to add to existing knowledge about the intersection of the fields of adult development and organizational development. Further, from a postformal perspective, the general intent of this study was to research organizations that have a greater sensitivity to the needs of all stakeholders, including the developmental movement of employees, as well as sensitivity to the environment (McCauley et al., 2006). Organizations that are sensitive to developmental issues are showing signs of gaining a competitive advantage through adding value to employees *and* communities as they offer value-adding, regenerative solutions (see Flaccavento, 2016; Kegan et al., 2016; Laloux, 2014; Sanford, 2017; Scharmer & Käufer, 2013; Schwinn & Schwinn, 2015). Although the existence of such an organization is as yet largely theoretical, an operational research method in this area would be very useful in identifying such organizations as well as providing a diagnostic tool for the stages of all organizations. Understanding these dynamics at an organizational level is a first step toward

transforming the entire system, which happens to be an existential imperative of the human species living in the Anthropocene.

The specific intent of this study was to provide a methodological foundation in order to be able to research Next-Stage Organizations and their founder/CEOs, and in doing so, to explore any correlation between the leader's individual stage of development and that of the organization. Next-Stage Organization implies an organization with a developmental complexity that could be described as developed beyond the socialized (Kegan et al., 2009), conventional (Cook-Greuter, 2013) and formal (Commons, 2008) stages of development. Although research continues to be scarce in this area, preliminary studies show a positive correlation between leader performance and later stages of development (Anderson & Adams, 2016; B. Brown, 2011; Kegan et al., 2016; Rooke & Torbert, 1998).

### **Research Question**

The research question chosen for this study was: “How effectively does the combined transdisciplinary, integral, and STAGES approach allow for the identification of whether a Founder/CEO’s stage of human development informs the stage of development of an organization?” This question highlights the methodological focus of the current study, while also investigating the relationship between Founders/CEOs, their organizations, and their respective STAGES of development. Thus, two subquestions are implied: (a) How effective is the Transdisciplinary Integral STAGES method for assessing a Next-Stage Organization? And (b) Does the Founder/CEO’s stage of human development inform the stage of development of an organization, and if so, in what ways?

### **Methodological, Theoretical, and Conceptual Overview**

This study was grounded in one methodology, one theory, and two conceptual frameworks. They are, respectively, transdisciplinary methodology, integral theory, and adult development and organizational development. The ensuing discussion shares their respective basic tenets, premised on the belief that their collective assumptions are complementary and relevant to addressing the research question.

In short, the transdisciplinary methodology offers the ontological, logical, and epistemological basis for this study, providing the philosophical foundation needed to appropriately address the knowledge pursuant to the complex interdependence between a founder/CEO and an organization. Integral theory offers an interpretive lens focused on ensuring sufficient perspectives are brought to bear to accommodate the complexity of wicked, intractable problems that must somehow be addressed. Adult development addresses research that shows that humans can grow through stages of developmental complexity throughout adulthood, which in turn affects individual and collective decisions and meaning-making in action. Finally, organizational development is a field of research encompassing organizational structure, transformation, and stages of development.

These four research building blocks are briefly introduced below. More details about transdisciplinarity and integral theory is provided in Chapter 2, whereas adult and organizational development are further elucidated in Chapter 3. The discussion herein serves to affirm their collective use as the philosophical, theoretical, and conceptual framework for this research inquiry.

## **Transdisciplinary Methodology**

Regarding transdisciplinarity, modern science was born out of the revolutionary idea of separating the knowing subject (humans) from observable reality, assuming and privileging a material universe that is independent of the observer. This material universe consists of just a single layer of observable reality, reducible to constituent parts that behave in a predictable, deterministic manner of cause and effect (i.e., Newtonian thinking). Knowledge is assumed to preexist outside of the observer. It is a discoverable parameter of what is, just waiting for humans to discern it through research using the scientific method (Nicolescu, 2014b).

Nicolescu (2010, 2014b) offers transdisciplinarity as a methodological alternative to the current empirical, positivistic methodology, which is grounded in the scientific method. His notion of transdisciplinarity is based on experimental evidence from quantum physics (as well as chaos theory and complexity theory), as opposed to the classical model of Newtonian thought. He formulated that knowledge is emergent, created out of the interaction of the subject (humans) with its environment (objects) across different levels of reality (e.g., material [physical], economic, political, social, and spiritual). Nicolescuian transdisciplinarity assumes a multilayered reality in which the transdisciplinary subject and the transdisciplinary object interact, creating emergent knowledge through the embodied exploration of their mutual aspects in the “Hidden Third.” Nicolescu considers the latter to be a zone of nonresistance where people can come together and stop resisting each other’s perspectives long enough that new, co-created knowledge can emerge and become embedded in (a part of) everyone involved in its creation (McGregor, 2015; Nicolescu, 2010).

## **Integral Theory and Integral Methodological Pluralism**

Per the intractable, complex problems of contemporary society (such as climate change), Nicolescuian transdisciplinarity allows for the *complexity* of interaction between the individual and the group, the subjective and objective, and the emergent nature of knowledge creation (Nicolescu, 2010, 2014b). Important here is the reaffirmation of the subject (humans) as *integral* to knowledge creation, which will be further delineated with the application of Ken Wilber's (2001, 2006) Integral Methodological Pluralism.

Integral Methodological Pluralism offers a lens that honors these distinct, interdependent perspectives in a clear framework that delineates the subjective, objective, singular, and plural aspects of reality, viewing them from both the inside and outside. This calls for honoring "8 primordial perspectives" that are elemental in any investigation (Wilber, 2006). Together, transdisciplinarity and Integral Methodological Pluralism create a compound perspective from which the interactions of various levels of reality could be observed. More specifically, within this larger perspective, the conceptual frameworks of both adult development and organizational development were explored, with the aforementioned expectation that the transdisciplinary and integral nature of this inquiry would shed light on the intersections of these two frameworks.

### **Adult Development Frameworks**

In brief, adult development refers to the body of research confirming that various lines of human development show analogous stages of increasing complexity. This development is transcended and included in an open-ended progression throughout adulthood, expressed, for example, in one's worldviews and behaviors (Graves, 1981). Established examples of these human developmental approaches include ego (Loevinger, 1976), morality (Kohlberg, 1969), and cognitive development (Commons & Richards, 2002b; Kegan, 1980). These stages are

dependent upon life conditions, meaning the nonlinear ups and downs of existence apply, and ego-identity, cognitive abilities, morality and so on are context dependent.

This study focuses on *later stages* of development or operation, which refer to those beyond the formal operational (Piaget, 1954) or socialized (Kegan, 1980) developmental stages, known alternatively as postconventional (Cook-Greuter, 2013; Kohlberg, 1969) and postformal stages (Commons & Richards, 2002a). At this point in time, the development of humans into the later stages has been shown to be relatively rare, although this manifestation is projected to increase should life conditions be favorable (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Commons & Ross, 2008; Graves, 1981). At the same time, leaders at these later stages are important factors in facilitating societal transformation (Commons & Ross, 2008; McGregor & Donnelly, 2014), making sure that their organizations and the world can better deal with the complex issues facing humanity in the Anthropocene.

### **Organizational Development Frameworks**

Organizational development refers to the body of literature covering organizational management and transformation, as well as its burgeoning cross section with adult development, in terms of both the development of human capital and the application of adult development theory in group settings. The idea of applying the scientific method to organizational management, which yielded *scientific management*, found its beginning with Frederick Winslow Taylor in the latter half of the 19th century (Weisbord, 2011). This innovation blossomed even further in the second half of the 20th century, as knowledge from the fields of cybernetics and general systems science began to filter into the organizational development field. Most recently, theories of adult development and transformative learning have been combined in various ways to highlight the transformative potential of the organization for employees, their communities

and the planet (Flaccavento, 2016; Kegan et al., 2016; Laloux, 2014; Sanford, 2011; Scharmer & Käufer, 2013; Schwinn & Schwinn, 2015; Wood, 2014).

In particular, Laloux's (2014) notion of the teal organization recognizes the existential imperative of adding value to people, place, and planet. His work informed this research inquiry. He begins with the observation that every time humanity has shifted to a new stage of consciousness, people have also invented a radically more productive organizational model. He believes humans are nearing their

next stage of human consciousness....This next stage involves taming our ego and searching for more authentic, more wholesome ways of being. If the past is any guide to the future, then as we grow into the next stage of consciousness, we will also develop a corresponding organizational model. (Laloux, 2014, Kindle Location 376)

A Next-Stage Organization will have evolved to a more advanced level of development, one where people make *meaningful* decisions, place *purpose* at the center of everything, and have *uplifting* yet productive meetings. Their leaders will have helped the organization be more productive, fulfilling, soulful, and purposeful while concurrently being very successful enterprises. Next-Stage Organizations reportedly need later stage leaders who share power in a way conducive to productive self-organization in the pursuit of wholeness and evolutionary purpose (Laloux, 2014). A self-organizing system increases in complexity *without* being guided or managed from an outside source. It is able to be both self-directed and capable of regrouping and reorganizing in the face of change.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is fivefold. First, transdisciplinarity and Integral Methodological Pluralism are both newer methodologies and theories with vast implications. Thus, studies that attempt to verify their operational efficacy in investigating the multilayered interactions of a complex reality are needed. Second, the use of the STAGES model and its

assessment tool (O’Fallon, 2013) on both individual *and* group levels constitutes both a methodological and research design (methods) innovation. Third, stage development theory has only been minimally applied to leadership studies and leader development, let alone to researching founders/CEOs of Next-Stage Organizations. Fourth, the same can be said even more so in terms of organizational development. Some efforts have been made to describe what “stages of organizational development” might look like in relation to adult development theories, but actual research in this area is very limited (Cacioppe & Edwards, 2005; Laloux, 2014; Rooke & Torbert, 1998; Torbert, 1976, 1987, 2019). Finally, all these aspects were brought together in order to shed light on the interrelated nature of individual, organizational, and societal development.

### **Inspiration**

I shifted gears, from small business owner to my current academic endeavor, beginning with an MA in Transformative Leadership. I was called to that program out of a desire to translate my personal vision of the transformative potential of harnessing capitalism for social transformation into some sort of palpable reality. On the microlevel, I had hit a wall called “the system” when trying to run a profitable business in a conventional fashion that added transformative value to employees and customers. I began to explore what was out there on the macrolevel, reigniting a lifelong passion for scholarship and research in the process. As it turns out, my timing was good, as Next-Stage Organizations, in a multitude of forms, seemed to be sprouting up all over the world. I am truly excited to have made the decision to conduct this research at just the right time, as the need and efficacy of this line of research becomes a mainstream reality.

## **CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Creswell (2007) expresses the importance of making explicit the assumptions, paradigms, and frameworks underlying an inquiry, as they have practical implications for the design and conduct of research. In this study, Nicolescu's (2010) transdisciplinarity methodology and Wilber's (1996) integral theory played prominent philosophical and framing roles. In this section, the transdisciplinary methodology is reviewed, including the two main schools of transdisciplinary thought—Zurich and Nicolescuian, with the latter informing this dissertation. After that, integral theory will be introduced, as it provided operational boundaries for the multiple perspectives and layers of reality posited by Nicolescu. This includes a discussion of Integral Methodological Pluralism and its application in this study. After the philosophical and theoretical groundwork is laid, a discussion of the research design, including choice of methods, follows.

First is a summary of the major philosophical axioms informing this doctoral research. This research project assumes a transdisciplinarity perspective for ontology, where reality is multilayered consisting of multiple, distinct, and interrelated levels. The epistemological assumptions are that knowledge is cross-fertilized, emergent and embodied, arising through the complex interaction of the interdependent layers of reality mediated by the Hidden Third level of reality, where space is created for reconciliation of contradictions. The implicit axiological biases assign a positive value to humanistic principles, such as the importance of people, place, and planet. Rhetorically, qualitative terms and first and second-person pronouns are utilized, though sparingly, in this writing. In addition, my worldview is unabashedly integral in nature, meaning I have an inherent positive bias toward transdisciplinarity, as well as a healthy respect for the need to include multiple perspectives and act in service of the whole (i.e., an integral vision).

## **Transdisciplinarity**

Before delineating the two major schools of transdisciplinarity, it is important that transdisciplinarity be distinguished from mono-, multi-, and interdisciplinarity. Monodisciplinary science is predicated upon the branching of the scientific inquiry into various, separate disciplines of expert reductionism. It forms the foundation of Modernity, or the Machine Age, when Machine Thinking molded the Industrial Revolution, and the organization of knowledge paralleled that of industry, with “increasing specialization and expertise” (Montuori, 2015, p. 215). Multidisciplinarity involves presenting and sharing ideas from two or more disciplines, with no attempt at integration or synthesis. Interdisciplinarity is the *integration* of multiple disciplinary perspectives from a higher-order perspective (Max-Neef, 2005), but still occurring at only the disciplinary level (i.e., within the academy). Transdisciplinarity is at once between, across, and beyond disciplines, as well as embracing nondisciplinary knowing and perspectives (i.e., life-world perspectives from civil society, government, and industry; Nicolescu, 2010).

### **Zurich Transdisciplinarity**

The term transdisciplinarity was first coined in 1970 at an international workshop on interdisciplinarity in France, during talks between Jean Piaget, Erich Jantsch, and Andre Lichnerowicz. They were envisioning what could be described as “just a new, ‘superior’ stage of interdisciplinarity” (Nicolescu, 2010, p. 20). Nicolescu (2010) observed that this interpretation of transdisciplinarity, based on Piaget’s remarks, “retained only the meanings ‘across’ and ‘between’ from the Latin prefix [*trans*]” (p. 20), clarifying that contemplating a space *beyond* disciplines was not a viable path in the intellectual climate at the time. Consequently, the general use of the term transdisciplinarity is closer to interdisciplinarity, in that it still fits within the narrower disciplinary orientation (i.e., across and between disciplines, but not beyond them).

The Zurich approach to transdisciplinarity is a version of this truncated understanding that explicitly creates socially beneficial knowledge by bringing together academics and non-academics in the context of existing problems to create solutions beyond the grasp of any one discipline or practice (McGregor & Volckmann, 2011). It assumes that science is still the best way to create knowledge, but that science has to be done differently, by including society (McGregor, 2015). The approach is named after its roots in a 2000 congress in Zurich, and the subsequent Swiss-based *Network for Transdisciplinarity Research* (td-net), which is now the primary Swiss contact point for researchers in the fields of inter- and transdisciplinarity viewed from this perspective (McGregor, 2015, p. 2). This approach assumes that solutions beyond the grasp of any one discipline, although within current disciplinary theory, become possible. Because this study is informed by Nicolescuian transdisciplinarity, it receives more attention in this literature review (see McGregor, 2015, for a detailed overview of how the Zurich founders envisioned their approach in theory and practice).

### **Nicolescuian Transdisciplinarity**

One hundred years ago, Albert Einstein introduced a paradigm shift in physics, one born primarily within the subjective experience of his inner imagination. Just three years after the formalization of Einstein's *General Theory of Relativity*, Max Plank won the Nobel Prize for his discovery of energy quanta, which led to the field of quantum mechanics. Einstein, the genius, whose insights shattered the concepts of space and time, could not accept yet another change in worldview. This came not from an inability to understand the theory or its implications, but because his faith, his personal "religion" (Chopra & Kafatos, 2017, Kindle Location 488), was rooted in the idea of a single, *material* (physical, tangible) universe.

His resistance shows both the power and the failure of human imagination. “Paradigms are self-fulfilling, so the only way to cause radical change is to jump out of them” (Chopra & Kafatos, 2017, Kindle Locations 199–200). Einstein was comfortable abolishing time and relinquishing the power of gravity to the curvature of space/time, but he could not quite stretch enough to allow the implications – that reality, including the “laws” of nature themselves, is relative too. The observer (human), far from being objective, is an integral piece of recreating a continuously evolving universe (subjective, even intersubjective). “If something is subjective, it exists in someone’s mind. If something is *intersubjective*, ‘it’ exists or occurs *between* conscious minds and people are capable of sharing ‘it’ or holding it in common” (McGregor & Donnelly, 2014, p. 173). Einstein could imagine riding on a beam of light but becoming that light with impunity was a step too far.

The importance of integrating the inquirer with the inquiry is central to Nicolescu’s notion of transdisciplinary inquiry (Montuori, 2013a). This “*engagement* of knowledge [is] about knowledge that is embodied and embedded” (Montuori, 2013b, p. 51). Modern science was founded on the idea, “surprising and revolutionary for that era,” of separating the inquirer from the inquiry, allowing for its proliferation beyond the bounds of “theology, philosophy, and culture” (Nicolescu, 2014b, p. 186). The Nicolescuian transdisciplinary methodology seeks to bring the subject (human beings) *back* into the inquiry, as per the disciplinary findings of quantum mechanics.

This dissertation opened with the suggestion that dealing with problems of the Anthropocene requires cultural progress. Only if we question the space between, across, and *beyond* disciplines can we have a chance to progress by establishing links between the two postmodern cultures (i.e., technoscientific and spiritual; Nicolescu, 2014a). The technoscientific

culture arose when the forces of technology and science merged, excluding spirit in the process. This culture drives contemporary globalization, which privileges the economy at the expense of humans, other species, and the world's ecosystems, hence climate change. The spiritual culture encompasses both the "psyche, biological, and physical nature...and the transcendental nature [of the human being]" (Nicolescu, 2014a, p. 9). Questioning and addressing the span of *between, across, and beyond* best allows for the integration of the traditions of both science and wisdom (i.e., spirituality). Without this integration, humanity's future, and that of the world, is jeopardized. "Transdisciplinarity can offer a methodological foundation for a dialogue between the technoscientific culture and the spiritual culture" (Nicolescu, 2014a, p. 9).

Modern science assumes a material universe consisting of a single layer of observable reality. This reality is said to be reducible to constituent parts behaving in a manner predictable by cause and effect, where knowledge is a preexisting, discoverable aspect of reality independent of the observer (McGregor, 2011, 2015). These assumptions arise out of three philosophical principals, or pillars, called axioms, formulated by Galileo Galilei nearly 400 years ago. They have, thus far, withstood the test of time. Nicolescu (2010, p. 24) lists these enduring axioms as:

1. There are universal laws, of a mathematical character.
2. These laws can be discovered by scientific experiment.
3. Such experiments can be perfectly replicated.

The foundation of the Nicolescuian approach to the transdisciplinary methodology, based upon three new versions of longstanding axioms, is what sets it apart from the Zurich approach. It is an alternative, updated approach to the current scientific method, based on experimental evidence from quantum physics (Nicolescu, 2010). Knowledge is cross-fertilized and emergent, created out of the interaction of the subject (humans) with its environments (object) across different levels of reality, interacting through the Hidden Third, an invisible zone of

nonresistance to others' perspectives. Nicolescu (2010) formulated this premise in the following three axioms:

1. The ontological axiom: There are, in Nature and society and in our knowledge of Nature and society, different levels of Reality of the Object and, correspondingly, different levels of Reality of the Subject.
2. The logical axiom: The passage from one level of Reality to another is ensured by the logic of the included middle.
3. The complexity axiom: The structure of the totality of levels of Reality or perception is a complex structure: every level is what it is because all the levels exist at the same time (also called epistemological axiom). (p. 24)

In brief, there is (a) an ontology (what counts as reality) that states there are multiple levels of reality for both the human subject (consciousness and perspectives) and the objective world (information); (b) an epistemology (what counts as knowledge and knowing) that states that cross-fertilized, complex, embodied knowledge emerges when these levels of reality interact interdependently in the mediated Hidden Third (part of ontology); and, (c) a logic of inclusion, which says even contradictory viewpoints can be accounted for. Nicolescu (2010) eschews the conventional fourth axiom, axiology (the role of values). Together, these three axioms imply the existence of a mitigating zone of nonresistance to human perceptions, consciousness, and current measurements, which lie between and beyond the levels of Reality (Nicolescu, 2010). Nicolescu calls this zone the Hidden Third (to connote the idea that a third entity is aiding [mediating] the interactions). It aids in the bridging of an apparent paradox (and contradictory points of view) by linking one single level of reality with other levels of reality, leading to an emergent solution to a problem of the Anthropocene.

### **Ontology: Levels of Reality.**

Although not new to transdisciplinarity, this axiom has classically been “founded either on religious dogma or on the exploration of the inner universe only” (Nicolescu, 2010, p. 27).

Not until the introduction of quantum mechanics into disciplinary science did the type of postconventional transdisciplinarity being described here become possible. In this approach, the phenomenon becomes the focus, requiring “a different set of competencies, and indeed a different way of thinking. And this is what is both so very exciting, daunting, and, for some, threatening about transdisciplinarity” (Montuori, 2008, p. xv). We are being asked to leave the apparent rationality of a measurable and definable material world for a quasi-magical reality where that which cannot be seen or measured, even subjective experience, is as cosmologically (scientific study of the universe) important as that which can.

The discussion of quantum theory here is not simply metaphorical. How Reality emerges from the interdependent actions of internal and external systems at various levels of reality is unknown (note that Nicolescu [2010] capitalizes the word Reality). “Two levels of Reality are different if, while passing from one to the other, there is a break in the applicable laws, rules or norms and a break in fundamental concepts (like, for example, causality)” (Nicolescu, 2014b, p. 192). The relationship between levels, although interdependent, is not hierarchical, meaning no one level is more fundamental to reality; they are all needed.

In nature, three to four distinct levels of reality are noted: “The macrophysical level, the microphysical level, and the cyber-space-time [and perhaps the hypothetical superstring]” (Nicolescu, 2014b, p. 193), whereas in social systems, five realities are noted: “the individual level, the geographical and historical community level (family, nation), the cyber-space-time community level, the planetary level, and the cosmic level” (Nicolescu, 2014b, p. 193). The human being is embedded in and throughout all of these levels and connected to other human beings and the rest of the universe by the Hidden Third, a vacuum full of potential. New knowledge is created by facilitating the emergence of unique combinations of subjective and

objective realities (Nicolescu, 2014a). In sharp contrast, classical Newtonian thinking presumes the human is outside the creation of knowledge, not embedded in it.

### **The Transdisciplinary Subject, Transdisciplinary Object, and the Hidden Third**

A key aspect of Nicolescu's methodology is the ontology axiom, in particular multiple levels of reality and their integration in the Hidden Third. Subject (human consciousness and perspectives) and object (environments, context, and information) interact through the Hidden Third as the transdisciplinary subject and the transdisciplinary object. The transdisciplinary subject and transdisciplinary object communicate through the mediated flow of internal perceptions and external information. When new patterns of coherence, or flow, emerge between transdisciplinary subject perspectives and transdisciplinary object information, embodied, emergent knowledge is created (Nicolescu, 2010, 2014b). In other words, humans come together in a space where they can temporarily hear and integrate respective perspectives with respective information, trusting that new, co-created, cross-fertilized knowledge will emerge.

As mentioned in Axiom 2, it is the logic of the included middle that allows people to navigate multiple levels of reality through the Hidden Third (i.e., the quantum vacuum rich with potential). Galilei's original three axioms led to a habit of mind of the materialist viewpoint that cannot tolerate contradictions (manifested in exclusive logic). The logic of the included middle (i.e., inclusive logic) remedies this, assuming that apparent contradictions at one level of reality can temporarily be resolved by including perspectives and information from other levels of reality. The Hidden Third, where these connections arise, and the dance of emergence and evolution occurs, is accessed through spirit-opening modalities such as art, religion, and social communion. Indeed, F. David Peat (2014) elucidates Jung's distinction between a coincidence

and a synchronicity, the former being random and interesting, whereas the latter is an undeniably palpable and transformational experience of communication with the numinous.

This transition from an objective, material world (confined to one reality) to an emerging reality, in which transdisciplinary subject and transdisciplinary object codefine one another across a Hidden Third, is a fundamental shift from the conventional view of knowledge and reality (McGregor, 2011, 2014; Nicolescu, 2010, 2014b). Knowledge is no longer a secret treasure to be found. It is an embodied, emergent phenomenon, where actors embedded in these interdependent levels of Reality transcend as they include the logic of separation and embrace apparently contradictory perspectives to more fully know their roles in co-visioning this dynamic, evolutionary universe. Human modalities of interaction (including culture, art, religion, and spirituality) help people become open to other's perspectives. In other words, these mediating modalities help them access the Hidden Third and transcend the logic of exclusion by employing the logic of inclusion (McGregor, 2015). This effort affords access to new knowledge and innovative solutions to the wicked problems at hand.

If successfully employed, the application of the Nicolescuian transdisciplinary methodology can facilitate the emergence of the practical, embodied knowledge required to address the world's complex, wicked problems (McGregor, 2015). This requires a profound evolution in human and organizational development. In the next section, Integral theory, and the attendant Integral Methodological Pluralism, is presented as the theoretical and operational boundaries to navigate these multiple levels of reality using inclusive logic to create new transdisciplinary knowledge.

## **Integral Theory**

Since his first book in 1977, Ken Wilber has published over two dozen books about integral theory, an approach that is currently being used in over 35 distinct academic and professional fields. Both a theory and a framework, Wilber's (1995, 2001) AQAL model (matrix), with the acronym meaning "all quadrants, all levels" (as well as all lines, states, and types), recognizes that these five elements signify the most basic repeating patterns of people's reality (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2009). The central tenet of Wilber's integral theory is that leaving out any element leads to an incomplete picture of reality. People are encouraged to use as many perspectives as possible to deal with the complexity at hand. Integral theory is offered as an approach that provides clear boundaries for this study within the philosophical assumptions of the Nicolescuian transdisciplinary methodology. The next section sets out a brief description of each of Wilber's five elements of integral theory, followed by an introduction to Integral Methodological Pluralism and its implications for this study.

The first element of integral theory, the quadrants (i.e., the four-cell matrix), separates reality into four fundamental perspectives, or dimensions, with the other elements (lines, states, and types) expressed through stages. The four perspectives are inside out, outside in, singular, and plural, which are respectively referred to as subjective, objective, intersubjective, and interobjective perspectives, or dimensions of reality. The subjective, intersubjective, and objective perspectives also represent 1st, 2nd, and 3rd-person perspectives, respectively.

In this way, the inner self (I), the physical self (IT), the community (WE), and the collection of world systems (ITS) are represented. Just as the philosophical assumptions of Nicolescuian transdisciplinarity, these quadrants are said to be tetra-arising, meaning they interact interdependently in a complex fashion. Called a "tetramesh," Wilber's (2001) elements

are said to arise together, sustain each other, and co-create each other. Because of this tetra-  
arising phenomenon, observations in any one quadrant are said to be true, but only partially.

In general terms, Quadrant 1 (upper left—I, inner self) represents the individual's mind, and is concerned with consciousness. Quadrant 2 (upper right—IT, physical self) represents the outside of an individual (their brain, body, and behaviors as understood by empirical science). Quadrant 3 (lower left—WE, community) references life lived within the cultural collective, reflected in social norms, group awareness, morality, and life with others. It represents the importance of culture, the community context, and supportive networks. Quadrant 4 (lower right—ITS, world systems) represents life lived outside the collective, in the web of life. It contains the collection of institutions, rules, and standards that shape and inform life. It concerns the macro context including social, economic, political, ecosystem, and other systems.

Levels, the second element, refers to aspects of development (i.e., positions in a range of relative scales or values) in each quadrant that transcend and include one another in holarchic waves of depth and complexity, attributes inherent in the subjective and objective quadrants, respectively. Thus, whether referring to the depth of individual consciousness, the depth of cultural inclusion, or the evolutionary complexification of matter, social systems, and living environments, recognizable progression through and plateaus of development can be identified across all quadrants. It would seem that consciousness is made to deepen, and matter is made to complexify indefinitely, with the subjective ability to influence the objective process being greater as perspectives widen and awareness grows (Chopra & Kafatos, 2017).

The third element is *lines* of development, similar to *levels*, with lines recognizing unique capacities that grow within a quadrant. Although interdependent, each line has correlates in the other quadrants. Some documented lines include such individual capacities as cognitive,

emotional, interpersonal and moral development, and group cultural lines such as kinesthetic capacities, interpersonal maturity, and artistic expression. Explicit as an identifiable feature of any line of development is the existence of increasing levels of depth and complexity that transcend and include one another in predictable, sequential stages (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2009).

*States* are the fourth element and refer to temporary phase changes in aspects of reality, typically incompatible with related phases (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2009). States are temporary moments and refer to potential for *progression* through more permanent stages. For example, liquid water and steam exist under different conditions, as do normal waking states of consciousness and dreaming or ecstatic states. Examples can be found in all quadrants. Key to this study is the assumption that leaders at *later action logics* begin to tap into nonstandard states of consciousness and ways of knowing.

The final element, *types*—representing different styles or fundamental patterns—that arise irrespective of developmental levels. Types are very stable, resilient, and enduring traits of human behavior. Belonging to a type means individuals share attitudes and dispositions, employ different logic (aspect or voice), and hold different orientations than other types. Again, types can occur in all quadrants. Examples are personality and gender types, blood and body types, religious and kinship systems, and biome and regime types (Esbjörn-Hargens, 2009).

Esbjörn-Hargens (2009) also notes that the AQAL integral model can be used in at least two ways, by applying the quadrants as a quadratic approach (Latin *quadrus*, related to a square), or as a quadrivial analysis (Latin for *place where four roads meet*). In the context of this study, the former refers to the founder/CEO at the center of the four perspectives, and the latter places the phenomenon being researched, the Next-Stage Organization, at the center of the quadrants, where the lines cross. The data collected in any one quadrant in this approach are then referred to

as quadrivia (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). This leads us to a discussion of Integral Methodological Pluralism, which read backwards means more than one paradigm or methodology to use to obtain knowledge or knowing without missing essential parts.

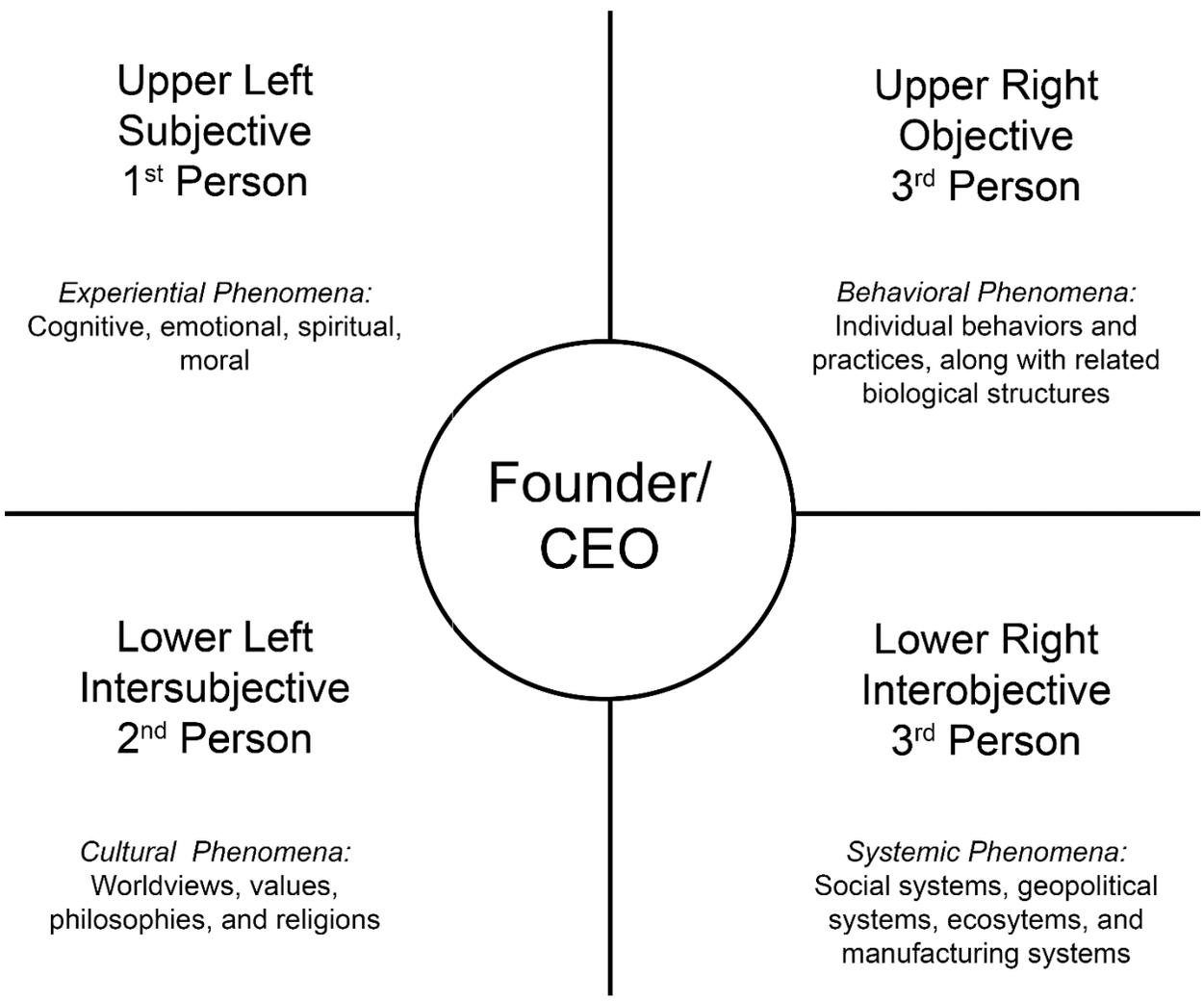


Figure 1. Quadratic approach to analyzing the founder/CEO.

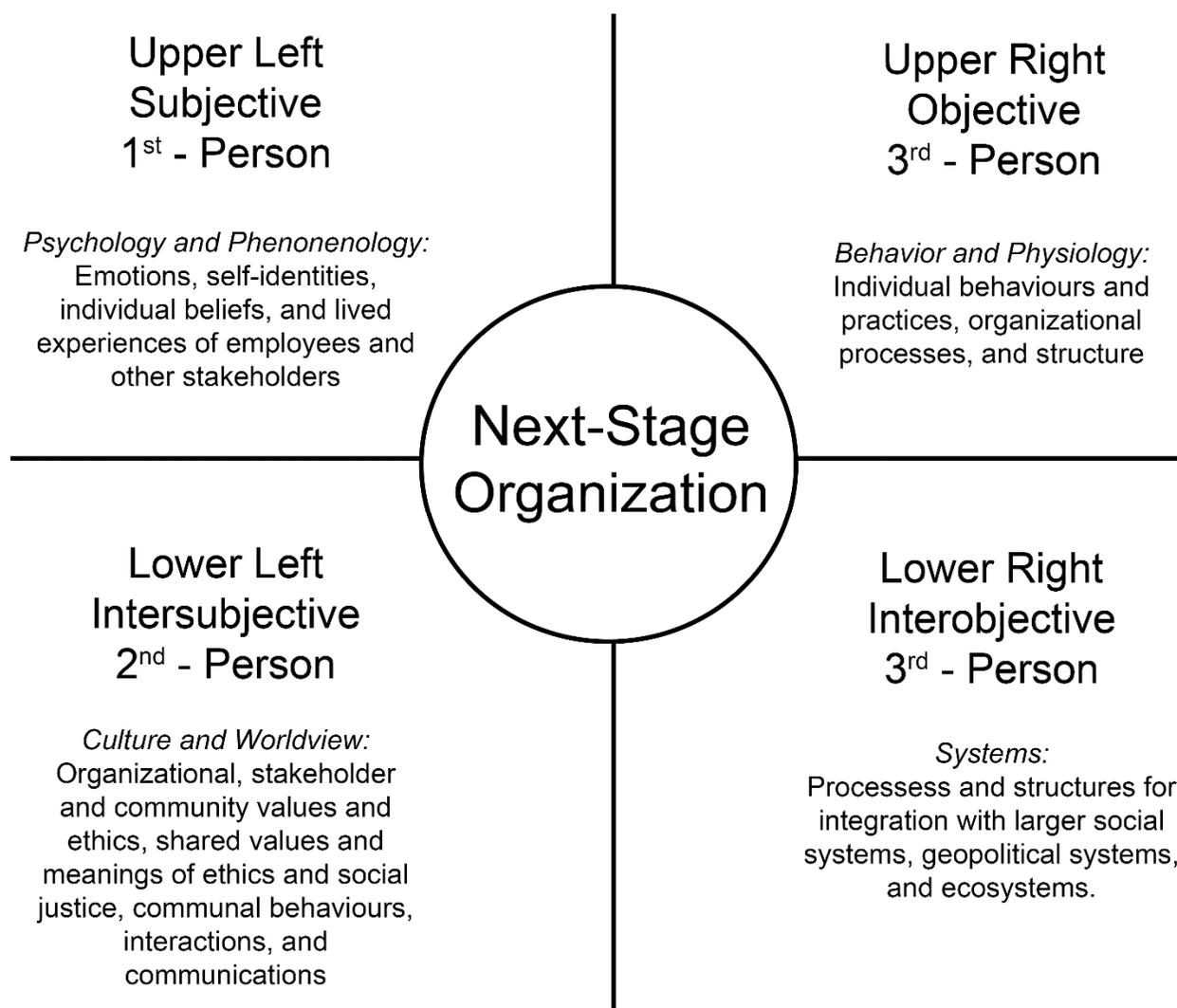


Figure 2. Quadrivial analysis of a Next-Stage Organization.

### **Integral Methodological Pluralism**

Integral Methodological Pluralism stems from Ken Wilber's (2001, 2007) work on integral thinking, specifically his AQAL model, which can be used as a method for understanding complex problems. For clarification, integral stems from the Latin root *integer*, "whole." If something is integral, the whole cannot be complete if *that* something is missing. The Integral Methodological Pluralism approach involves the creation of zones by taking an internal

and external perspective of each quadrant. The resultant approach yields 8 primordial perspectives. If something is primordial, it is essential or basic (i.e., integral as defined above). Primordial also constitutes a beginning, made possible because it helps something derive or be developed. These 8 primordial perspectives are the main operational boundaries of this doctoral study. Using the 8 primordial perspectives lens helped ensure a deeper holism by pluralistically including many approaches to knowledge creation, especially multiple levels of reality (transdisciplinarity) and multiple perspectives (integral theory). Figure 3 depicts the eight zones and the suggested method for investigating each primordial element (i.e., plural methodologies) vis-à-vis next stage organizations.

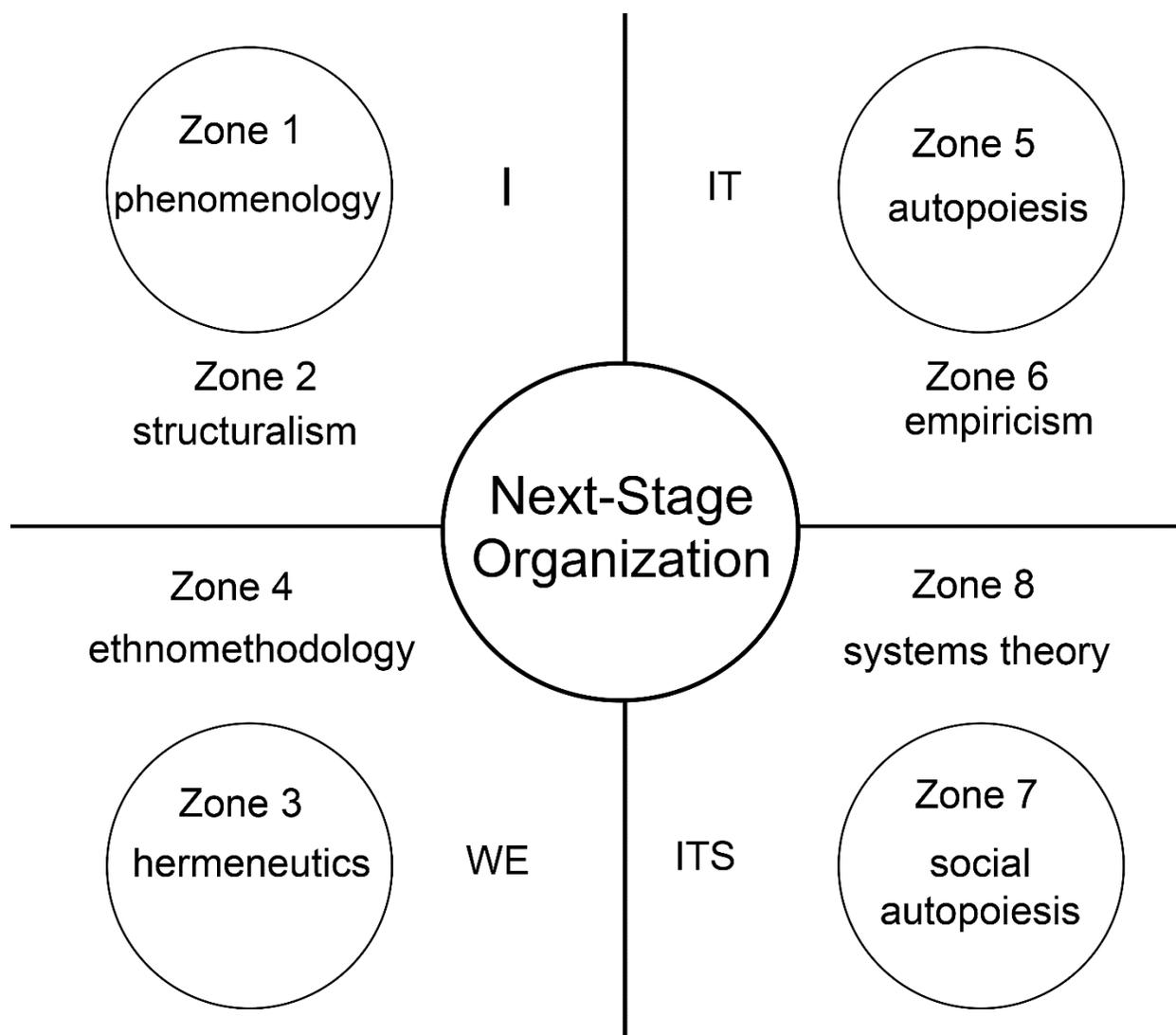


Figure 3. 8 primordial perspectives of the Next-Stage Organization.

As Martin (2008) and Kelly (2008) both note, the eight methodologies here are descriptive, not prescriptive, meaning they are a general description of the best methodologies, or theoretical perspectives in the case of zones 5 and 7, to uncover a given zone, not a prescription as the *only* way to do so. According to Esbjörn-Hargens (2009),

each major methodological family (e.g., empiricism or hermeneutics) is simply a formalized version of something we do naturally all the time. For example, our ability to take a third-person perspective on the world around us (e.g., looking at the flowers growing along the sidewalk) is the basis for empiricism and our ability to take a second-person perspective with our friends (e.g., talking to them about why they want to quit

their job) is the basis for hermeneutics. Consequently, the eight zones of IMP is [*sic*] simply a reminder of the many ways we know ourselves, others, and the world around us. The integral framework allows us to coordinate these multiple ways of knowing and place them into orchestrated action in the world. (p. 18)

Although not prescriptive, Wilber (2006) stated that any approach that leaves out any of these eight perspectives is a less-than-adequate research approach (reflecting the true meaning of integral). Although it was beyond the scope of this study to make an in-depth exploration of each of these zones, each was included when conceptualizing the research. Indeed, the deeper philosophical implications of this are that these eight zones are not simply classifications. Rather, just as Nicolescu's levels of reality, they are complexly interacting, autonomous, and yet interdependent layers of reality. In Wilber's (2007) own words,

We inhabit these 8 spaces, these zones, these lifeworlds, as practical realities. Each of these zones is not just a perspective, but an action, an injunction, a concrete set of actions in a real world zone. Each injunction brings forth or discloses the phenomena that are apprehended through the various perspectives. It is not that perspectives come first and actions or injunctions come later; they simultaneously co-arise (actually, tetra-arise). "Perspectives" simply locate the perceiving holon in AQAL space. To take such-and-such a perspective is to be arising in this particular area of the AQAL matrix. (In fact, we will soon give the "address" of a holon in the AQAL matrix as: address = altitude + perspective, where altitude means degree of development and perspective means the perspective or quadrant it is in.). (pp. 34–35)

For a more detailed theoretical and philosophical analysis of the zones and their interpretations, refer to Snow (2007) and McGregor (2010).

### CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) stated that a review of the literature relevant to a research problem should involve the systematic identification and analysis of related material. Robson (2011) proposed five purposes of a literature review, those being to (a) expose gaps in knowledge and areas of dispute or uncertainty; (b) identify general patterns across findings and results from multiple relevant studies; (c) compare apparently contradictory research to explore discrepancies; (d) define terms and variations in terminology; and (e) identify appropriate research methodologies, methods, and instruments.

However, in areas where there is a paucity of research, a conceptual literature review can be used to synthesize research from a diverse range of sources (Creswell, 2007; McGregor, 2017; Robson, 2011). Robson (2011) lists integrative, theoretical, methodological, and historical reviews as specific types of conceptual literature reviews. To that, Montuori (2013b) adds the transdisciplinary literature review, which is (a) inquiry based, (b) meta-paradigmatic, (c) integrates the inquirer and inquiry, and (d) applies systems and complex thought. Additionally, he proposed to begin with the phenomenon, develop a rich description through narrative, and ask questions along the way, allowing the reviewer to highlight the insufficient nature of a discipline-driven review.

The purpose of this *conceptual, transdisciplinary* literature review is to provide the necessary foundation to address stage development in humans and organizations and to answer the research question: “How effectively does the combined transdisciplinary, integral, and STAGES approach allow for the identification of whether a founder/CEO’s stage of human development informs the stage of development of an organization?” McGregor (2017) explains that conceptual reviews draw from a wide range of different sources so as to thoroughly examine

the literature streams relevant to a specific idea. They enable researchers to synthesize areas of knowledge in an integrated fashion, leading to more clarity, better understandings, and new insights into a phenomenon.

In that spirit, this chapter will focus on adult development and organizational development literature, based on the assumption that, together, they provide a robust conceptual framework for engaging the research topic and question. Given that the contributions of this study are largely theoretical and methodological (discussed in Chapter 4), reflected in the innovative research method introduced in the study, the closest, most relevant research pertains to organizational leadership and development. To reiterate, the phenomenon being explored is the relationship between a postformal founder/CEO and the Next-Stage Organization in the context of the Anthropocene. This phenomenon comes in the midst of globally accelerating social injustice and environmental degradation, at a time when the majority of actors have yet to recognize the existence of either a problem or their own complicity in it.

First, adult development theory will be evaluated, showing how complexity of cognition and ego development of humans develops through adulthood. As well, the importance of *later stages* of development to collective evolution will be explored. Finally, the field of organizational development will be examined, highlighting specifically, how stage development theory and a context of sustainability are gradually being recognized in the literature.

### **Adult Development**

Adult development encompasses a broad body of research noting the development of humans in various lines of development through predictable, sequential stages, transcending and including one another with increasing degrees of complexity throughout life (Reams, 2014). The following introduction to the history of developmental psychology begins with James Mark

Baldwin (1861–1934), who greatly influenced the later, and better known, work of Jean Piaget (1896–1980). These contributions led to growth in the human development field through the latter half of the 20th century until today. A synopsis of various theories of stages of development is given, followed by the application of human development and its implications in leadership within organizations.

### **Baldwin**

James Mark Baldwin was the epitome of a transdisciplinary thinker, likely accounting for his relative obscurity from prominence in his own time until the 1980s (Wozniak & Santiago-Blay, 2013). “One of the most important and least known American scientific psychologists” (Wozniak, 2009, p. 93), he was an early president of the American Psychological Association (APA), a faculty member at University of Toronto (1889–1893), Princeton (1893–1903), and John Hopkins (1903–1908), and a co-founder of the *Psychological Review*, to name a few of his accomplishments (p. 93). Inspired by Darwin and steeped in the literature of evolutionary biology as well as psychology, he was ahead of his time. With his scandalous departure from academia in 1908, Baldwin relocated to Paris. He is best known today for influencing Jean Piaget (1896–1980), who lived in Paris at the same time (Reams, 2014).

Their earlier work on developmental perspectives was subsequently forced underground, altering the direction of the human development field with the ensuing prominence of behaviorism in the *Psychological Review* (Reams, 2014). As in the physical sciences, it seems that the established disciplines, predicated on the separation of spirit and matter (including psychology), were not ready for the profound implications of Baldwin’s theories, needing almost one hundred years before his work once again gained prominence in the west. Two areas where his theories are still relevant today are the *Baldwin effect* and social heredity (Baldwin, 1895,

1896, 1904). The former provides a mechanism whereby acquired individual characteristics may influence evolution through natural selection. The latter recognizes the role of enculturation in the inheritance and internalization systems of behavior and meaning-making (Wozniak, 2009).

Baldwin's amalgamation of biological and social theories highlights their interrelated nature, presenting "mental growth as a social process in which higher stages reorganize and incorporate lower stages" (Wozniak, 2009, p. 94). Largely theoretical, Baldwin's work can be characterized as leaning toward a transdisciplinary direction. His introduction of a stage model of development that incorporated Subject/Object theory challenged the then reductionist views of contemporary science (Reams, 2014), and paved the way for Piaget (1954, 1970) and beyond.

### **Piaget and Beyond**

By studying children playing marbles, Piaget (1954, 1970) began the modern scientific inquiry into the nature of ego development and cognition. By adapting Sigmund Freud's use of clinical interviews in psychoanalyses, Piaget also devised the method of using semistructured interviews to study the evolution of epistemological structures (Reams, 2014). His work yielded four major stages of development from infancy to adulthood: (a) sensorimotor (physical movement in response to sensory input), (b) pre-operational (thinking symbolically), (c) concrete operational (organized and rational thinking using logic), and (d) formal operational (thinking about abstract and theoretical concepts).

Piaget, unlike Baldwin, was pedantic in terms of methodology. This investigative rigor contributed to his wider acceptance and continued recognition of his first four stages of child development, even though he contributed more to understanding the process of developing epistemological structures than to the structures themselves, for which he is well known (Reams, 2014). His theory of genetic epistemology proposes a "constructivist theory of truth wherein

progressive psychological states of the organism correspond to progressively more adequate, true epistemological models of the world” (Cahan, 1984, p. 130). This progression is accomplished through an iterative process of contrasting periods of accommodation and assimilation, as a child first perceives and then integrates objective reality into his or her subjective world by adapting to the world in increasingly more complex ways (Cahan, 1984).

Stage-based psychological research bloomed during the latter half of the 20th century. Many theories built upon Piaget’s childhood stages, using the *stage lens* to examine various aspects of the human condition. These theories show the iterative nature of reality by examining different levels of reality from various perspectives, uncovering common phenomena. It is *developmental movement*, that is, the “gradually increasing awareness of...[one’s] current subjective organizing principle until...[one] is able to reflect on the organizing principle itself, at which point what was subjective becomes objective” (McCauley et al., 2006, p. 636).

This developmental movement can be seen in research pursuant to each of these five areas: cognitive development (Kegan, 1982; Piaget, 1954; Piaget & Inhelder, 1958), morality (Kohlberg, 1973), psychosocial maturity (Erikson, 1982), ego development (Cook-Greuter, 1999; Loevinger, 1976; O’Fallon, 2013; Torbert, 1998), and biopsychosocial development (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Graves, 1981). It can also be seen in hierarchical complexity as a general phenomenon (Commons & Richards, 2002b) as well as in meta-theoretical perspectives that account for the complex, multileveled interdependence of all of these things (E. Laszlo, 2017; Morin, 2008; Nicolescu, 2010; Wilber, 1996).

For the purpose of this study, it was not necessary to explore these individual models more fully. Important here, instead, is the *relationship of subject to object*, the one thing these models all seem to have in common. Although tied to cognition, the process of making that

which was subjective objective must be embodied as well (Commons & Richards, 2002b).

Hence, a person's perception of reality becomes their meaning-making system, which situates that person in the iterative schema that *is* human society. In this way, knowledge is attained and processed according to one's worldview. Those at "later stages" of development transcend and include earlier stages, showing increasing spans of perception in areas such as person perspective (1st through *n*th), time horizons (now to generational to cosmic), space (ego-centric to kosmos-centric), relationship to feedback (defensive to welcoming), and systems view (none to cross-paradigmatic; O'Fallon, 2007).

### **Propositions and Limitations of Adult Development**

The study of adult development is built upon a number of propositions, set out verbatim in the following numbered text (McCauley et al., 2006, p. 636). In the context of this dissertation, these propositions informed the case study research design (see Chapter 4):

1. People actively construct ways of understanding and making sense of themselves and the world (as opposed to "taking in" an objective world).
2. There are identifiable patterns of meaning-making that people share in common with one another; these are variously referred to as stages, orders of consciousness, ways of knowing, levels of development, organizing principles, or (in this article) orders of development.
3. Orders of development unfold in a specific invariant sequence, with each successive order transcending and including the previous order.
4. In general, people do not regress; once an order of development has been constructed, the previous order loses its organizing function, but remains as a perspective that can now be reflected upon.
5. Because subsequent orders include all earlier orders as special cases, later orders are more complex (they support more comprehensive understanding) than earlier orders; later orders are not better in an absolute sense.
6. Developmental movement from one order to the next is driven by limitations in the current way of constructing meaning; this can happen when a person faces increased complexity in the environment that requires a more complex way of understanding themselves in the world.

7. People's order of development influence what they notice or can be aware of, and therefore, what they can describe, reflect on, and change (Cook-Greuter, 2004).

The literature in this area is convincing, suggesting clear evidence for the ongoing and successive evolution of the human being throughout life. However, there are limitations to existing research, the most serious of which are restricted samples and compromised research designs (McCauley et al., 2006), hence the impetus for this research.

### **STAGES of the Individual**

Of particular interest to this study's research question is O'Fallon's (2012, 2013) assessment methodology for human development that reveals how humans grow through life. O'Fallon (2013) describes her approach as being grounded in the traditions of Baldwin and Piaget, and based on Wilbur's (2001) AQAL model. The assessment of ego development is also statistically correlated (O'Fallon, 2013) with the sentence completion test (SCT) lineage of Loevinger (1979) and Cook-Greuter (2004). O'Fallon's (2013) STAGES model "describes and measures twelve stages through six-person perspectives...[revealing] iterating concrete, subtle and causal patterns and tiers" (p. 1). These three tiers refer to the nature of the objects that the subject is focusing on including (a) concrete objects (body, other people, and environment); (b) subtle objects (internal feelings, visualizations, insides of others); or (c) very subtle objects (expanded awareness, awareness of awareness, generational patterns). These tiers correspond, respectively, with the physical, emotional and, what could be called, metaphysical.

Within each of the three tiers, a person is said to move through four patterns, which build up the sensory experience of internal and external realities, thus forming the core of one's meaning-making system, which then indicates the stage development and center of gravity of one's consciousness. The four patterns are: (a) iterating *states* (active, receptive, reciprocal, active-interpenetrative); (b) iterating *stages* (receptive, either/or, both/and, interpenetrative); (c)

iterating passive and active periods within the states and stages; and (d) a focus on the individual or collective (O'Fallon, 2013). Each tier also represents a movement around Wilber's (2001) four quadrants: the subjective and objective, the singular and plural. The STAGES are listed in Appendix B (see also O'Fallon, 2018), along with the three tiers and their respective patterns. The STAGES are correlated with Spiral Dynamics, a dynamic, meme-based model of human development (see Beck & Cowan, 1996; Cook-Greuter, 1999; Kegan, 1982; Piaget & Inhelder, 1958; Commons & Richards, 2002b; Rooke & Torbert, 2005). It is important to note that the information in Table 1 implies direct correlations between these various approaches, with clear boundaries between each stage. Further research is needed to substantiate these correlations, or what Wilber (1996) refers to as orienting generalizations. That being said, the visualization provided by Table 1 is useful for general comparisons.

Table 1

*Various Stage Models*

O'Fallon's StAGES		Spiral Dynamics	Cook-Greuter	Rooke & Torbert	Piaget	Richards & Commons	Kegan	Kohlberg & Wilber
1.0	Impulsive				Pre Operational	5	Impulsive	Preconventional
1.5	Opportunist	SurvivalSense			Pre Operational	6	Impulsive	Preconventional
2.0	Delta	KinSpirits	Impulsive 4.3%	Opportunist	Concrete Operational	7	Instrumental	Preconventional
2.5	Diplomat	PowerGods	Conformist 11.3%	Diplomat	Concrete Operational	8	Instrumental	Conventional
3.0	Expert	TruthForce	Self-conscious 36.5%	Expert	Formal Operational	9	Socialized	Conventional
3.5	Achiever	StriveDrive	Conscientious 29.7%	Achiever	Formal Operational	10	Socialized	Conventional
4.0	Individualist	HumanBond	Individualist 11.3%	Individualist		11 20%	Self – Authoring	Post-conventional
4.5	Strategist	FlexFlow	Autonomous 4.9%	Strategist		12 2%	Self – Authoring	Post-conventional
5.0	Construct Aware	GlobalView	Construct-Aware 1.5%	Alchemist		13 .05%	Self – Transforming	Post – Post-conventional
5.5	Transpersonal		Unitive .05%	Ironist		14 .05%	Self – Transforming	Post – Post-conventional
6.0	Universal							
6.5	Illumined							

*Note.* Adapted from Wilber (2000, pp. 201, 204-205), Beck & Cowan (1996, p. 41), Commons & Richards (2002, p. 160), Cook-Greuter (2013, p. 19), and O'Fallon & Barta (2018, p. 3), Rooke & Torbert (2006, p. 3).

## Postformal Thought

A red thread (a filament of fate connecting plots, themes, and places) that has been running through this literature review is the paradigm-shifting nature of postformal thinking, as well as the general resistance to change of those people adherent to existing paradigms. As noted earlier, postformal thought is thinking, as well as accompanying action, which is beyond Piaget and Inhelder's (1958) formal operational stages. Postformal thought is important for the transformative leverage it has vis-à-vis current systems, such as the economy and education, especially if solutions are to be found to intractable wicked problems related to the most disadvantaged persons across the globe (Commons & Ross, 2008). Postformal levels of thinking and being have been alternatively labeled: (a) 2nd tier (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Wilber, 1996, 2001), (b) self-authoring or self-transforming (Kegan et al., 2016), and (c) postconventional (Cook-Greuter, 2013) stages of development. Gebser (1949) referred to a shift in the structure of individual and, ultimately, collective consciousness, from what he termed the mental structure to the integral structure of consciousness.

The resistance to paradigm changes comes from two sources. First it comes from developmental directions, in that those at conventional stages are trying to adhere to social norms (i.e., resisting change). Second, it manifests as the resistance of early postformal thinkers to later stage explanations of their own thought structures (Ross, 2008c). Both forms of resistance can be remedied when postformal thought leaders learn to filter their communications through their own embodied understanding of earlier stages, which involves strategically relearning and using these earlier ways of thinking and speaking (Ross, 2008b). Furthermore, Commons and Goodheart (2008) propose that cultural "levels of support, or scaffolding [are necessary] for people to develop higher stages of hierarchical complexity. The resulting wider accessibility to higher-

stage action and knowledge, which requires higher stages of development to understand, enables social and scientific progress” (p. 406).

This does not simply mean that later stages are better, or that transitioning all human beings and human activity systems to world-centric worldviews and capabilities is necessary, desirable, or even ethical (Graves, 1981). It is, instead, recognition that a critical mass of networked leaders, leading with a concept of leadership as a relational context of facilitating potentially developmental interactions, could provide the guiding light, or the *strange attractor*, to achieve socio-cultural coherence (Wood, 2017). The concept strange attractor refers to chaotic behavior that can lead a system forward in evolution. As the harmful impulses of individuals and organizations at earlier stages are checked, and creative potential is fostered by able leaders empowered by world-centric social systems, new ways of being, doing, knowing, and relating have the potential to flower for the benefit and enjoyment of all.

A theoretical future society operating at the paradigmatic stage of development would functionally care for all people, while functionally building into the structure of society humanity’s biological, sociological, and cosmic imperative for evolution (Ross, 2008a). Interestingly, these imperatives correspond with Wilber’s (2001) integral theory’s four quadrants: individual, physical, collective, and world systems. This evolution of societal structures implies a move toward, what Wilber and DiPerna (2018) call, a “Deliberately Developmental Civilization.” To make the transition, transdisciplinary measures, which are designed to simultaneously produce solutions to wicked problems, such as addressing humanity’s adaptive challenge to things such as climate change, must induce conceptual change. The latter is concerned with the process by which people’s central organizing concepts change under the impact of new ideas or information (McGregor, 2014; O’Brien & Selboe, 2015a).

## Organizational Development

The discussion now shifts from a focus on human to organizational development. The arch of the organizational development field shows that how people think about things affects how they interact with them. Modern society was designed to create formalized workers; creativity, let alone postformal exploration, becomes a threat to the well-oiled functioning of the machine (Montuori, 2013a). Contemporary education, as well as current organizational models, tends to promote socialized, conventional ways of being. Also, in a specialized (machine-focused) society, most people are not afforded the opportunity to practice complexity (Nussbaum, 2011). However, the successful completion of complex tasks is necessary for thinking to evolve (Commons as cited in McGregor, 2014). This necessitates ways of organizing that foster, as well as utilize, the postconventional stages of development.

Comprising the Individualist, Strategist, Construct Aware, and Transpersonal stages (O'Fallon's [2017] stages 4.0 to 5.5), the postconventional stages of manager and leader logic are associated with wisdom and show increasing integration compared to the conventional domain, which employs increasing differentiation. The postconventional stages reflect gaining deeper understanding, recognizing assumptions, seeing whole dynamic systems, stripping away illusions, and transforming oneself and creating conditions for others to transform (Cook-Greuter, 2013). At best, less than 15% of the current adult population can be considered having attained a postconventional level of development, with the numbers closer to 3 to 5% when considering the more complex end of the scale (i.e., the later stages; Commons & Ross, 2008; Cook-Greuter, 1999).

Fortunately, development, be it individual or organizational, need not take decades or be a rare occurrence. Development is a function of life conditions, which continue to change

drastically. People are all becoming connected, with each other, all of knowledge, and themselves (whether they know it not). Now society just needs a collective vision, a planetary path accessible to all. Not only is this vision possible, but necessary so that all children (potential managers and leaders) can be ecologically educated and economically empowered as soon as possible (World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2010). In this vein of thought, it will become the operational purview of all organizations to tend to such education.

Later-stage organizations have the potential to become the carriers of the new social DNA, embodied manifestations of an evolutionary way of being that transcend and include the current paradigm. As these cultural imaginal cells (Slater, 2008) proliferate and network to one another in an emergent ecosystem of resonant organizations, they can cross boundaries and introduce new patterns that the dominant system can no longer resist—once a tipping point is reached (McGregor, 2014). Considered at first to be outliers, they can be conceived as an immune response foreshadowing the next stage of human evolution, a stage where people take an active part in the evolution of the planet and all species. However, just as with any journey of importance, in order to take an active part in where they want to go, people must first come to understand where they are at, organizations included.

### **From Efficiency to Efficient Transformations**

Human civilization has triggered the Anthropocene, the first known geological epoch where a single species' behavior effects the environment on a global scale (O'Brien & Selboe, 2015a; Wilson, 2016). Ironically, this impact reflects the successes of *modern* science, technology, and organizational development (Adams, 1996), mostly over the past 100 years. Even more ironic, exponential growth in fragmented knowledge, and its application through technology, will not be enough to change the course that has been set, as overcoming blindness

to our own systemic complicity is the main barrier for social transformation (Nicolescu, 2014a; O'Brien & Selboe, 2015b). Without the benefit of integrated, transdisciplinary knowledge, these paradigmatic blinders will stay in place. Both the separation of science and philosophy, marked by Newtonian thinking, and the rise of disciplinary knowledge must be transcended and included, bringing together that which can and cannot be measured (McGregor, 2013; Nicolescu, 2012).

Current organizational models, such as the current educational systems, were created explicitly to prepare humans for a socialized existence that rewards people for fitting into the machine, not to fostering creativity (Montuori, 2013a). Such is the form of contemporary organizations and economies, based largely on Taylor's scientific management approach (i.e., improving economic efficiency and labor productivity) conceived at the beginning of the 20th century (Weisbord, 2011). In other words, social and management sciences have, from a system's perspective, largely envisioned humans and organizations as closed systems, with employees working as isolated cogs in a larger machine (Montuori, 2013a). This either/or polarization of reality has led to separation, which has led to degradation; the externalization of costs, immortalized by Friedman's (1962) doctrine of responsibility to shareholder profit, has led modernity to the brink. Wilson (2016) recently asked, "Will we continue to degrade the planet to satisfy our own immediate needs, or will we find a way to halt the mass extinction for the sake of future generations?" (p. 15).

In more detail, beginning with Frederick Taylor in the second half of the 19th century, the organization was viewed through the lens of materialistic science, using the scientific management approach. This approach had many benefits, as Taylorism allowed some workers to earn significantly more than most others, increasing individual exceptionalism and productivity

while decreasing costs (Weisbord, 2011). Taylorism was attached to an American understanding of capitalism, which fueled an era of science and machinery. This notion of capitalism fit the development of society at the time, constituting an intellectual “positive act of freedom” (Nicolescu, 2014a, p.186), which led to the blossoming of the Modern Age.

Taylor’s organizational theory was followed by that of James MacGregor. His Theory X and Theory Y laid the groundwork for a more nuanced view of organizational development. Even in his own time (1970s), MacGregor lamented that people were missing the point, and some hold that they are still missing it to this day (Heil, Bennis, & Stephens, 2000; Maslow, Stephens, & Heil, 1998). Theory X and Y had less to do with human nature being inherently slothful versus creative, and more to do with the fact that what leaders expect (their mindset) is largely what they get. As observed earlier, how people think about things affects how they interact with them. “Leaders must learn to see themselves as part of both the problem and the solution” (Weisbord, 2011, p. 104). A contemporary of Abraham Maslow (best known for his hierarchy of needs, a theory of human motivation), MacGregor brought humanistic values into organizational development, making room for Kurt Lewin and Eric Trist, two influential organizational development theorists. Humans can develop. Given the environment and the opportunity, they *will* do so.

Kurt Lewin’s work (e.g., gatekeeper theory) in the 1930s and 1940s marked a shift in the understanding of organizational dynamics, bringing the concepts of action research and group dynamics into organizational work. Taking the whole system into consideration means stakeholders at all levels must be addressed. “Lewin’s gatekeeper theory showed that he understood ‘stakeholders’ long before the word was coined....Involving people was not a ‘technique.’ It was the bedrock of social learning, requiring goal focus, feedback, leadership, and

participation by all the relevant actors” (Weisbord, 2011, p. 98). This premise represents a shift away from a mechanical interpretation of organizations, which assumed that people work *in* them. The gatekeeper movement toward participation implies dynamics that can only be understood by interacting *with* them (i.e., by changing the system). An expert becomes less a diagnostician and more a catalyst. “[Lewin] taught that to understand a system you must seek to change it....Diagnosis does not mean just finding the problem, but doing it in such a way as to build commitment for action” (Weisbord, 2011, p. 80).

Likeminded work further unfolded in the late 1940s and 1950s, epitomized by the work of Eric Trist and the Tavistock Institute in a coal mine town in Northern England. This work led to a “paradigm shift” in the understanding of group behavior and organizational efficiency (Weisbord, 2011, p. 176). Half a century earlier, Frederick Taylor had shown that the technical (efficiency) systems of an organization greatly affect productivity. With Trist’s work, the paradigm shift was that group dynamics, or social systems, were as important to organizational understanding as the technical systems. However, unlike Taylor’s insistence that technical systems should be designed by the experts, enforced by management, monitored by supervisors, and carried out by labor, it came to be understood that autonomous groups *could* self-regulate (and self-organize) to a greater degree than previously proposed by top-down scientific management.

By 1960, the term *organizational development* had been coined, and the first graduate program in the field was being offered. Also, during the 1960s, Abraham Maslow’s aforementioned “hierarchy of needs” was gaining ground, and the concept of a humanistic psychology based on fundamental, universal human needs, as opposed to a psychology of pathology, was gaining momentum. By the end of the decade, the fledgling organizational

development field had formed a network of practitioners, the OD Network. These early roots of organizational development were solidly grounded in the principles of humanistic psychology, promoting and protecting the well-being of individuals in the context of organizations.

Contemporary times mark a struggle for the organizational development field to remain attached to humanistic principles and, ultimately, become a force for contributing to healthy organizations.

Although much of the groundwork of organizational development was laid during the previous half century, it was not until the early 1970s that the field began to have an identity as such, although just what that identity might be was not so clear. What *was* becoming clear was that effectively implementing change in an organization was very much about people and culture, not just efficiency and productivity. As Weisbord (1987) pointed out in *Productive Workplaces*, the early research that led to the field of organizational development was not in businesses. However, once organizational development got rolling, business is where the majority of interest and funding for the work subsequently came from. By the late 1970s, organizational development was on the world map, with a plethora of instruments for plying the trade.

The work in the beginning of the seventies focused on diagnosis and teambuilding, with the humanistic roots of the movement still in sight. However, as the 1970s came to a close, the tools got better, the money got bigger, and the focus began to shift to the method of the day, that being diagnosis of organizational problems and issues (Jaffe, 2013). The interesting thing about diagnosis, which means “specifying gaps between the way things are and the way they should be,” is that people tend to find what they are looking for (Weisbord, 1987, p. 289). There was a tool for every diagnosis, and when people had a favorite tool, they tended to look for a place to

use it, leading to a focus on incremental tinkering rather than full-scale change (especially paradigmatic change).

The first generation of organizational development was aging quickly. By the early 1980s, a new generation was emerging. It was becoming clear that simply “running people through training” might incrementally increase effectiveness and efficiency, but the increasingly turbulent reality that companies were operating in begged for something more. This *more* was a focus on “second-order change, that is, on organizational transformation” (French & Bell, 1995, p. 53). And *organization transformation* (Adams, 2005) was, at its core, a return to the values and principles of humanistic psychology—with the added dimensions of clarifying purpose, building vision, and nurturing the human spirit in the workplace (Jaffe, 2013).

However, this humanistic psychology renaissance was short lived. As the 1980s became the 1990s, and the pace of everything picked up and the money got even bigger, the tools of organizational development were necessary just to keep businesses afloat. The world had entered a new paradigm of constant change, and humanistic principles took a back seat as the big consulting firms jumped into the game (Jaffe, 2013). Organizational development had become another tool for supporting “business as usual,” a palliative balm to keep human resources effective and efficient.

### **Systems Thinking and Social Systems Design**

The need for postformal modes of thinking and doing has been established. Scholarship in systems thinking and social systems design offers tools for both transforming existing organizations and designing new ones with this in mind. Also, design and design thinking have become ubiquitous in modern life. Archetypical examples, such as Steve Jobs’s thinking and the iPhone, show how a focus on, and investment in, design can literally change the world. However,

unevenness of distribution of this sort of thinking, attributed to a lack of creative mastery, means there is still a way to go before such innovative thinking and doing becomes the status quo (T. Brown, 2015).

When the systems view of the world began to emerge, the scientific establishment moved from thinking of the universe as a mechanical clock to attempting to bring together the best of holistic understanding and scientific rigor to understand the world (Banathy & Jenlink, 2005).

Systems thinking marks a shift in thinking

towards rigorous but holistic theories. This means thinking in terms of facts and events in the context of wholes, forming integrated sets with their own properties and relationships. Looking at the world in terms of such sets of integrated relations constitutes the systems view. (E. Laszlo, 1972, p. 19)

Systems thinking is an “emerging contemporary view of organized complexity, one step beyond the Newtonian view of organized simplicity, and two steps beyond the classical world views of divinely ordered or imaginatively envisaged complexity” (E. Laszlo, 1972, p. 15). If systems thinking is an upgrade of Newtonian science toward a holistic understanding of the interdependent nature of the universe, then design thinking is the view that humans have an interactive role to play within these systems.

Whereas science, and increasingly technology, is moving toward the quantum, today’s economic and social structures remain firmly rooted in the longstanding Newtonian approach (Dawlabani, 2013). A core tenet of this dissertation is that human thinking, and the productivity and creative potential of our species, evolves with our social systems in a synergistic relationship between individual and collective evolution. Social systems are how humans get things done. Checkland (2000) uses the term “human activity systems,” with these being “a collection of structured sets of activities that make up the system, coupled with a collection of activities concerned with processing information, making plans, performing, monitoring performance,

etc.” (Banathy, 1996, p. 14). Such systems are “intellectual constructs [that form] a notional system that expresses some purposeful human activity that could be found in the real world” (Banathy, 1996, p. 14).

Banathy (1996) defined design as “purposeful creative action, the building of relations between us and our world” (p. 33). It is a “creative, disciplined, and decision-oriented inquiry, carried out in iterative cycles” (p. 16) and is “concerned with how things ‘ought to be’” (p. 24). In the context of decision-oriented inquiry, Banathy (1996) noted that, in “the design world of wicked problems, the aim is not to find the truth but to design systems that enhance human betterment and improve human quality” (p. 31). In other words, the goal of design is to iteratively add value to and improve upon the human condition. The implications of these understandings of design cannot be understated, as what was once viewed as the immutable laws of human nature came to be understood as results of the social systems humans create.

Banathy (1996) argued for the education of a culture of design, pointing out that “collective design capability empowers us to exercise truly participative democracy” (p. 2). He insisted, “once people in self-organizing social systems develop competence in design, they can carry out their own inquiry and create their own system based on their image of the future they wish to create” (Banathy, 1996, p. 23). Current social systems are mostly hierarchies of domination, conceived as a form of mechanical thinking put into being, with those at the top making the decisions and everyone else a part of the machine (Eisler, 1987). Social systems design marks a move from planning and design by authorities and experts to collaborative design, recognizing that each person is the best expert in terms of their personal subjective experience and any unique gifts to offer moving forward. Bottom-up initiatives reflecting the input of all stakeholders are not only humanistic but also offer perhaps the only chance for

humanity as we know it to navigate the turbulent onset of the Anthropocene. In natural systems, sun and water come from the top down, and growth comes from the bottom up. Social systems must reflect this arrangement if humanity is to move beyond sustainability and thrive.

Organizations are included in this argument.

Building upon Banathy's (1996) work, K. C. Laszlo (2001) introduces the concept of Evolutionary Learning Community, asserting it is "an ideal alternative learning system that seeks to catalyze the purposeful creation of sustainable and evolutionary futures" (p. 379). Described as a specific version of Evolutionary Systems Design, which is in turn a social systems application of General Evolution Theory, these learning communities hold design conversations around a shared ideal vision while honoring sustainability concepts. The ideal vision becomes an *attractor* for collective emergence, as does the community. Such a community becomes both a source of evolutionary learning and a vehicle of evolutionary praxis. This learning and praxis might then come together, marking the emergence of evolutionary social systems (A. Laszlo & Laszlo, 2002).

To review, humanity faces a Gordian knot of intertwined wicked problems, where the solutions to any one of them already seem impossible, while the lot of them poses a potential threat to civilization as we know it. Transdisciplinarity, in theory and action, represents a way of networking together the traditionally solitary silos of disciplinary knowledge and areas of local expertise (i.e., life world knowledge) in ways that honor the collaborative and emergent nature of new knowledge. Designing social systems to foster systems thinking and doing, while actively embodying solutions to these wicked problems, is crucial to a sustainable humanity.

Which, in a way, brings one back to the beginning of organizational development, to individual practitioners who see a focus on humanistic principles as the end, not the means. Or

perhaps more accurately, we are at the beginning of a third generation of organizational development practitioners who see the health of a firm as measured by its effect on society, not just the strength of its bottom line. This third generation has its work cut out, as the second generation is still alive and well, spurring on the global economic machine with wild abandon (i.e., it is an entrenched paradigmatic mindset). Indeed, the stakes are higher than ever, and people will likely soon find out if principles alone are enough. In fact, the current mainstream paradigm of organizational development brought Adams (1996) to bemoan the irony of its success, noting “the better we do as Organizational Development practitioners, while operating in today’s paradigm, the faster we are hastening the arrival of several major global challenges” (p. 1). The vast majority of humans assume growth to be the single most important aim of economic activity, while such intractable wicked problems as toxic consumerism, climate change, and social and economic injustice power much of “business as usual.”

This discussion started out with a deep concern for climate change and, by association, sustainability as well as the relationship of modern leaders and the modern organization to these concepts. Both climate change and sustainability have become buzzwords, with climate change a growing, if not understood, reality; however, integrating the need for systemic change into the day-to-day decision making of organizations is another matter. Clearly, new ways of leading and organizing organizations are necessary to access the creative solutions needed for humanity to create a true future value (Wood, 2017)—to solve the challenge of the Gordian knot.

### **Leadership and Development**

Leadership models and theories abound: “situational leadership, trait-based leadership, transformational leadership, distributed leadership, servant leadership, collaborative leadership, shared leadership, charismatic leadership, authentic leadership—the list goes on and on”

(Ladkin, 2010, p. 15). There are at least 1,500 definitions of leader and leadership and their synonyms, and “at least 46 theories of leadership” (Volckmann, 2014, p. 257). Whether focusing on traits, behaviors, or situational and relational contexts, the vast majority of these theoretical efforts focus on attributes of the person designated to hold power in the leader role. In this context, the leadership of an organization is often thought of as the collective group of those in leader roles in a given organization. This current labeling reflects an evolution over time of a focus on (a) inborn traits of leaders to (b) traits and behaviors that could be developed, to (c) a growing understanding of the contextual nature of leadership.

Volckmann (2014) made a further distinction between *leaders* (the person in a role), *leading* (the activities that leaders do), and *leadership* (the integration of leader, leading, and context in its multiple levels). Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, and McKee (2014) note the many ways in which leader and leadership development is being researched. This includes, as proposed in this research, applying constructive developmental theory to leader development. McGregor and Donnelly (2014) offer the concept of “transleadership” as a bridge between these agents, by stating, it “entails crisscrossing and going *beyond* traditional approaches to leading, taking people to *new* places and to new states of understanding and insights, transcending their former [leadership] positions to new transdisciplinary positions” (pp. 166–167).

Continuing the red thread that is holding this study’s argument together, changing the worldview of a civilization cannot be achieved by decree; it will emerge as the threats facing humanity and the planet are met with transleadership. “The ultimate goal of transleadership is the creation of new knowledge to address wicked problems, knowledge that did not exist before it was integrated from disparate perspectives into an integral whole” (McGregor & Donnelly, 2014, p. 180). This ability to bring seemingly opposing realities together to find creative solutions in an

existing tension is a hallmark of postformal stages of development. To make this individual attribute an organizational reality, the fertile middle space between many areas of study must be cultivated as organizations become value-adding entities in all aspects of their interactions (Sanford, 2011). These areas include but are not limited to communitarian ethics (Selznick, 2002), the capabilities approach (Nussbaum, 2011), stakeholder theory (Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar, & Colle, 2010), the natural step (James & Lahti, 2004), natural capitalism (Hawken, Lovins, & Lovins, 1999), the partnership organization (Eisler & Montuori, 2001), and partnerships (Eisler, 2002), which is acknowledged but not addressed in this literature review.

B. Brown (2011) showed that leaders at late-stage (postconventional) action logics (Cook-Greuter, 2013) have more success engaging in sustainability initiatives than those who are not at this stage. Kegan and Lahey (2010) agree, pointing out the increased efficacy of leaders who have developed a self-authoring mind. Torbert (1987) and then Rooke and Torbert (1998, 2005) showed the importance of later stage ego development to organizational transformation. Getting to know one's own psychology, putting one's self in other's shoes, and noticing how both change depending on social and environmental factors, is a lifelong practice. Over time, practice, attention, and intention lead people to greater understanding and facility, both in socio-emotional and cognitive development. This deeper understanding of self and other and the constructed nature of reality can inform and influence leadership within organizations and, ultimately, the stage development of not only employees and other stakeholders but that of the organization itself.

### **Organizations and Stage Development**

It is significant to note that the practice of pairing individual and group psychology with business productivity in western literature is well over one hundred years old, beginning, as

noted, in the Modern Era with scientific management, from Taylor to McGregor. And yet, theories of stage development, although developed simultaneously (Baldwin, who influenced Piaget, was a contemporary of Taylor), have been largely ignored in mainstream leadership and organizational literature (McCauley et al., 2006). In fact, for the most part, the existing human stage development theories are about individuals or individual lines of development. As yet, there is no validated assessment applying developmental theory to *assess* an organization's stage of development, although Barrett (2002), Beck and Cowan (1996), Edwards (2010), and Torbert (1976, 1987, 2013) have *described* them in various ways. Table 2, provided by Cacioppe and Edwards (2005), synthesizes theoretical descriptions of organizational stages from four different approaches into a developmental model that maps the four quadrants in integral theory to leadership consciousness, organizational behavior, organizational culture, and organizational systems, where attributes in each quadrant at each level of development are delineated: spiral dynamics (Beck & Cowan, 1996), integral theory (Wilber, 2000), corporate transformation (Barrett, 2002), and developmental action inquiry (Torbert, 2004). The practice of integral organizational development, which might be described as a focus on transformative development, is defined as

the balanced (all quadrants), transformative (all levels), multidimensional (all lines) growth and integrative sustainability (all dynamics) of the whole organization and its employees to achieve worthwhile visions and goals for the owners, customers, industry, natural environment and the community which it serves. (Cacioppe & Edwards, 2005, p. 99)

Table 2

*Levels of Organizational Development*

Basic Level	Description	Leadership consciousness	Organisational behaviour	Organisational culture	Organisational system
1. Surviving Beige  Impulsive reaction	Immediate physical gain, “results now,” reactive survival, crisis mode	Dominated by a few leaders’ personality, reactive struggle for existence, attend to immediate payoffs	Survival goals and basic existence activity, random subsistence goals, short-term sales focus	Values based on survival and immediate results, materialistic, cash flow and profit is the only value	Ad hoc, no real systems, efficiency driven only by cost-cutting appearances, no strategic planning
2. Bonding Purple  Joining together for self-benefit	Focused on joining with others for mutual safety and security, organ, as “family”	Instinctual, reactive, and manipulative, immediate needs-based, leadership focus on bringing people together to build a common sense of team by establishing norms that ensure group survival and identity	Follows regulations norms, conforming behaviour, seeks acceptance of the group, habitual	Peer and group norms keep the group intact. Can be an in-group, out-group culture	Systems are focused on self-maintenance, monitoring, reporting based on comparison to past or similar
3. Asserting Red  Gaining advantage	Gaining capital resources, and relationships to build and preserve, relationships based on power	Leaders do anything to succeed. The organisation seeks managers who want to expand/grow at all costs.	Self-centred and risk-taking behaviour, acts out of power, status. Short-term goals. Aims to win at expense of others	“The end justifies the means,” values sales and acquisition above all else, values hard work, power and status symbols.	Minimal HR, legal, marketing or accounting systems, technology used to bring immediate gains, limited planning
4. Organizing Blue  Establishing Order	Desire for order and certainty, “right and wrong” orientation, paternalistic	Focus on rules-based identity, fear of loss of control and uncertainty, “this is how we do things”	Set behaviours, job descriptions, activities defined and regulated, follow a letter of the law	Values obedience, followers are expected to follow procedures, conservative morality	Directive management systems, focus on quantitative aspects, technology as tool for organising, reporting

Basic Level	Description	Leadership consciousness	Organisational behaviour	Organisational culture	Organisational system
5. Achieving Orange Maximizing performance	Strives to achieve through rational, independent, autonomous means	Leaders have high drive to achieve and compete, success and achievement defines identity	Goal-based behaviour, set objectives and do anything to achieve them, workaholic	Individualist worldview, reward or punish the individual, performance culture, focus on efficiency	Systems are designed to achieve targets/ goals, technology as a means to show-case individuals and provide advantage
6. Cooperating Green Internal cohesion	Combining and supporting multiple goals, development via combining skills and resources	Aware of the needs of others. Leaders seek consensus but not manipulative	Behaviour is based on multiple goals, triple bottom line, internal cooperation when commitment is present at all levels	Values individual rights and fairness, consensus decision making, diversity and equity in workforce culture	Integration of systems for cooperating and effectiveness to achieve local and total goals, high use of CIT
7. Visioning Yellow Values-based foresight	Visionary links to industry and community, displays both micro- and macro-global perspective	Aware of the entire spectrum of needs, balanced conscious activity, caters for individual and team wellbeing	Commitment to organisational goals and action, considerable trust, clear, open, two-way communication	Values a balance of individual and collective views, values community involvement in development	Technology unifies yet allows for diversity, external systems focus, links with industry and community, triple bottom line
8. Integral Turquoise Integrative of multiple goals and values	Service-oriented, aims to improve organization and the community via integrated development	Wisdom in leadership behaviour, seeks to fulfill needs of staff, customers, owners, and community	Compassionate, service-focused behaviour, learning leads to action to improve the growth of communities	Values life, supports balanced growth, care, committed to active involvement in community or national issues	Systems fully integrated and linked to external industry and appropriate community interests, technology used for collaboration and services

*Note.* From “Seeking the Holy Grail of Organisational Development” by R. Cacioppe & M. G. Edwards, 2005, *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 26(2), pp. 100–101. Reproduced by permission.

Table 2 illustrates the point that the stages of adult development can theoretically be mapped to an organization. Successively, later-stage organizations exhibit increasingly complex ways of making meaning or acting in the world. The common ground investigated in this dissertation is the dialectical relationship between individual and group development (with dialectical meaning dealing with tension between conflicting ideas by employing discussion, the Socratic method, the Hegelian process, or debate). Laske (2015) defines common ground “as a dynamic assemblage of elements *co-defining each other* as part of a dynamic whole (the true meaning of holon)” (p. 92). As individuals mature through stages of development, their ability to make meaning of and relate to each other and reality can become increasingly complex. This increased complexity affords a greater understanding of the systemic, interdependent nature of life, allowing for more fulfilling forms of organization to be imagined and prototyped. Researchers have recently chronicled examples of more fulfilling forms of organizations from multiple perspectives. Five particularly relevant examples follow with a critique of how each one fits with this particular study.

Kegan et al. (2016) present the “deliberately developmental organization,” chronicling case studies of three organizations that have hardwired the personal development of all members into their everyday cultural milieu. The main point here is making individual development explicit, utilizing the energy normally devoted to office politics and generally saving face for personal growth, thus making people more effective and the organizations more profitable. However, actual stages of development of organizations or individuals are not discussed in the deliberately developmental organization approach.

Laloux’s (2014) book, *Reinventing Organizations*, is based on his interpretation of the works of Jenny Wade and Ken Wilber, with additional readings from Kegan, Loevinger, Cook-

Greuter and Graves (Laloux, personal communication, June 2017). He offers 12 case studies of teal organizations. For clarification, teal refers to Wilber's (1996) color spectrum for the various stages of development, correlated with the yellow or systemic stage in Spiral Dynamics (Beck & Cowan, 1996) and 4.5 in the STAGES model (O'Fallon, 2013). The term is used more loosely in Laloux's (2014) book to describe a postformal organization in which people's actions are guided by "listening" to the organization's purpose. These next-generation organizations are further characterized by rapid change and adaptation, as adjustments are continuously made to better serve the organization's purpose.

Laloux's (2014) cases exhibited three breakthroughs, which he labels self-organization, wholeness, and evolutionary purpose. These breakthroughs indicate a stage of organizational development that fosters the development of personal initiative and hierarchies of actualization, personal growth, and the organizational agility and ability to serve people *and* profits as best as possible. Laloux applied stage theory to understand existing organizations, although not in a formal research setting as will be done in this dissertation.

Schwinn and Schwinn (2015) put forward that "a commitment to expanding the consciousness of people enlarges the purpose of the organization, leads to its prosperity and, ultimately, creates greater possibilities of a more peaceful world for all" (Kindle Locations 109–111). They make their case through a review of 10 organizations where selfness (basic needs and well-being); otherness (reflection, inner peace, and relating to other as self); and wholeness (systemic ecological and social healing) are integrated parts of successful businesses. Although the authors provide a number of case studies supporting their findings, they provide neither a working framework integrating these three areas of selfness, otherness, and wholeness, nor a diagnostic tool for assessing an organization.

Sanford's (2011) *pentad* is a compelling model for creating a vibrant, socially responsible and regenerative organization. It is represented by a geometrical framework for a responsible business, a stakeholder model that views five (hence the name pentad) core stakeholder groups as most significant to overall business success. Iterative movements around the pentad, with attention to adding value in all interactions, and a theoretical basis in permaculture, makes for a lively model. However, it fails to address stage development theory in a way useful to this study's research question.

Wood (2014, 2017) offers a clear system for assessing and addressing thriveability of organizations, which includes integral theory, and developmental and systemic understanding. Accounting for eight forms of capital with six pathways for innovation, it marks the path of organizations as they seek to build true future value in areas of (a) sustainability (natural, infrastructure and manufactured capital); (b) organization development (intellectual and financial capital); and (c) sociocultural advancement (human, relationship and social capitals). However, the metrics are still in beta testing, and the model does not specifically offer an assessment for organizational development within established developmental research. Taken together, these five initiatives provide compelling evidence of the emergent interest in the literature around theorizing and conceptualizing more vanguard approaches to organizational development, leading us to the Next-Stage Organization model.

### **The Next-Stage Organization**

Given the state of humanity and the environment in the Anthropocene, organizations that are able to provide goods and services with value-adding solutions to all stakeholders represent emergent solutions, which include and transcend current contexts. The previous discussion frequently referred to "later stage" development, defined as when development transcends and

includes earlier stages while becoming progressively more evolved and complex. A Next-Stage Organization is able to provide a good or service *while* adding value to all stakeholders. It becomes a *holding environment for transdisciplinary commerce*, which requires unprecedented global synergy and cooperation. Nicolescuian transdisciplinarity holds that new knowledge is born in the tension between the apparent paradoxes of being a healthy organization in an unhealthy system. The new science notion of tension is that it holds things together as they evolve, rather than pushing them apart (McGregor, 2011). Maslow et al. (1998) comment that the

very fact that social change must be holistic, practically guarantees that it must also be very complex, which practically guarantees that it is not going to be easily understood by an uneducated man, and that it certainly cannot even be quickly understood by any man [*sic*], however intelligent, and however learned. Perhaps it can never be totally understood by any one human being; perhaps it has to be a colleague-hood, league-hood or a joint effort with division of labor among a fairly large group of specialists each of whom can understand well his own sector of the society. This means as one of the underlying necessities of social betterment or of slow revolution science, research, education, learning, teaching, etc., etc. (p. 281)

In other words, social change is by its very nature an ongoing, transdisciplinary phenomenon. By acknowledging and fostering this, the Next-Stage Organization becomes a leading force for social change.

Humans, as well as other living systems, develop through stages of complexity (Commons, 2008). “Evolution, as an idea, transcends biology. It is better thought of as a broad set of principles and patterns that generate novelty, change, and development over time” (Phipps, 2012, Kindle Locations 370–371). Human capital is generally underutilized when addressing most problems, despite that involving everyone has positive, emergent effects (Nussbaum, 2011). Including the environment as a stakeholder adds to this too, but most organizations and most people, are likely at the mid-to-late conventional stages of development, given the relative rarity of postconventional people at this time (Commons & Ross, 2008; Cook-Greuter, 2013). This means there is currently no space or place for integration, environments, or complexity

when it comes to problem posing and solving, at a time when their combination is urgently needed.

Postconventional (Cook-Greuter, 2013), postformal (Commons, 2008), and self-transforming (Kegan, 1994) orders of development indicate a cusp (i.e., a point that marks the beginning of a change) in which an individual becomes acutely aware of the socially and cognitively constructed nature of reality. This awareness entails alternating stages of discernment and integration that are inherent in development (Cook-Greuter, 2013) and contributes to the beginnings of a layer of intentional creativity wherein the interconnected nature of all levels of reality becomes more apparent. Next-Stage Organizations, such as transleaders who recognize leadership as a “co-created act” (McGregor & Donnelly, 2014, p. 168), add value as emergent solutions to wicked problems become competitive advantages in the genesis of a thriveable planetary culture (Wood, 2014, 2017).

These are organizations that can *hold space* for members with differing developmental trajectories, skills, and backgrounds so they can collaborate across current socio-cultural divides to find emergent solutions to wicked problems. This work could be considered making meaning in a more complex fashion than “business as usual.” Such an organization can unlock the minority’s best thinking, which otherwise “might not prevail in team discussions and decisions... purely and simply on account of the distribution of phases of cognitive development toward dialectic in the team” (Laske, 2015, p. 93). Emergent knowledge is fostered, instead of repressed. It is alive and always changing because those co-creating it are alive and always changing (Nicolescu, 2014a, 2014b). In other words, if a self-transforming human mind can change itself, then a self-transforming organization lead by humans should be able to become a lever that can change society. All parts of a system are interrelated. As an organization constructs a dialectical

identity, self-organizing with purpose by adding value and building community, it builds momentum toward a systemic upshift; that is, to higher, more complex and inclusive levels—to the next stage.

*Next-stage structures* would expose individuals to each other in increasing depth, allowing the group to include and transcend individual growth. At the same time, they would seek to continuously add value to self and society as a whole, leveraging evolutionary purpose as a competitive advantage. This developmental cusp, known as second tier in integral theory and spiral dynamics, marks the transition to a more holistic, interconnected, and less egoic interpretation of reality. The notion of second tier is alternatively and similarly known as (a) postconventional (Cook-Greuter, 2013), (b) postformal (Commons, 2008), and (c) self-authoring/self-transforming (Kegan, 1994).

Given the oppressive nature of current hierarchical systems (Eisler, 2007), in the context of a global economy on the brink of ecological ruin (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2014; World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2010), organizations are urgently needed that are explicitly transforming self and society by providing products and services in a way that is healing ecological, psychological, and sociological ills (Wood, 2014).

Living systems become both more complex and more essential through time. Ecological and biological systems not only adapt to their surroundings; they also transform them. They create contexts in which increasingly sophisticated networks of relationships emerge. This opens up expanding opportunities for the expression and development of their inherent potential. (Sanford, 2011, Kindle Location 224)

A Next-Stage Organization is formed with the realization that striving for wholeness is an evolutionary right for all life and should be a key component of the organization's purpose. As such, all life is also imbued with an evolutionary purpose to be beneficial to the whole. "Our responsibility is to build sustainable futures in agreement with the overall movement of Reality" (Nicolescu, 2014a, p. 197). To do so, *all* of reality must be acknowledged as "a unified theory of

levels of Reality [that] is crucial in building sustainable development and sustainable futures” (Nicolescu, 2014, p. 196). In other words, sustainability must become the purview of organizational development now that we have entered the Anthropocene. This review of the literature ends with a comment on sustainability in the Anthropocene, using it to tie off the red thread woven throughout the development of the argument justifying this study.

### **Sustainability in the Anthropocene**

Sustainability refers to the need to live within the natural limits of one’s environment, recognizing that current global life conditions (our new reality) include increasing environmental degradation and exploitation of nonrenewable resources that are far outstripping realistic future supplies (Heinberg, 2010). Human history clearly shows that it is normal for civilizations to crash once they grow beyond the carrying capacity of their surrounding environment (Diamond, 2011). This information is not new, as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (1992) saw this as an imminent global threat to humanity nearly three decades ago.

Climate change is currently a politically debated meme (i.e., a transmittable cultural characteristic), an intersection of an entire checklist of threats to the longevity of human civilization. It is being debated endlessly, as mentioned earlier, because the majority of humans have yet to adapt to the reality that their actions directly affect the environment (O'Brien & Selboe, 2015a). Associated with this interminable debate about climate change is the term sustainability, defined as the ability to live within ecological limits in such a way that life conditions are not adversely affected, now and in the future. The literature supports the assertion that new knowledge is necessary, and transformation is a must. In other words, a transitioning to sustainability requires overcoming the adaptive challenge to recognize human behavior as the

cause of environmental degradation, which necessitates individual stage development, organizational development, cultural progress, and global evolution.

Evolution is a moving target involving maturity, although maturity might be defined as coming into balance with one's individual and collective purpose. Consider the collective actions and agreements made at the 2015 *Paris Conference of Parties* about climate change (the COP21 conference), at once historic and at best just enough of a step in the right direction, with no room to falter (United Nations, 2015). To capture this idea in a nutshell, consider that

in mature natural systems there are no authoritarian governments. What species is in charge in a rainforest? What part is in charge of your body? Imagine doing world politics in our bodies. Imagine the brain deciding not to allocate resources to certain organs, but keeping them to itself. You can't have some organs exploiting the others. You would die. (Sanford, 2011, p. 154)

As Sanford (2011) notes in a recent interview, many of these concepts have been in use for a long time (Southern, 2015). Indeed, in start-up companies in general and, stereotypically, the technology industry in particular, human resource (HR) policies explicitly cater to Maslow's (1954, 1971) entire hierarchy of needs (Jerome, 2013). However, for true self-actualization and self-transcendence (the top levels of his hierarchy), the *entire* system must transform. Thus, organizations, not to mention entire industries, nations, and continents, must begin working toward the same common good – to transform the entire system. As Doppelt (2011) notes,

sustainability is about protecting our options. This requires a new economic paradigm that allows humans to live and work in ways that can be maintained for decades and generations without depleting or causing harm to our environmental, social and economic resources. (Kindle Locations 1252–1254)

In fact, the literature reviewed for this dissertation and reported in this section supports the further assertion that more than just the economic paradigm has to shift. A system-wide paradigmatic shift is required.

Between current technologies and the emergent potential of collective action, plenty of solutions potentially exist. Ultimately, however, the problem of sustainability is a *human* problem, the greatest challenges of which are “social, personal, and political transformations” (O'Brien & Selboe, 2015a, Kindle Locations 6–7). In other words, “only a major shift in moral reasoning, with greater commitment given to the rest of life, can meet this greatest challenge of the century” (Wilson, 2016, p. 207). The good news is that the shift has already begun on the grass roots level where local sustainability initiatives are becoming prototypes for the potential inherent in “solving for pattern” (Flaccavento, 2016). Even better, it marks the beginning of a move toward a truly regenerative culture (Wahl, 2016).

### **Chapter Wrap Up**

As evident throughout this critical review of the literature, it takes a while for people and systems to evolve, genius to become commonplace, and the wisdom of the sages to become the common sense of the ages. Colloquially, that is what this research is for. The possibility of a paradigmatic next-stage civilization (Ross, 2008a) does not mean everyone is automatically postformal; it means everyone is respected and has an honored place.

And yet, the system itself needs to evolve past the conventional stage of civilization as we know it is to persist. Reason and spirit must be brought back together, integrated into a rich, integral whole. The overall red thread of this narrative has been the need for not only individual shifts but an entire organizational, system-wide, and societal shift from Newtonian to Quantum thinking and being. This includes the understanding that, if they are to survive, all systems (including organizational systems), although resistant to change, must remain open to transformation and self-organization, becoming a *strange attractor* for change in chaotic situations. In closing, consider the following quote from Heil et al. (2000):

To a lesser degree, and in a much more tentative fashion, we are in a position in the social sciences today like that of the physical sciences with respect to atomic energy in the thirties. We know that past conceptions of the nature of man [*sic*] are inadequate and in many ways incorrect. We are becoming quite certain that, under proper conditions, unimagined resources of creative human energy could become available within the organizational setting. (Kindle Locations 1256–1258)

## CHAPTER 4: METHODS

The research question guiding this study was: “How effectively does the combined transdisciplinary, integral, and STAGES approach allow for the identification of whether a Founder/CEO’s stage of human development informs the stage of development of an organization?” This question was investigated using a qualitative research approach, specifically case studies, chosen for two reasons. First, the study focused on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 2009) by exploring a bounded case. In-depth data were collected about three Next-Stage Organization Founders/CEOs and the respective organizations from multiple sources so as to report the description of each bounded case. Second, I had little or no control over events related to this phenomenon, making the case study a good choice because it allowed me to narrow the scope of, and better manage, the inquiry. Per the central tenet of qualitative research, my intent was to include participants’ personal meanings and perspectives, which provide a more holistic account of their lived experience with the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

### Research Design

This qualitative study employed the case study research design. In these instances, the *case* is the real-life situation, and the *study* is the analysis of it. The researcher must prepare an in-depth account sufficient to convince readers that a real-life situation has been thoroughly analyzed. Instead of a single case, this study employed a *multiple case* study design. This approach involved the creation of three individual case studies, representative of the phenomenon in question. Each separate case was a whole study in itself. As well, this was an *embedded* multiple case study design, meaning each of the individual cases entailed more than one unit of analysis. Developing multiple case studies provided more compelling, robust

evidence of the phenomenon. And, having more than one case also facilitated cross-case comparisons (Yin, 2009).

The case study research design has five components: the research question, underlying propositions, units of analysis, the logic linking the data to the propositions, and the criteria for analyses. These comprise the logical sequence that connects the guiding question to the qualitative data and any conclusions (Yin, 2009). The following text relates these components to my research design for this study.

### **Ethics Review**

The data collection process followed the protocol approved by Saybrook University's Institutional Review Board. Although the identity of each Founder/CEO is revealed in Laloux's (2014) book, it was protected in this study by the assignment of a number (pseudonym).

Regarding my study, participants knew ahead of time that their business and professional information would be profiled in this doctoral dissertation (a public document). Part of this entailed them agreeing to complete the SCT, which was used to determine their personal stage of human development, the results of which are revealed in this document albeit using pseudonyms.

### **Underlying Propositions**

Yin (2009) recommends that case study researchers carefully articulate the propositions underlying their study, preparing the way for pattern matching (i.e., relating several pieces of information from the case to some theoretical proposition). The main methodological proposition underlying this study, aside from McCauley et al.'s (2006) seven propositions of adult development theory listed in Chapter 2, was that the STAGES model can be effectively and usefully applied to study organizations. Specifically, I proposed that a Next-Stage Organization is a theoretical late stage (developmentally) organization likely to fill a leader role in the

emergence of a sustainable global humanity. I further proposed that the ability to identify such organizations, as well as to assess where those organizations are on the developmental spectrum, would be useful for the organizational development field.

Philosophically, a multilayered reality implies the proposition that the STAGE development of the Founder/CEO is linked to, and has a direct affect upon, the STAGE development of the organization. This multilayered reality encompasses several realities that evolve interdependently: subjective, objective, intersubjective, and interobjective (per Nicolescu's [2012] transdisciplinarity and Wilber's [2001] AQAL approach). This means patterns of relationships should be observable between the individual and the organization in each of these four areas.

### **Sampling, Site Selection, and Participants**

To ensure that the study sample drew from a previously identified population of potentially advanced organizations, the participants were purposefully sampled from Laloux's (2014) book, *Reinventing Organizations*. Purposive sampling is generally used in case study research and involves selecting participants on purpose because they can best provide information to answer the research question (Creswell, 2007; McGregor, 2017). This meant that the participants for this study were Founder/CEOs of organizations identified by Laloux (2014) as potential Next-Stage Organizations. They represented a pool of well-studied, mature, successful organizations about which there is ample current, public data and research. When I asked him, Mr. Laloux agreed to personally approach each of his 12 study sites, contacting the Founder/CEO to help recruit participants for my study. Using informants who have key connections to the area of study (i.e., gatekeepers) is a recognized recruitment technique for qualitative research (Creswell, 2007).

To help insure consistency in recruitment, I prepared a script for Mr. Laloux to use, which he then personalized to foster interest and uptake. Appreciating the dearth of Next-Stage Organizations, and the reality that the Founders/CEOs represented in Laloux's (2014) book are very busy corporate leaders, my goal was to interview three or more Founder/CEOs, the number dependent upon the success of the informant-solicited outreach. Of four initial affirmative responses received by Mr. Laloux, three participants ultimately completed the process for this study.

Although there is no set number of required participants for case studies, save that they provide sufficient information to address the research question, Yin (2009) explained that having four or more carefully selected cases would have allowed for theoretical replication. This would have enabled me to deal with contradictory results across cases as well as similar results. In this study, the minimum number of three cases was met for literal replication logic wherein I could accommodate similar results across cases (Yin, 2009).

### **Data Collection**

Yin (2009) offers five attributes of a skilled case study researcher. To conduct a quality study, one must be (a) able to ask good questions and interpret the answers, (b) a good listener, (c) adaptive and flexible, (d) unbiased by preconceived notions (purposefully accommodated during qualitative research), and (e) have a firm grasp on the issue being studied. These traits are especially important when using the case study method, as "the demands of a case study on your intellect, ego, and emotions are far greater than those of any other method" (Yin, 2009, p. 69). Foremost, in order to ensure that I had a firm grasp on relevant issues, as well as to moderate bias due to preconceived notions, aspects of the research design and data collection process were

vetted with experts in the fields of transdisciplinarity, integral theory, and organizational development.

### **Data Collection Principles**

Yin (2009) also offers three data collection principles that were employed in this study, namely, using multiple sources (triangulation), creating a case study database, and maintaining a chain of evidence. First, this study used two of Patton's (2002) four types of triangulation, specifically, (a) data triangulation (gathering from multiple perspectives and cases) and (b) methodological triangulation (multiple research methodologies as well as multiple methods of data collection—documents, interviews, and SCT assessment tool).

Regarding the second principle, three separate databases were created, one to hold the documentation data, a second for the participants' interview data, and a third to log the researcher's field reports (part of the data triangulation protocol). These databases were analyzed and drawn upon to develop insights and conclusions relative to the research question. In particular, the field notes contained two components: (a) descriptions of what I saw and heard as the researcher and (b) my reflections on these entries. My descriptions focused on the setting, people, events, interactions, and reactions. Reflections concerned my personal feelings and impressions of these notes, and what they contained relative to the research question (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010).

Third, a clear chain of evidence was maintained by cross-referencing between methodological procedures and the resulting evidence. Maintaining a case study chain of evidence entails reporting only the manifest evidence collected (saving latent inferences for the interpretative stage of the research). I reduced the likelihood of losing evidence by minimizing carelessness with the data and accounting for bias. This involved printing everything as it was

found and tracking the document procurement process. I cut and pasted whole sections containing the CEO or company name in to respective spreadsheets (one created for each CEO/Founder). Iterative versions of the spreadsheets were created as I proceeded to code. The first round removed noise, the second generated Integral Methodological Pluralism labels, the third gave STAGES scores to non-SCT data, and the fourth to sixth rounds involved thematic coding. I accounted for my bias by using these multiple rounds of coding, by cross-checking STAGES scores with descriptions, and by continuously reviewing themes in the multiple iterations to see if they continued to hold. I also created each case separately, both in time and space to ensure I was not actively looking for similar themes. These steps assured that I, as well as the readers, were able to follow the initial research question to the ultimate conclusion. Strict adherence to Yin's chain of evidence principles provided increased credibility of the findings, conclusions, and any recommendations that stemmed from the analysis of the findings generated by this research design (Yin, 2009).

Two of Yin's (2009) six most common sources of case study evidence were used in this study, namely documentation and interviews. Additionally, an assessment of the STAGE of development of each Founder/CEO was administered online and scored by Terri O'Fallon, the author of the STAGES Sentence Completion assessment tool. For clarification, (a) the documents and archival records were analyzed to determine the organization's stage of development, (b) STAGES SCT data were used to determine the Founder/CEO's stage of development, and (c) interviews provided data pertinent to the relationship between the two (i.e., stage of human and organizational development).

## Documentation

Documentation (written documents) can take many forms, from letter and memoranda to minutes, reports, and media artifacts (Yin, 2009). For each case in this study, data relevant to the research question were gathered online from both the respective company's website as well as from *Glassdoor* (a website for employees to anonymously rate companies and their management). Although I originally intended to obtain documents from other sources, I found that strategy to be beyond the scope of the study. Respecting that information from documentation should be the object of an explicit data collection plan (Yin, 2009), the general procurement procedure for each document type entailed printing the pertinent material, reading it, highlighting information pursuant to the research question and then adding that highlighted text to the spreadsheet for the specific case. Each separate entry became a unique datum point.

As a caveat, I systematically and purposefully selected and searched for these documents while allowing sufficient time for their retrieval and secure storage for later analysis (Yin, 2009). As Yin (2009) suggests, I remained cognizant that these documents were created for purposes other than my study, a strategy intended to lessen the likelihood of incorrectly interpreting their importance relative to my research question. That being said, these sorts of documents play an explicit role in case studies because they reflect communication among parties attempting to achieve common objectives. This collection of documents was used to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources for the case studies (Yin, 2009).

Documentation for this study also included a large amount of information gleaned by conducting an organized keyword search of Laloux's (2014) book wherein he documented previously authenticated details about the three organizations in question. In more detail, a spreadsheet was created for each case. Then, the book was searched using the *CTRL Find*

function and search words comprising both the company and the Founder/CEO's name. As these were located, pertinent information was extracted from that particular part of the text and entered it into the relevant spreadsheet. This process continued until the search function yielded no new results. This approach yielded a significant amount of case-specific data.

## **Interviews**

The use of secondary data is quite common in case studies (e.g., documents and records), but this study also employed primary data garnered from interviews (Yin, 2009). During fall 2017, I conducted in-depth, individual interviews with the Founder/CEO of each Next-Stage Organization. Interviews ranged from 30–60 minutes, with two conducted by Skype and one in person. The questions in Table 3 were used as an interview guide. Per Yin's (2009) suggestion for high-quality case studies, I endeavored to maintain an inquiring mind during the interviews, so I could be flexible, listen between the lines, and adapt with follow-up and probing questions that went deeper into the root of the inquiry. I also grounded myself with a meditative practice before each interview to mitigate the impact of any mental and emotional strain typical during data collection activities. The interviews were audio recorded and professionally transcribed verbatim. These types of interviews are especially useful for gaining insights into the participant's inner world, as well as getting information pursuant to all four of Wilber's (2001) quadrants. Most important was gaining insight into the relationship between the organization's and the Founder/CEO's stage of development.

Table 3

*Questions for In-Depth Interviews With Founder/CEO*

First, second, and third person	Next-Stage Organization as quadrivia	IMP* zones	Interview questions
First-person look at...	Stakeholder experiences	1	What cognitive/emotional/ spiritual/moral experiences led you to founding this company?
First-person look at...	Stakeholder experiences	2	What STAGE of adult development is the Founder/CEO?
Second-person look at...	Organizational culture	3	What values did you share with the organization?
Second-person look at...	Organizational culture	4	What effect did you have on forming the common patterns of communication, behavior, and interaction of the organization?
Third-person look at...	Organizational environment	5	What sort of language and belief systems do employees and stakeholders share due to your influence?
Third-person look at...	Organizational environment	6	What sort of behaviors do employees and stakeholders share due to your influence?
Third-person look at...	Organizational environment	7	How did the group practices and behavioral norms of the organization evolve?
Third-person look at...	Organizational environment	8	How close are the current business technologies, processes, and functions to when the company began?

*Note.* \*IMP = Integral Methodological Pluralism

**STAGES Assessment: Sentence Completion Test**

Each founder/CEO completed the STAGES Assessment, a SCT of ego development to gauge their respective stage of human development. This is the level from which people consistently make meaning of their life's experiences. The SCT involves participants completing a sentence stem. For example, "Business means...". "The rationale for the SCT is that ego development is, or reflects, the person's frame of reference" (Loevinger, 1979, p. 284).

For Loevinger the “ego” is an abstraction, not an extant structure; thus, she describes the ego informally, referring to it as “a frame of reference” or “lens” through which individuals perceive their world (*ego development* thus represents a change in one’s frame of reference). (Murray, 2017, footnote 35)

Therefore, it is appropriate to employ an unstructured test, permitting participants to orally or in writing supply their own frame of reference when prompted with a sentence stem (i.e., an incomplete sentence that they complete).

At my behest, Terri O’Fallon agreed to personally facilitate the online administration and scoring of the previously validated set of 36 sentence stems comprising the STAGES developmental assessment, specialized for business environments (with some stems pertaining to organizations) but also focused on family and relations. The study participants typed in their answers, with the system recording how long it took for each stem. O’Fallon has deep familiarity with this type of assessment tool (Murray, 2017). The internal consistency coefficient alpha for the 36-item ego development test was .91 in 1979 (Loevinger, 1979), and this still holds today (Murray, 2017). A total protocol score for the person taking the test is compiled after rating all 36 stem item responses.

As data were collected for each case, they were printed and collated in a case-specific binder that was then coded for analysis. Each respective binder included any webpage documentation, interview transcripts, STAGES assessment test scores, case-specific spreadsheets (including iterative versions), and my case-specific field notes.

## **Analysis**

### **Units of Analysis**

Units of analysis had to be identified and analysed so as to obtain the data to answer the research question, presented as case studies. The units of analyses for this study were derived by applying Integral Methodological Pluralism as a lens to delineate boundaries in a Next-Stage

Organization (per Yin's [2009] recommended protocol about case study boundary setting).

Integral Methodological Pluralism was used to break the levels of reality mentioned by Nicolescu (transdisciplinarity) into four quadrants, the contents of which are quadrivia, as explained in the previous section. By adding inside and outside perspectives to the quadrants, 8 primordial perspectives, or zones, were created. These zones are depicted in Table 4, with accompanying perspectives, methodological perspectives, and general questions being addressed from each perspective (i.e., unit of analysis). Each case was approached with the depicted units of analysis.

Table 4

*Summary of Integral Methodological Pluralism Regarding a Next-Stage Organization*

1st, 2nd, and 3rd person	Quadrivia of an organization	IMP Zone	Perspective	Methodological perspective	Units of analysis	Questions addressed
1st person look at...	Employees, stakeholders, and founder/CEO	Zone 1	Individual-interior-inside	Phenomenology	Lived experience of the employees, stakeholders and Founder/CEO.	What is the lived experience of the employees, stakeholders and the Founder/CEO?
1st person look at...	Employees, stakeholders, and founder /CEO	Zone 2	Individual-interior-outside	Structuralism	Founder STAGE development.	What STAGE of adult development is the Founder/CEO?
2nd person look at...	Organizational culture	Zone 3	Collective-interior-inside	Hermeneutics	Shared values and meanings of ethics and social justice.	What are the shared values of the organization?
2nd person look at...	Organizational culture	Zone 4	Collective-interior-outside	Ethno-methodology	Behavior, interaction and communication.	What are the common patterns of communication, behavior and interaction of the organization?
3rd person look at...	Organizational environment	Zone 5	Individual-exterior-inside	Autopoiesis	Organizational functions and processes	What are the core processes that make up the organization?
3rd person look at...	Organizational environment	Zone 6	Individual-exterior-outside	Empiricism	Organizational structure	How is the organization structured?
3rd person look at...	Organizational environment	Zone 7	Collective-exterior-inside	Social autopoiesis	Systemic interactions	What are the organization's processes for interacting with the larger systems environment?
3rd person look at...	Organizational environment	Zone 8	Collective-exterior-outside	System theory / Social systems design	Systems environment	What is the larger systems environment?

*Note.* IMP = Integral Methodological Pluralism

Table 4 contains a summary description of the eight zones as they relate to this particular study (i.e., their operationalization). The eight units of analysis were organized around three aspects of the quadrivia: the Founder/CEO, the organizational culture, and the organizational environment. Indeed, respectively, Yin (2009) suggests that the units of analysis can be classified as individuals (macro to micro), intermediate units or the entire system. Yin (2009) further recommends that the definitions of the units of analysis should not be idiosyncratic but be similar to other studies. In this dissertation, the units are similar to Laloux's (2014) earlier work on Next-Stage Organizations, as well as to general organizational literature.

In more detail, in the context of a quadrivial analysis of a Next-Stage Organization, Zone 1 represents the first-person, subjective experience of every employee and stakeholder, including that of the Founder/CEO. Zone 2 represents an outside perspective on each individual interior, referring here to the STAGES assessment of the founder/CEO. In Zone 3, we move to a second-person perspective of the collective interior, here being the shared values and meanings of ethics and social justice. Zone 4 represents a second-person perspective of the collective interior, noting at common behaviors, interactions, and ways of communicating within the organization. Together, Zones 3 and 4 represent organizational culture. Zone 5 represents an objective or third-person perspective of the individual interior. In the context of a quadratic approach to understanding an individual, such as the Founder/CEO, this would refer to inner thought processes, as well as the inner biological processes that make up the person. In the context of a quadrivial analysis of a Next-Stage Organization, however, we are now referring to the inner processes that make up the organization, those being organizational functions and processes.

Zone 6 represents a third-person perspective of the outside of the individual exterior, those being the individual behaviors and biological structures of a person when using a quadratic

approach, while referring to the organizational structure when applied as a quadratic analysis of a Next-Stage Organization. Zone 7 moves to third-person perspective of the inside of the collective exterior, here being the organizational processes and functions through which the organization interacts with larger systems environment, i.e. other organizations, industries, government, or society. Zone 8 represents a third-person perspective of the outside of the collective exterior, here being a description of the larger systems environment in which the organization is embedded (e.g., politics, labor market, economic system).

### **Data Analysis**

This research design protocol involved the collection of three types of data: Founder/CEO and organization-specific documentation, Founder/CEO interviews, and the SCT assessment. These data were used to create individual cases for each Founder/CEO and the respective organization. Yin (2009) confirms that case study researchers must specify the strategy they used to *analyze* these data, what he called a *general strategy*. This is necessary because analysis is influenced by each researcher's style of rigorous thinking, along with sufficient presentation of evidence. The intent of the analysis is to treat evidence fairly, produce compelling conclusions, and rule out alternative explanations.

To that end, Yin (2009) outlines four general strategies for analyzing case study data, as well as five specific analytic techniques. The *general* analytical techniques are to (a) rely on theoretical propositions, (b) develop a case description, (c) use both quantitative and qualitative data, and (d) examine rival explanations. The *specific* analytical techniques that can be used in conjunction with the preferred general strategy are pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis.

Per the above, in this study, the previously outlined seven theoretical propositions of adult development (McCauley et al., 2006, p. 636) were used to form a general strategy for analyzing the data, which was to determine whether the CEO's scores on the SCT (stage of human development) correspond with the organization's stage of development (see Table 2). Pattern matching and explanation building (two specific analytical techniques) were also used to ascertain and explain patterns related to these propositions.

Yin (2009) refers to the use of a pattern-matching as "one of the most desirable techniques" (p. 136) for case study analysis. A pattern is a regular or repetitive form, order, arrangement, configuration, or relationship in the data (Wiebe, Durepos, & Mills, 2009). The pattern-matching method of analysis involves comparing an empirically based pattern arising from data analysis with a predicted or foreseen one to determine if they match (are the same) or do not match (are different). Matching involves identifying and comparing "the patterns evident in the data against one or more hypothesized [or proposed] patterns that the analyst has developed through familiarity with the field" (Almutairi, Gardner, & McCarthy, 2014, p. 240). It is the researcher's responsibility to state an expected overall pattern that embraces everything being examined. This way, what is found (the actual pattern) can be compared to the expected pattern (Almutairi et al., 2014).

Thus, internal validity was strengthened by ensuring that found patterns coincided with anticipated ones. Explanation building is a special case of pattern-matching. It involved building an explanation about the case with critical evidence to support the explanation, with better case studies reflecting some theoretically significant propositions (as was the case in this study). Finally, cross-case analysis compared any found patterns across all three cases (Yin, 2009).

To reiterate, the general analytical strategy was to determine whether the CEOs STAGES' scores (stage of human development) correspond with the organizations' stage of development. To accomplish this, all data were first coded according to the 8 primordial perspectives (zones; Cohen, 2008; Kelly, 2008; Hedlund-de Witt as cited in Saldana, 2009) to sort them into scorable chunks by zone.

Then, each datum point from documents and interviews that was entered into the spreadsheets was scored by applying the three questions of the STAGES StageLens process (Murray & O'Fallon, 2015; O'Fallon & Barta, 2016) to obtain a zone-by-zone STAGES score. Murray and O'Fallon (2015) showed that scoring a SCT can be done by answering three questions: (a) What is the tier of the object being foregrounded? (b) Is it speaking to an individual or collective space? And, (c) is the learning sequence receptive, active, reciprocal, or interpenetrative? It was confirmed, in private conversation with O'Fallon at the Integral European Conference (personal communication, May 7, 2016), that these questions could theoretically be applied to an organization.

Thus, these three questions were applied to the organizational data, looking to see (a) whether the processing of concrete, subtle, or very subtle objects was being foregrounded; (b) what degree of activity or passivity was adopted in their activities; and (c) whether the focus was more on the individual or the group? These data were then compared to the founder/CEOs' SCT scores. To further validate the correlation, the data were processed with multiple rounds of thematic coding, and the resultant themes were also compared across cases. Because people can read the same data set and come up with different themes, researchers have to explain how *their* themes and assertions were developed. A theme can be said to exist if (a) a *recurring* idea threads its way through the data (albeit using different, nuanced words); (b) the same words,

phrases, even sentences, are *repeated* across the data; (c) a few incidences occurred very *forcefully*; (d) a topic was raised or discussed *frequently*; or, (e) a large number of people expressed the same idea, not necessarily using the same words (*extensiveness*; McGregor, 2017; Owen, 1984).

Finally, the resultant zone scores and themes were compared to stage and quadrant descriptions given by Cacioppe and Edwards' (2005) summary of integral theory, spiral dynamics, corporate transformation, and action inquiry, previously introduced as Table 2. Table 5 below reintroduces the same chart, this time with the addition of the STAGES numbers in the first column and the zone numbers in the heading. Thus individual, scored themes were compared to the matching description in the chart, allowing for a confirmation of predicted themes. The findings from subsequent pattern-matching (Yin, 2009) are reported in Chapter 5.

Table 5

*Cacioppe and Edwards' (2005) Summary of Integral Theory, Spiral Dynamics, Corporate Transformation, and Action Inquiry With Human Development Stages (y axis) and Organizational Development Stages (x axis)*

STAGE	Basic levels	Description	UL zones 1 & 2 leadership consciousness	UR zones 5 & 6 organizational behavior	LL zones 3 & 4 organizational culture	LR zones 7 & 8 organizational systems
1.5	1. Surviving Beige Impulsive reaction	Immediate physical gain, “results now”, reactive survival, crisis mode	Dominated by a few leaders’ personality, reactive struggle for existence, attend to immediate payoffs	Survival goals and basic existence activity, random subsistence goals, short-term sales focus	Values based on survival and immediate results, materialistic, cash flow and profit is the only value	Ad hoc, no real systems, efficiency driven only by cost-cutting appearances, no strategic planning
2.0	2. Bonding Purple Joining together for self-benefit	Focused on joining with others for mutual safety and security, organ, as “family”	Instinctual, reactive, and manipulative, immediate needs-based, leadership focus on bringing people together to build a common sense of team, establishing norms that ensure group survival and identity	Follows regulations norms, conforming behavior, seeks acceptance of the group, habitual	Peer and group norms keep the group intact. Can be an in-group, out-group culture	Systems are focused on self-maintenance, monitoring, reporting based on comparison to past or similar
2.5	3. Asserting Red Gaining advantage	Gaining capital resources, and relationships to build and preserve, relationships based on power	Leaders do anything to succeed. The organization seeks managers who want to expand/grow at all costs.	Self-centered and risk-taking behavior, acts out of power, status. Short-term goals. Aims to win at expense of others	“The end justifies the means,” values sales and acquisition above all else, values hard work, power, and status symbols.	Minimal HR, legal, marketing or accounting systems, technology used to bring immediate gains, limited planning
3.0	4. Organizing Blue Establishing order	Desire for order and certainty, “right and wrong” orientation, paternalistic	Focus on rules-based identity, fear of loss of control and uncertainty, “this is how we do things”	Set behaviors, job descriptions, activities defined and regulated, follow a letter of the law	Values obedience, followers are expected to follow procedures, conservative morality	Directive management, focus on quantitative aspects, technology as tool for organizing, reporting

STAGE	Basic levels	Description	UL zones 1 & 2 leadership consciousness	UR zones 5 & 6 organizational behavior	LL zones 3 & 4 organizational culture	LR zones 7 & 8 organizational systems
3.5	5. Achieving Orange Maximizing performance	Strives to achieve through rational, independent, autonomous means	Leaders have high drive to achieve and compete, success and achievement defines identity	Goal-based behavior, set objectives and do anything to achieve them, workaholic	Individualist worldview, reward or punish the individual, performance culture, focus on efficiency	Systems are designed to achieve targets/ goals, technology as a means to showcase individuals and provide advantage
4.0	6. Cooperating Green Internal cohesion	Combining and supporting multiple goals, development via combining skills and resources	Aware of the needs of others. Leaders seek consensus but not manipulative	Behavior is based on multiple goals, triple bottom line, internal cooperation when commitment is present at all levels	Values individual rights and fairness, consensus decision making, diversity and equity in workforce culture	Integration of systems for cooperating and effectiveness to achieve local and total goals, high use of CIT
4.5	7. Visioning Yellow Values- based foresight	Visionary links to industry and community, displays both micro- and macro-/global perspective	Aware of the entire spectrum of needs, balanced conscious activity, caters for individual and team wellbeing	Commitment to organizational goals and action, considerable trust, clear, open, two-way communication	Values a balance of individual and collective views, values community involvement in development	Technology unifies yet allows for diversity, external systems focus, links with industry and community, triple bottom line
5.0	8. Integral Turquoise Integrative of multiple goals and values	Service-oriented, aims to improve organization and the community via integrated development	Wisdom in leadership behavior, seeks to fulfill needs of staff, customers, owners, and community	Compassionate, service-focused behavior, learning leads to action to improve the growth of communities	Values life, supports balanced growth, care, committed to active involvement in community or national issues	Systems fully integrated and linked to external industry and appropriate community interests, technology used for collaboration and services

### **Research Design Rigor: Trustworthiness Criteria**

Yin (2009) offers four logical tests that are commonly used to judge the quality of an *empirical* case study, those being construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability. These requirements were historically characterized by the natural sciences three centuries ago (Ulrich, 2001). The need to apply these concepts to qualitative research has led to many perspectives on the importance, definition, terms, and procedures for establishing high quality qualitative research and attendant reports. McGregor (2017) lists confirmability, credibility, transferability, dependability, and authenticity as the most important aspects in establishing a quality qualitative study, ensuring trustworthy data. These criteria were addressed in this study as follows.

#### **Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to maintaining the researcher's neutrality given the subjective nature of data collection and analysis. The goal is that data and findings can be corroborated by others, confirming that they are shaped by the respondents themselves, and not the researcher's values. Hence, I practiced reflexivity during data collection and analysis, logging my logic, decisions, and rationales in a researcher's journal, creating a clear audit trail. This strategy involved practicing self-critique during the process in order to balance my disclosed predisposition toward transdisciplinary and integral approaches. Confirmability (researcher's neutrality) was also increased through methods triangulation across zones.

#### **Credibility**

Credibility involves ensuring the faithful accounting of the lived experiences of participants, thereby acquiring a full answer to the research question, and the confidence of others in the truth of reported findings (McGregor, 2017). Again, Integral Methodological

Pluralism was chosen to explicitly allow for the triangulation of methods and data, which adds to credibility. The added peer review from experts in transdisciplinarity, STAGES and Integral Theory applied here as well, as did practicing researcher reflexivity to mitigate invalidity (i.e., ensured that I measured what I intended to measure). Findings arising from analysis of the interview data were reported using thick, rich descriptions with ample quotes, and the cross-case comparisons of the three participants added to credibility (i.e., users can have confidence in the truth shared by the researcher in their observations, interpretations, and conclusions).

### **Transferability**

Transferability (determined by the user) relates to the ability of others to apply or transfer the findings of this study in their contexts. This was addressed by (a) providing detailed descriptions of the case study context and participants, (b) researcher reflexivity to mitigate invalidity, (c) the aforementioned cross-case comparisons, as well as (d) a clear statement of study limitations (McGregor, 2017).

### **Dependability**

Dependability means the findings, conclusions, and interpretations are supported by the data. It depends on the researcher providing sufficient information, so others can apply the research protocol within their own context (but not necessarily get the same findings); in effect, others can *depend* (rely) on the study (McGregor, 2017). An audit trail (especially chain of evidence), triangulation, and rich documentation were important here.

### **Authenticity**

Finally, authenticity (realness for participants) refers to ensuring participants' voices and agency and representing all participants' views. Here, member-checking during the interviews was practiced, as was disclosure of what I brought to the study, and researcher reflexivity

(McGregor, 2017). In this study, member-checking during interviews entailed that I continually checked with participants to make sure I was accurately capturing their thoughts, opinions, and perspectives, especially through the use of follow-up, probing, and clarifying questions (Creswell, 2007); Yin (2009) referred to this as a valuable researcher trait in that it reflects respectful listening and remaining open to the participants' voice.

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

Delimitations are research design decisions that are under the researcher's control. They clarify the boundaries of the study, indicating how the scope of the study was narrowed before the study began, explaining what was included, excluded and why (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; McGregor, 2017). These decisions can lead to limitations pertaining to future use of the study's findings. In qualitative research, limitations can arise from restricted sample size and reliance on certain data gathering techniques. Respectively, first, this study comprised three case studies, the minimum recommended by Yin (2009) to ensure replication logic, whereby similar results can be found. Future studies should aspire to develop more than three case studies so researchers can achieve theoretical replication, whereby contrary results can be produced for predictable reasons. Second, restricting data collection to just the Founder/CEO of Next-Stage Organizations did generate data to answer the research question, but it also limited the researcher's ability to account for lived experiences of other stakeholders. Future studies should build this into their research design because both transdisciplinarity and integral theory require as many perspectives as possible. Third, the use of Integral Methodological Pluralism was intended to lessen reliance on any particular methodology or data gathering technique. Although beyond the scope of this study, a more robust research design would ideally add stakeholder STAGES assessments, and 360° stakeholder reviews, as well as a thorough review of relevant archival materials.

## CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

Per the research question, the overall finding is that the combined transdisciplinary, integral, and STAGES approach was very effective in identifying a close connection between the Founder/CEO's (leader's) stage of human (ego) development and the organization's stage of development. Each case comprises a Founder/CEO and the corresponding organization. To protect their identity, each of the participants and their associated organization is identified by a number (e.g., Case 1, Participant 1, and Organization 1). Detailed descriptions of actual organizational practices are avoided, again to protect identities.

Participants' scores are shown by zone and stage. A summary from each participant's STAGES assessment, along with coded themes from the assessment and interview data, are shared, using four general categories that reflect the four integral quadrants. They are (a) interior, which covers subjective zones 1 and 2 in the upper left quadrant (UL); (b) action orientation, which covers the objective zones 5 and 6 in the upper right quadrant (UR); (c) relationships, mutuality, and culture, covering the intersubjective zones 3 and 4 in the lower left quadrant (LL); and (d) systems and contexts, covering interobjective zones 7 and 8 in the lower right quadrant (LR).

The organizational descriptions also includes organizational data by zone and stage. Coded themes from the data are presented in four general categories highlighting the four quadrants. They are (a) people, which covers subjective zones 1 and 2 in UL; (b) behaviors and business systems/functions, which covers the objective zones 5 and 6 in UR; (c) culture, covering intersubjective zones 3 and 4 in LL; and (d) systems and society, covering interobjective zones 7 and 8 in LR. Each case is summarized, comparing participant and organizational results for each of them. Finally, findings across all three cases are summarized.

In more detail, this chapter provides a summary of findings for three cases investigating how the stage of development of the Founder/CEO's informs the stage of development of the organization. STAGES assessments were made of each of the three Founder/CEOs. The data generated from the completion of the 36 stems of the STAGES SCT was additionally coded using Integral Methodological Pluralism to sort it into zones. Thematic coding was used to categorize the essential nature and provide a rich description of the data points. Data from each of the three organizations were also gathered, largely from existing data presented in Laloux's (2014) book *Reinventing Organizations*, with supplemental information collected from company websites, other online resources, and an approximately one-hour interview with each Founder/CEO.

These data went through a 3-part coding process. First, Murray and O'Fallon's (2015) three questions were applied to attain a STAGES score for that data point. Next, Integral Methodological Pluralism coding was used to sort the data point. Finally, thematic coding was used to provide a rich description of each data point. Themes were then compared between each participant and their corresponding organization. Participant 2 and Organization 2 data points required a second round of thematic coding to create thematic categories. In all three cases, significant (non-statistical but noteworthy) relationships between participant and organizational themes were evident. Also, in all three cases, organizational scores were at or below those of the participants.

## **Findings for Case 1**

### **Participant 1**

Participant 1 was assessed at the 4.0 Pluralist stage of development, with individual scores of the 36 sentence completion stems ranging from the 2.5 Conformist to the 4.5 Strategist

stages, with 3%, 8%, 39%, 36%, and 14% of stems scored at each of the stages respectively. This finding means that Participant 1 operated stably from the 4.0 Pluralist stage of development, with a supporting stage of 3.5 Achiever, and a leading edge of 4.5 Strategist. Table 6 shows each of the 36 SCT stem scores presented by zone. Following that, four general categories for themes from the SCT data are discussed. Finally, a summary of said themes is presented.

Table 6

*Participant 1 STAGES SCT Scores by Zone*

STAGES score	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Zone 8	Total scored at each STAGE	% scored at each STAGE
2.5	1								1	3
3.0	1						2		3	8
3.5	7			3		1	2	1	14	39
4.0	5	1	2	1		1	1	2	13	36
4.5	2		2					1	5	14
5.0										
5.5										
6.0										
Totals	16	1	4	4		2	5	4	36	
Percentage per zone	44	3	11	11		6	14	11		

**Interior.** On the emotional line, the cognitive line, and the consciousness/awareness capacities, Participant 1 expressed feelings including care, love, enjoyment, kindness, and heartedness, as well as frustration and hurt. Participant 1 expressed both positive and challenging emotions, a good balance. Cognitively, Participant 1 reasoned and took perspectives, developed a higher purpose, integrity, and ethics, and valued individual growth, kindness, teamwork,

emotional intelligence, and [his or her] employees. Related to consciousness, Participant 1 focused (concentrated) on tasks, profitability, and solving social problems. Awareness was not mentioned, which often precedes focus, and is included at the 4.5 Strategist level. Zone 1 themes from the SCT assessment were adult development, authenticity, be of service, ego, fear of loss, grounding, healthy relating, kindness/skilled means, nature, positive feelings, skilled means, and heart-centered leadership. The single datum point for zone 2 was also coded with the be of service theme.

**Relationship, mutuality, and culture.** Relationship and mutuality were expressed in the working relationship Participant 1 had with coworkers. Through Participant 1's capacity to create love, mutuality, and relationship, the culture of the organization was built. Zone 3 coded themes from the SCT assessment were gratitude and teamwork. In zone 4, coded SCT themes were avoidance, community, and authenticity.

**Action orientation.** Participant 1 held organizational goals in three ways: impacting people, creating a loving workplace, and growing profits. In service to something greater than oneself, Participant 1's creativity centered on the theme of creating love. Participant 1 was in charge of life, which was juicy and a turn on. Participant 1 loved to learn teamwork, learn from everyone, and learn even from hurt feelings. Beyond learning, Participant 1 was committed to personal growth and the individual growth of everyone. Participant 1 was direct and honest in communication and feedback, and had the courage to participate in difficult conversations. Coded themes from zone 6 from the SCT assessment were be of service and pleasant spaces, respectively.

**Systems and contexts.** Participant 1 could see that different actions are needed for different contexts. Business can lead the way and seed societal systems for a democratic society.

Coded SCT themes from zone 7 included evolution, karma, learn from everyone, powerlessness, and social business. Coded SCT themes from zone 8 were be of service, powerlessness, and protect others.

**Participant 1 summary.** The seven most frequent themes (those occurring more than once) were be of service, adult development, authenticity, community, grounding, powerlessness, and skilled means. The most frequent of the themes by far was be of service, which accounted for 19.4% of the data for Participant 1 across five zones and three stages. Grounding was the second most frequent, with three instances accounting for 8.3% of the data in one zone. Of the remaining four themes, adult development and powerlessness occurred twice across two zones, whereas community and skilled means both occurred twice in a single zone, accounting for 5.5% each. Together the most frequent themes account for 49.7% of the data. They are presented in Figure 4, along with the zone and STAGES scores from the data points from whence the themes originated.

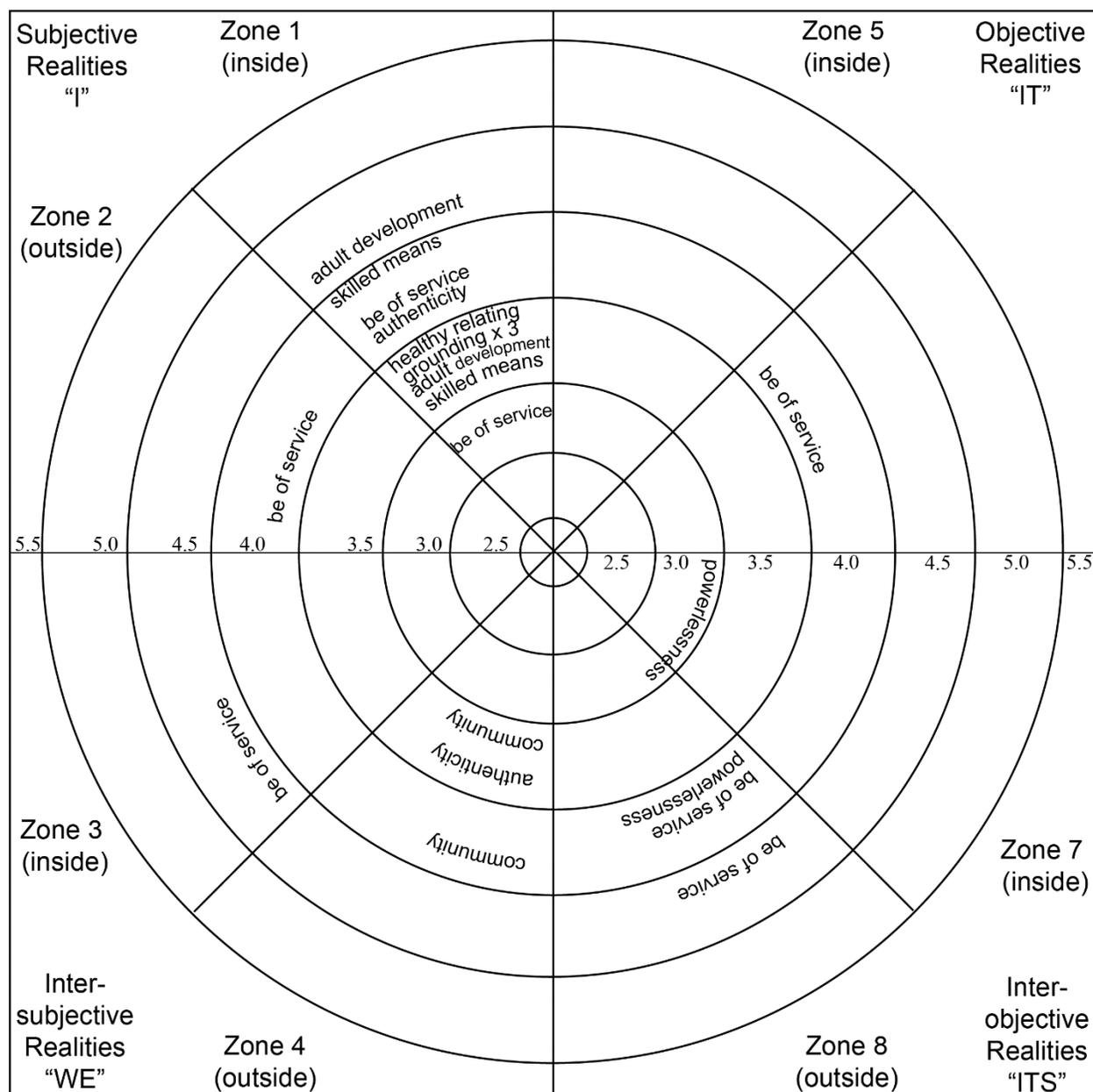


Figure 4. Participant 1 seven most frequent themes by zone and stage.

A path around the spiral of zones and STAGES paints a portrait of Participant 1. The most frequent theme was be of service. The first instance refers to zone 1 and Participant 1's individual, passive, subtle feeling to "want to help" (3.0) and a subtle, collective, reciprocal

desire to “lead, inspire, question, and create” (4.0). In zone 2, Participant 1 gave the subtle, collective, reciprocal description of a good leader as someone who “genuinely cares about others and is committed to serving a high purpose and being in integrity...[and] can articulate a vision in such a way that others want to follow” (4.0). Zone 3 shows a subtle, collective, interpenetrative organizational culture with values of “kindness...direct communication... teamwork and emotional intelligence...focused on profitably solving social problems” (4.5). Zone 6 shows the subtle, collective, reciprocal description of a good organization as one that “creates love and goodness.” Finally, in zone 8, Participant 1 offers the subtle, collective, reciprocal systemic exhortation to use technology “for good,” and the subtle, collective, interpenetrative definition of progress as “three bottom lines: impacting more people...creating a high-more loving workplace...[and] growing our profits” (4.5).

It is not necessary to offer a description of all themes for the purpose of the research question guiding this study. However, a more detailed analysis of the themes as they correspond to the organization will be given in the case summary. The following section explores themes on the organizational level.

### **Organization 1**

The range of scores for Organization 1 was 2.5 to 4.5, with 5%, 3%, 8%, 57%, and 27% of the data scored at each of these stages respectively. This means that Organization 1 operated from the 4.0 Pluralist stage of development, with a supporting stage of 3.5 Achiever, and a leading edge of 4.5 Strategist. In total, 31 pieces of data were scored, with 27% of those data points scoring at the 4.5 Strategist level, showing a strong leading edge into that stage. Table 7 shows the 37 data points by zone and stage. After that, themes coded from these data points are shared in four categories related to the quadrants. Finally, a summary of said themes is presented.

Table 7

*Organization 1 Organizational STAGES Scores by Zone*

STAGES score	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Zone 8	Total scored at each STAGE	% scored at each STAGE
2.5						2			2	5
3.0	1								1	3
3.5	1		1			1			3	8
4.0	2	2	5	3	4	3	2		21	57
4.5	2		3	2	1		1	1	10	27
5.0										
5.5										
6.0										
Totals	6	2	9	5	5	6	3	1	37	
Percentage per zone	16	5	24	14	14	16	8	3		

**People.** Coded themes for Organization 1 in zone 1 were authentic leadership, authenticity, be of service, compassion, and transparency. This finding indicates personal experiences of employees and stakeholders as a key focus. For zone 2, the two themes were high morale and honor all stakeholders. This finding refers to both the reciprocal nature of the leader's drive to be inclusive in this organization, and the general mood of employees as measured from the outside.

**Culture.** Themes for zone 3 were adult development, be of service, community, emergent culture, partnership, and sharing wisdom. Together, these themes indicate some of the cultural values foregrounded by the organization. Zone 4 themes were authenticity, collective purpose, healthy relating, honor all stakeholders, and intuition. These reflect elements being

foregrounded in group behavioral interactions and communication patterns within the culture of Organization 1.

**Business systems/functions and structure.** Zone 5 themes were authenticity, healthy relating, grounding, interview for cultural fit, and self-organization. This finding indicates a foregrounding of aforementioned cultural themes in organizational systems and functions, as well as individual behaviors. Zone 6 themes were compassion, grounding, a loving environment, structure of responsibility, traditional hierarchy, and transparency. These themes arose around organizational structure.

**Systems and society.** Zone 7 themes were adult development, be of service, and reciprocity. These themes are present around communication and processes with the larger environment (i.e., with society). The single theme for zone 8 was honor all stakeholders, indicating organizational structures that foreground honor when interacting with shareholders and society at large.

**Organization 1 summary.** The seven most frequent themes (those occurring more than once) were adult development, authenticity, be of service, community, compassion, grounding, healthy relating, honor all stakeholders, and transparency. They are set out in Figure 5, along with the zone and STAGE scores from the data point from whence the themes originated. The most frequent of the themes was be of service, with five instances across three zones accounting for over 13.5% of the data. Next in frequency were authenticity and honor all stakeholders at three instances, both across three zones, each accounting for 8.1% of the data (16.2%). The final six themes each occur twice, with community in one zone and adult development, compassion, healthy relating, grounding, and transparency in two zones, each representing 5.4% of the data (27.6%). Together, the most frequent themes accounted for two-thirds (62.1%) of the data.

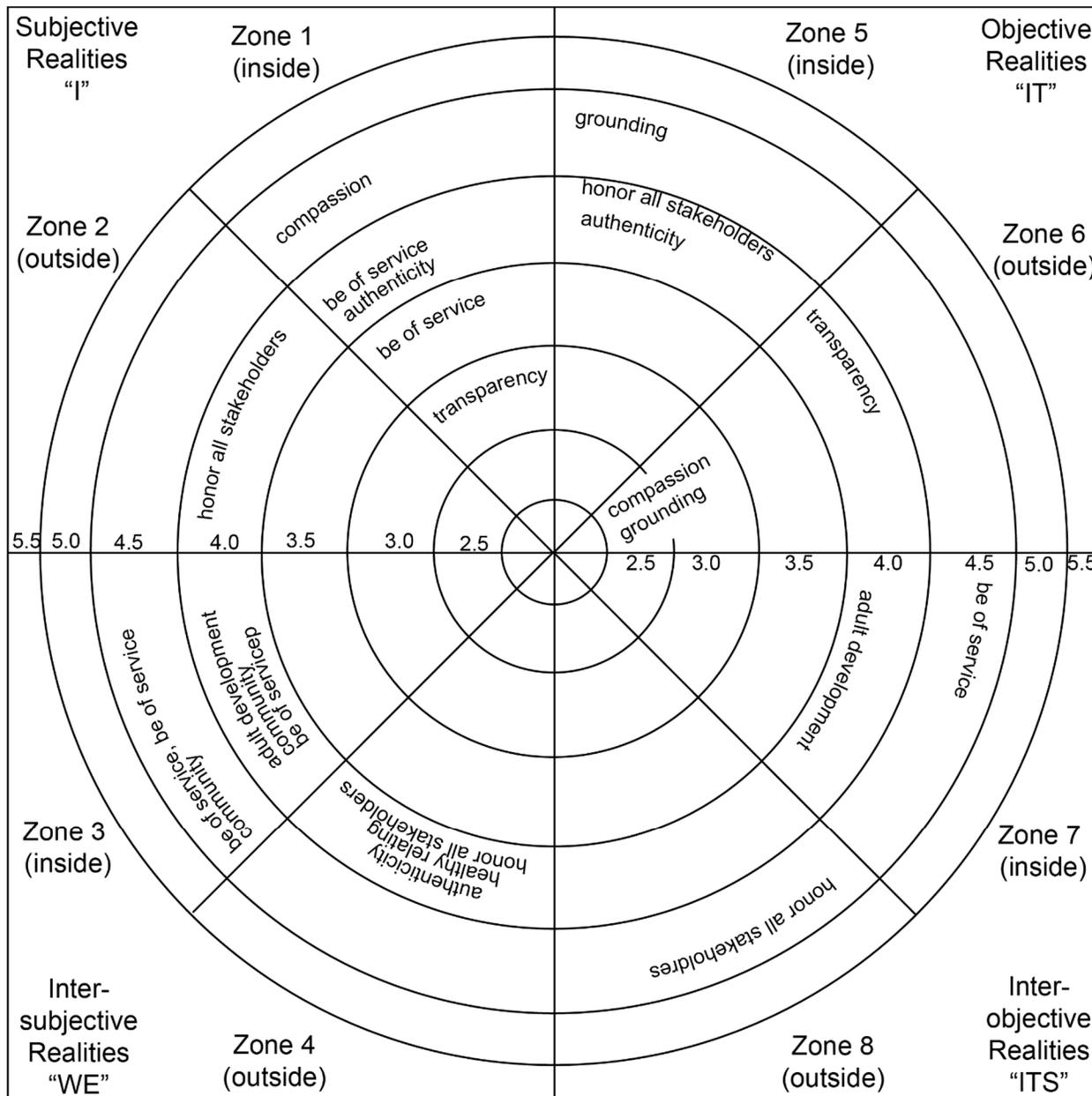


Figure 5. Organization 1 seven most frequent themes by zone and stage.

By following the be of service theme around the circle in Figure 5, it becomes evident that the finding is an individual, subtle, active desire (3.5) to be useful to society, and a subtle, collective, reciprocal (4.0) experience of putting purpose before business in zone 1. In zone 3, there is a subtle, collective, interpenetrative cultural value (4.5) of only producing products and

services that are high quality and good for humanity, and a subtle, collective, interpenetrative (4.5) focus on the transformative potential of serving in this way. Finally, in zone 7 is a subtle, collective, interpenetrative synergy (4.5) between the growth and thriving of the organization and the transformation of society.

### **Case 1 Summary**

The findings for Case 1 showed both Participant 1 and Organization 1 to be at the 4.0 Pluralist stage, with a leading edge in 4.5 Strategist and a 3.5 Achiever supporting stage. Comparing themes between Participant 1 and Organization 1 resulted in seven matching themes: adult development, authenticity, be of service, community, compassion, grounding, and healthy relating. The themes, along with associated zone and stage data, are listed in Table 8.

Table 8

*Matching Themes for Participant 1 and Organization 1 by Zone and Stage*

Zone	Stage	Participant 1 themes	Organization 1 themes
1	3.0	be of service	
1	3.5	adult development	
1	3.5		be of service
1	3.5	grounding (x3)	
1	3.5	healthy relating	
1	4.0	authenticity	authenticity
1	4.0	be of service	be of service
1	4.5		adult development
1	4.5		compassion
2	4.0	be of service	
3	4.0		adult development
3	4.0		be of service
3	4.0		community
3	4.0	compassion	
3	4.5	be of service	be of service (x2)
3	4.5		community
4	3.5	authenticity	
4	3.5	community	
4	4.0	authenticity	
4	4.0	community	
4	4.0		healthy relating
5	4.0	authenticity	
5	4.0		healthy relating
5	4.5		grounding
6	2.5		compassion
6	2.5		grounding
6	4.0	be of service	
7	4.0	adult development	
7	4.5		be of service
8	4.0	be of service	
8	4.5	be of service	

Four of the seven matching themes were also frequent themes for Participant 1, while the remaining three were frequent themes for Organization 1. This finding shows a strong connection (a non-statistical correlation) between the values and focus of Participant 1 and the organizational values and operational processes of Organization 1. For example, Participant 1's interest and practice in adult development as a personal, subjective interest (Zone 1) translates to an organizational culture that has cultural practices (Zone 3) that foster adult development. Likewise, Participant 1's personal and cultural experience and practice of authenticity (Zones 1 and 4) translate to an organization where individuals experience authenticity (Zone 1), the culture is structured around authenticity (Zone 4), and has business systems and functions (Zone 5) that produce products and services while foregrounding the authenticity of the offering.

### **Findings for Case 2**

#### **Participant 2**

Participant 2 was assessed at the 5.5 Transpersonal stage of development, with individual scores on the 36 sentence completion stems ranging from the 3.5 Achiever Stage to the 6.0 Universal stage, with roughly 3%, 8%, 17%, 28%, 42%, and 3% of stems scored at each of the stages, respectively. This finding means that Participant 2 operated stably from the 5.5 Transpersonal stage of development, with a strong supporting stage of 5.0 Construct Aware, and a light leading edge into 6.0 Universal. Table 9 shows each of the 36 SCT stem scores presented by zone. After that are the four general categories for themes from the SCT data. Finally, a summary of said themes is presented.

Table 9

*Participant 2 STAGES SCT Scores by Zone*

STAGES score	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Zone 8	Total scored at each STAGE	% scored at each STAGE
2.5										
3.0										
3.5						1			1	3
4.0	1			1				1	3	8
4.5	2			1			2	1	6	17
5.0	5	1	1	1	1			1	10	28
5.5	8		2	1		1	2	1	15	42
6.0			1						1	3
Totals	16	1	4	4	1	2	4	4	36	
Percentage per zone	44	3	11	11	3	6	11	11		

**Interior.** Participant 2 exhibited a robust emotional life, feeling enthralled, love, closeness, gratitude, empathy, unqualified joy, and delight, balanced with worry and allowing anger to come up, and sometimes enjoying acting it out, and sometimes feeling sad. Participant 2 seemed to have a lot more positive emotions than negative ones. Cognitively, Participant 2 was easily inspired and needed to be understood. Participant 2 saw perspectives and personal projections at times but missed them at times as well. Participant 2 saw the construction of word meaning, and very fine distinctions, including paradoxes, metaphors, and opposing poles (i.e., expectation/tensions, control in surrendering shackles and freedom, and connection in autonomy).

Participant 2 was clear on the difference between the purpose of an organization and personal purpose. Participant 2 saw subtle ego. Relating to awareness, Participant 2 used the word “awareness” in multiple ways, and hinted at awareness that is beyond self, beyond thought, and beginning to move beyond time. Zone 1 themes from the SCT assessment were attachment

motivating change, awareness makes purpose in anger, awareness allows choice of self, awareness as self, awareness defines self, contextual reciprocity, empathy of interdependence, feed healthy ego, joy of awareness, loneliness in complexity, multilayered self, relief in tension, self-deception, shifting power structures, systems thinking, and transform discomfort. The single zone 2 datum point yielded the theme leader is mirror.

**Relationship, mutuality, and culture.** Participant 2 understood reality as a shared phenomenon. Relationship seemed to be a push/pull experience for Participant 2, but deep intimacy has been found. Participant 2 also understood how to organize power, and how people defer their power. That did not stop Participant 2 from playing out the exquisite dance of alignment. Participant 2 viewed self and coworkers as co-parents to the organization, which gave Participant 2 deep intimacy, a love connection, gratitude, and appreciation. Themes coded for zone 3 from the SCT responses were personal responsibility for social change, transcendence of love, and uniqueness. Zone 4 themes included constructed nature of culture, integration of self and other, relief in avoidance, and work is family.

**Action orientation.** Participant 2 seemed to have a fondness for experiences, and used the subtle sensory system in presence, attunement, and embodiment. Participant 2 found self and others growing, evolving, developing, and unfolding in the developmental arc. Participant 2 seemed to act individually as opposed to collectively, and sometimes could not apprehend the difference between them. It seemed at times Participant 2 could not find the self that is doing. Often, work was in flow and Participant 2 was letting go and bringing opposing poles together. One of Participant 2's favorite things to do was to "show people a radical way to organize power." Illusion of permanence was the single theme from SCT data for zone 5. Zone 6 coded SCT themes were importance of comfort and purpose and beauty in interdependence.

**Systems and contexts.** Participant 2 seemed to delve deeply into systems, researched them, and understood their effects on policy. Participant 2 understood the connection of systems that are connected to other systems, ad-infinity, whether interior or exterior, and saw the effects they have on society, the world, and the universe. Themes for zone 7 were society is trade, social ills have societal origins, adult development, and socially constructed past constructs future. Zone 8 themes were rules as leverage for reciprocal evolution and privacy relates to authenticity.

**Participant 2 summary.** No themes were repeated exactly for Participant 2 (i.e., found in both self and organization). This outcome prompted a second round of coding, in which 18 data points were sorted into five broader themes: awareness, constructs, healthy ego, transmuting discomfort, and interdependence. The two most frequent of these were awareness and constructs, across 1 and 3 zones respectively, each accounting for 13.8% of the data (27.6%). The remaining three themes each occurred twice, across two zones, each accounting for 5.5% of the data (16.5%). Cumulatively, the five broader themes accounted for 44% of the data. They are listed in Table 10, along with the originating themes, zone, and STAGE scores from the data point from whence the themes originated.

Table 10

*Participant 2 Five Broader Themes and Originating Themes by Zone and Score*

Zone	Stage	Originating Theme	Broader Theme
1	5.0	awareness as self	awareness
1	5.0	awareness defines self	awareness
1	5.0	transform discomfort	transform discomfort
1	5.5	awareness makes purpose in anger	awareness
1	5.5	awareness allows choice of self	awareness
1	5.5	joy of awareness	awareness
1	5.5	relief in tension	transform discomfort
1	5.5	feed healthy ego	healthy ego
3	5.5	personal responsibility for social change	social change
4	4.0	work is family	interdependence
4	5.0	constructed nature of culture	constructs
6	3.5	importance of comfort	healthy ego
6	5.5	purpose and beauty in interdependence	interdependence
7	4.5	social ills have societal origins	constructs
7	5.5	socially constructed past constructs future	constructs
8	4.0	rules as leverage for reciprocal evolution	social change
8	5.0	labels are constructs	constructs
8	5.5	evolution is mutually constructed by evolution	constructs

The same coded themes are depicted in Figure 6. Following the two most frequent categories, awareness and constructs, around the spiral, it becomes evident that these two are interrelated at this tier. In zone 1, Participant 2 experienced both an individual, receptive, MetAware (5.0) awareness that awareness defines self, and of awareness as self. Participant 2 also experienced an individual, active MetAware (5.5) joy of awareness, as well as an

understanding of the power of awareness to make purpose in anger and to allow choice of self.

This awareness, when extended to larger cultural and systemic realities, yielded an understanding of the constructed nature of culture (5.0) in zone 4, the zone 7 socially autopoietic understanding that social ills have societal origins (4.5), that the socially constructed past constructs the future (5.5), the systems-based observations that labels are constructs (5.0), and evolution is mutually constructed by evolution (5.5).

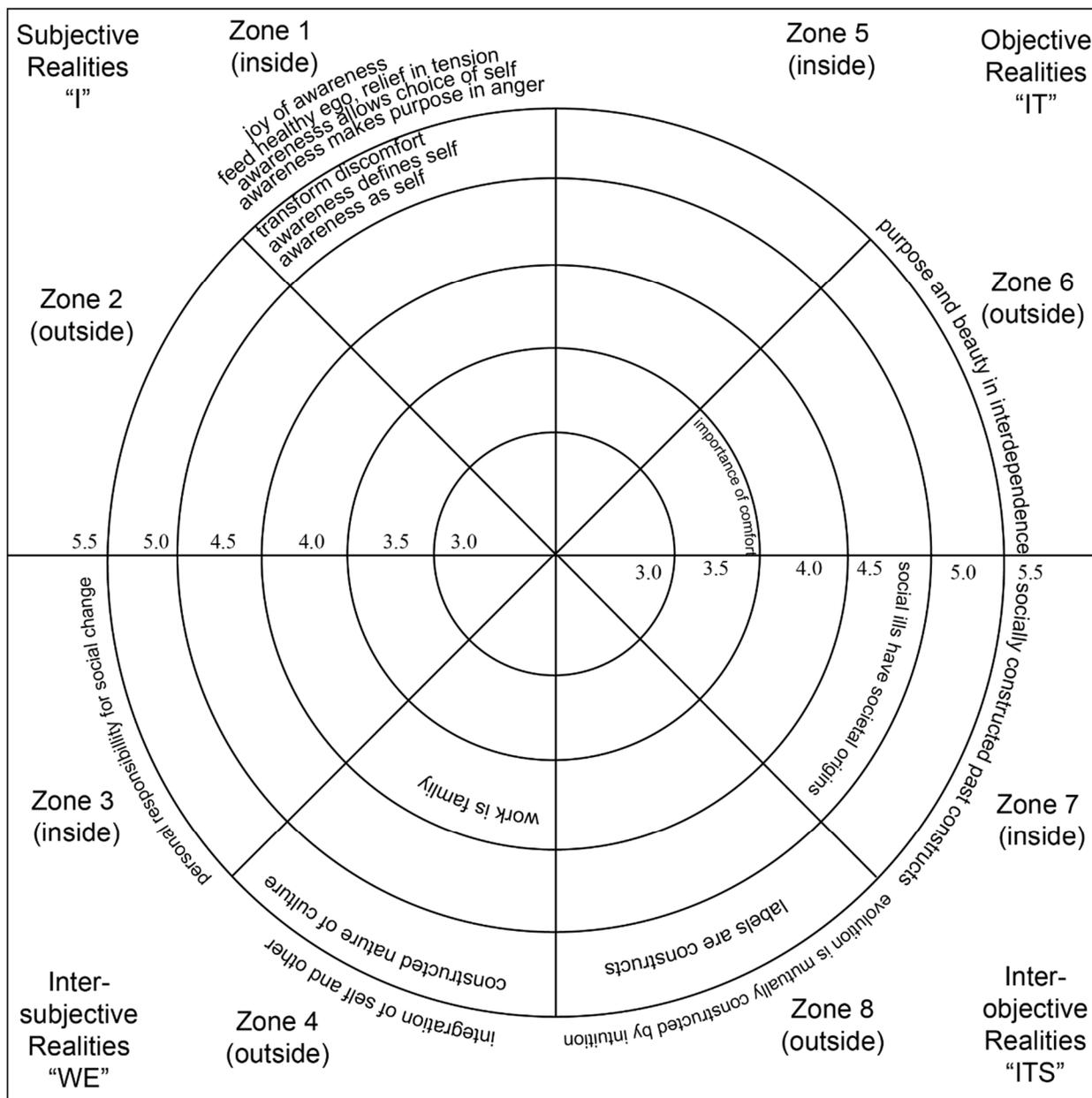


Figure 6. Participant 2 broader themes by zone and by stage.

**Organization 2**

The range of scores for Organization 2 was 2.5 to 5.0, with 7%, 0%, 10%, 24%, 52%, and 7% of the data scored at each of these stages, respectively. This finding means that Organization 2 operated stably at the 4.5 Strategist stage of development, with a slight leading edge of 5.0

Construct Aware, and a strong supporting stage of 4.0 Pluralist. Table 11 shows the 43 data points by zone and stage. After that, themes coded from these data points are shared in four categories related to the quadrants. Finally, a summary of said themes is presented.

Table 11

*Organization 2 Organizational STAGES Scores by Zone*

STAGES score	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Zone 8	Total scored at each STAGE	% scored at each STAGE
2.5						3			3	7
3.0								2		
3.5					1	1		1	4	10
4.0	1			2	5	1	5	1	10	24
4.5	1		3	1	7	4	2		22	52
5.0	1								3	7
5.5										
6.0										
Totals	3		3	3	13	9	7	4	42	
Percentage per zone	7		7	7	32	22	17	10		

**People.** Coded themes for Organization 2 in zone 1 were community, be of service, and removing ego from role. This finding indicates personal experiences of employees and stakeholders included a focus on these themes. There were no themes coded for Organization 2 in zone 2.

**Culture.** Themes for zone 3 were a better way, evolutionary purpose, and purpose inspires values. These themes indicate some of the cultural values foregrounded by the organization. Zone 4 themes were hierarchies of complexity, self-management, and purpose inspires values. These themes are being foregrounded in group behavioral interactions and communication patterns within the culture of Organization 2.

**Business systems/functions and structure.** Zone 5 themes were hierarchies of position, mutual support, role from soul, sense and respond, separate ego and power, transmuting tension x 2, evolutionary design, adult development x 2, individual adaptability, be of purpose, and continual prototyping. This finding indicates a foregrounding of these 13 themes in organizational systems and functions, as well as individual behaviors. Zone 6 themes were clear rules, positional authority, separate ego and power x 2, adult development x 2, holarchy of roles, roles relate to work, and positional power. These seven themes arose around organizational structure.

**Systems and society.** Themes for zone 7 were honor all stakeholders, collaborative design, constitutional power, growth, prototyping collective evolution, evolution, and sensing into purpose. These themes were present around communication and processes with the larger environment (i.e., with society). Zone 8 themes were empowerment, not community-oriented partnership, and market growth. This finding indicates organizational structures that foreground these themes when interacting with shareholders and society at large.

**Organization 2 summary.** The most frequent themes for Organization 2 can be separated into two categories, those which repeated exactly (both self and organization), and those which can be grouped into similar categories. Of those which repeated exactly, adult development occurred the most, with four instances in two zones, accounting for 9.3% of the data. The next most frequent theme was separate ego, which occurred three times across two zones, accounting for 7% of the data. The final two themes, purpose inspires values and transmuting tension, each accounted for 4.65% of the data and occurred twice, across two zones and one zone, respectively. Together, these four themes accounted for 25.6% of the data.

Five more frequent themes were found by creating categories of similar themes. They are evolution, hierarchies, roles, power, and sensing. Evolution occurred four times across three zones and accounted for 9.3% of the data. Hierarchies and roles both occurred three times across three zones, each accounting for 6.97% of the data (13.9%). Power and sensing each occurred twice in zones 1 and 2 respectively, each accounting for 4.65% of the data (9.3%). These five themes together accounted for another 32.5% of the data, and the most frequent themes and categories combined accounted for 58.1% of the data (see Table 12).

Table 12

*Organization 2 Most Frequent Themes and Similar Themes*

Zone	Stage	Original theme	Broader theme
1	5.0	removing ego from role	role
3	4.5	purpose inspires values	purpose inspires values
3	4.5	evolutionary purpose	evolution
4	4.0	hierarchies of complexity	hierarchy
4	4.5	purpose inspires values	purpose inspires values
5	3.5	hierarchies of position	hierarchy
5	4.0	separate ego and power	separate ego and power
5	4.0	transmuting tension	transmuting tension
5	4.0	role from soul	role
5	4.0	sense and respond	sensing
5	4.5	adult development	adult development
5	4.5	adult development	adult development
5	4.5	transmuting tension	transmuting tension
5	4.5	evolutionary prototyping	evolution
5	4.5	evolutionary design	evolution
6	2.5	positional authority	power
6	2.5	separate ego and power	separate ego and power
6	3.5	adult development	adult development
6	4.0	positional power	power
6	4.5	adult development	adult development
6	4.5	separate ego and power	separate ego and power
6	4.5	holarchy of roles	role
6	4.5	roles relate to work	role
7	4.5	prototyping collective evolution	evolution
7	5.0	sensing into purpose	sensing

Tracing the adult development theme around the circle in Figure 7 reveals two instances in zone 5 and two in zone 6. The first two indicate subtle, collective, interpenetrative (4.5) organizational processes that foreground adult development. The two instances in zone 6 similarly indicate an individual, subtle, active (3.5) structure for behavior that encourages adult

development, and a subtle, collective, interpenetrative (4.5) organizational structure that protects these practices and policies.

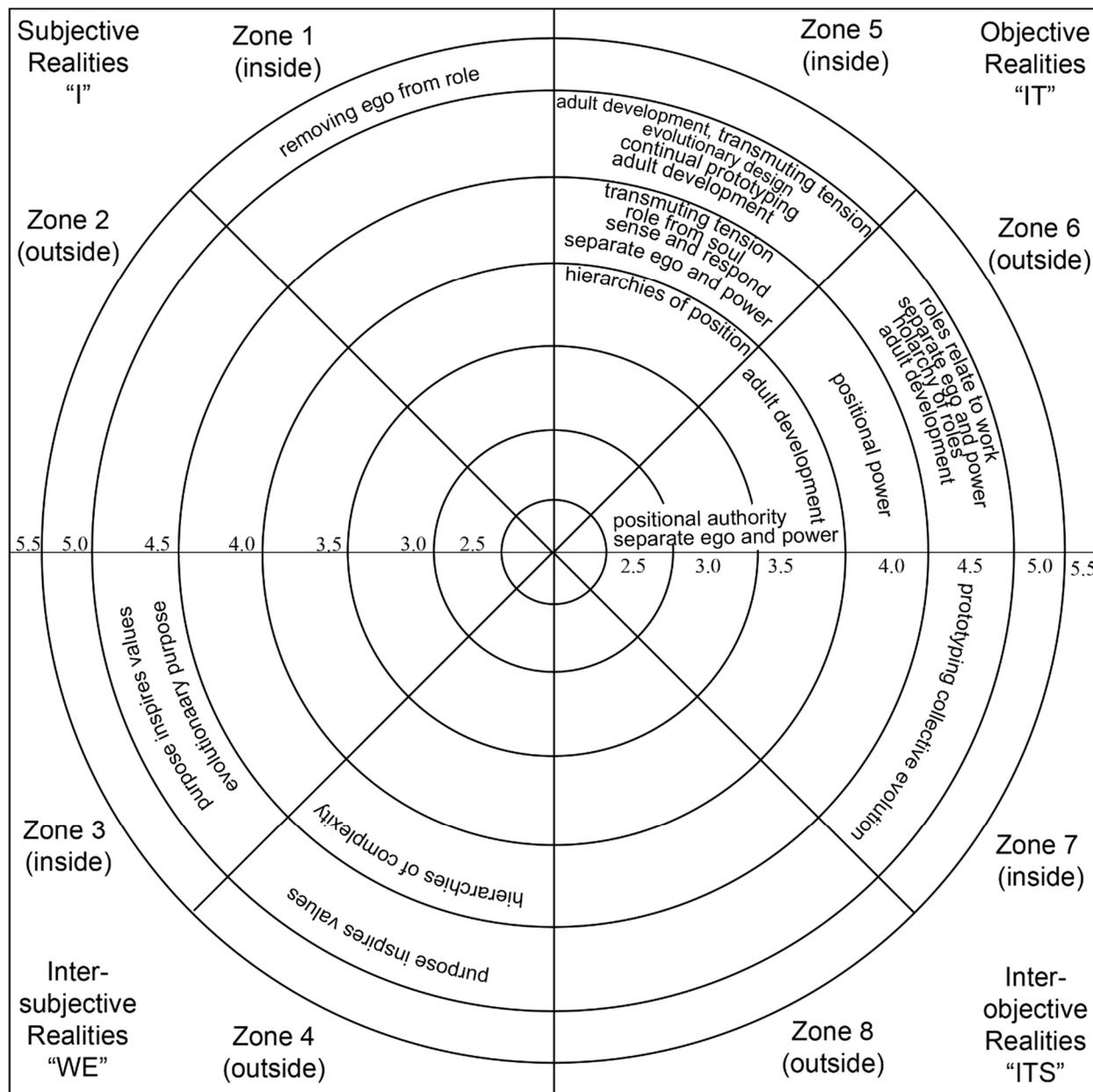


Figure 7. Organization 2 most frequent and similar themes by zone and stage.

## Case 2 Summary

Participant 2 operated stably from the 5.5 Transpersonal stage of development, with a strong supporting stage of 5.0 Construct Aware, and a light leading edge into 6.0 Universal, while Organization 2 operated stably at the 4.5 Strategist stage of development, with a slight leading edge of 5.0 Construct Aware. Table 13 profiles the most frequent themes and categories. There were no themes that matched directly between Participant 2 and Organization 2. However, a closer inspection of these themes and categories yields a distinct connection between Participant 2 and Organization 2. For example, the two most frequent theme categories for Participant 2 expressed a personal, subjective experience of awareness as joyful (Zone 1), and the power of awareness to define self (Zone 1), and a cultural and systemic understanding of the constructed nature of socio-cultural realities (Zones 4, 7, and 8). At the same time, Organization 2 exhibited organizational functions and structures (Zones 5 and 6) that were constructed such that adult development and the separation of ego and power (i.e., the cultivation of awareness), are paramount. This continues with the other themes. Social change, interdependence, and transform discomfort as thematic categories for Participant 1 translated into organizational practices that transmute tension and separate power and ego from roles by addressing the construction of hierarchies of position rather than power.

Table 13

*Participant 2 and Organization 2's Similar Themes by Zone and by Stage*

Zone	Stage	Participant 2 themes	Organization 2 themes
1	5.0	awareness defines self	
1	5.0	transform discomfort	
1	5.0	awareness as self	
1	5.0		removing ego from role
1	5.5	awareness makes purpose in anger	
1	5.5	awareness allows choice of self	
1	5.5	joy of awareness	
1	5.5	relief in tension	
1	5.5	feed healthy ego	
3	4.5		evolutionary purpose
3	4.5		purpose inspires values
3	5.5	personal responsibility for social issues	
4	4.0	work is family	
4	4.0		hierarchies of complexity
4	4.5		purpose inspires values
4	5.0	constructed nature of culture	
5	3.5		hierarchies of position
5	4.0		separate power and ego
5	4.0		role from soul
5	4.0		transmuting tension
5	4.0		sense and respond
5	4.5		adult development
5	4.5		adult development
5	4.5		evolutionary design
5	4.5		transmuting tension
6	2.5		positional power
6	3.5	importance of comfort	
6	3.5		adult development
6	4.0		positional power
6	4.5		adult development
6	4.5		holarchy of roles
6	4.5		separate ego and power
6	4.5		roles relate to work
6	5.5	purpose and beauty inspire values	
7	4.5	social ills have societal origins	
7	4.5		prototyping collective evolution
7	5.0		sensing into purpose
7	5.5	socially constructed past constructs society	
8	4.0	rules as leverage for reciprocal change	
8	5.0	labels are constructs	
8	5.5	evolution is mutually constructed	

### Findings for Case 3

#### Participant 3

Participant 3 was assessed at the 4.0 Pluralist stage of development, with individual scores of the 36 sentence completion stems ranging from the 2.5 Conformist to the 4.5 Strategist stages, with 3%, 8%, 44%, 22%, and 22% of stems scored at each of the stages respectively. This finding means that Participant 3 operated stably from the 4.0 Pluralist stage of development, with a supporting stage of 3.5 Achiever, and a leading edge of 4.5 Strategist. Table 14 shows each of the 36 SCT stem scores presented by zone. After that are the 4 general categories for themes from the SCT data. Finally, a summary of said themes is presented.

Table 14

#### *Participant 2 STAGES SCT Scores by Zone*

STAGES score	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Zone 8	Total scored at each STAGE	% scored at each STAGE
2.5	1								1	3
3.0	3								3	8
3.5	9		1	2		1	2	1	16	44
4.0	2		2	1	1		1	1	8	22
4.5	1	1	1	1		1	1	2	8	22
5.0										
5.5										
6.0										
Totals	16	1	4	4	1	2	4	4	36	
Percentage per zone	44	3	11	11	3	6	11	11		

**Interior.** Emotionally, Participant 3 expressed a variety of feelings that show a depth of heart and care: concern, empathy, happiness, enjoyment, and cherishing. Emotions that are less

upbeat were included in Participant 3's inventory, such as suffering, sadness, and depression. Cognitively, Participant 3 expressed trust, reasoning, a values orientation, and a deep sense of purpose. These traits showed up in Participant 3's care for humanity and its health and wellbeing. Participant 3 had two levels of awareness. The first was the capacity to zoom in or focus and be mindful. The second was zooming out or taking in a big picture of consciousness. The 16 coded themes from the SCT data for Zone 1 were comprised of: conformity is conscience, anger triggers silence, negativity comes from others, nerves trigger silence, bad people are bad, criticism is a projection, desires are fleeting, helplessness requires empathy, lack of joy, lack of power, not enough time for people, optimistic, other's pain equals suffering, pleasure in multiplicity, resilience, and care for others. The single zone 2 theme was purpose.

**Relationship, mutuality, and culture.** Participant 3 had a deep abiding love and respect for family as well as friends. This trait was repeated in Participant 3's working relationships, where Participant 3 had fun and provided autonomy. Participant 3 shared, listened, and connected. Zone 3 coded SCT themes were care for others, spontaneous planning in teams, trust, and honor all stakeholders. For zone 4, the themes were connection, uniqueness, reciprocal relationships, and perspectival interpretations.

**Action orientation.** Participant 3 had a robust outlook on learning from the past, others, and experience. Through this experience with life itself, Participant 3 counted on the resiliency that had developed. Participant 3 also had ways of responding to challenges with going silent. Participant 3 liked to engage through simplicity and simplifying. The single coded theme for zone 5 from the SCT data was importance of continuity. Two themes emerged for zone 6. They were sharing, and self-organization and service.

**Systems and contexts.** Participant 3's systems orientation seemed to rest in views of society and the world. These are third person perspectives relating to systems, and grow to encompass the planet, the environment and containers, and complex adaptive systems. Coded themes from the SCT data for zone 7 were continuous learning, learn from the past, social business, and trust. The coded SCT themes for zone 8 were prosperity through technology, privacy versus compassion, conscious purpose, and mindful rules.

**Participant 3 summary.** The two most common themes for Participant 3 were care for others and trust, with both occurring twice across two zones, each accounting for 5.5% of the data (11%). They are pictured in Figure 8. Tracing these two themes around the spiral revealed that Participant 3 expressed an individual, interior, subjective (Zone 1) subtle, collective, interpenetrative (4.5) belief in caring for others. In Zone 3, a subtle, individual, active (3.5) professional culture to care for others, and a subtle, collective, reciprocal (4.0) culture of trust work to integrate subtle, collective, interpenetrative (4.5) solutions to build trust at a systemic level.

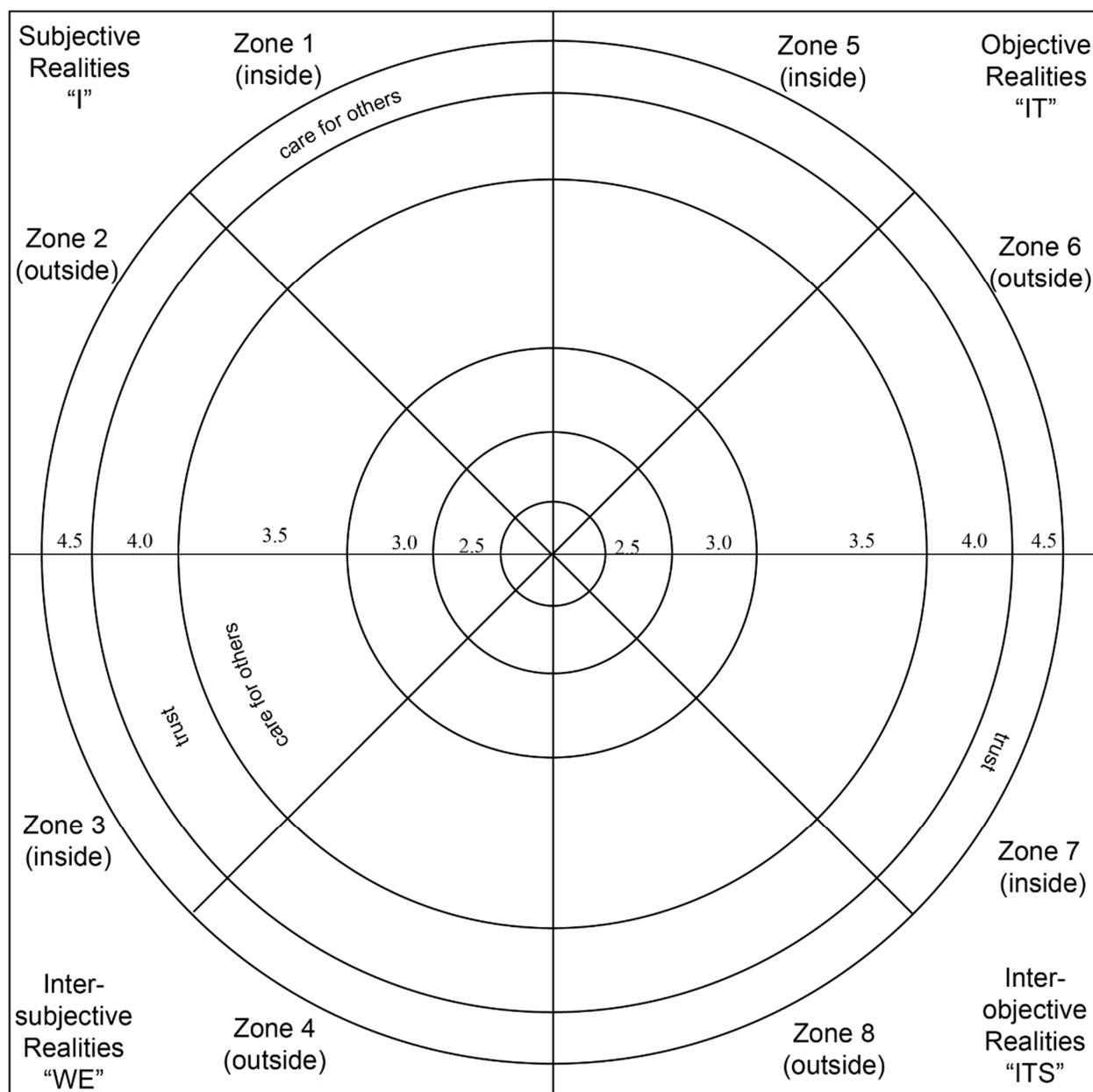


Figure 8. Participant 1 frequent themes by zone and stage.

### Organization 3

The range of scores for Organization 3 was 2.5 to 4.5, with 4%, 0%, 0%, 61%, and 35% of the data scored at each of these stages, respectively. This finding means that Organization 3 operated from the 4.0 Pluralist stage of development, with a supporting stage of 3.5 Achiever, and a leading edge of 4.5 Strategist. In total, 46 pieces of data were scored, with 35% of those

data points scoring at the 4.5 Strategist level, showing a very strong leading edge into that stage (see Table 15). Themes coded from these data points are presented in four categories related to the quadrants, followed with a summary of said themes.

Table 15

*Organization 3's Organizational STAGES Scores by Zone*

STAGES score	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Zone 6	Zone 7	Zone 8	Total scored at each STAGE	% scored at each STAGE
2.5						2			2	4
3.0										
3.5										
4.0			3	2	10	8	5		28	61
4.5			2		3	2	6	3	16	35
5.0										
5.5										
6.0										
Totals			5	2	13	12	11	3	46	
Percentage per zone			11	4	28	26	24	7		

**People.** No additional data points were available for Organization 3 in Zones 1 and 2.

**Culture.** Themes for zone 3 were to be of service, partnership, self-management, spontaneous innovation, and trust. These themes indicated cultural values foregrounded by Organization 3. Zone 4 themes included partnership and personal ethics, indicating their foregrounding in group behavioral interactions and communication patterns within Organization 3's culture.

**Business systems/functions and structure.** The majority of data gathered for Organization 3 was from zones 5 and 6, each zone representing slightly more than 25% of the data (> 50%). Zone 5 themes included adult development, community x 2, healthy relating x 2,

hierarchies of actualization, holistic, self-management x 2, separate ego and power, and transparency x 3. This finding indicates that, for Organization 3, these themes are prominent in organizational systems and functions, as well as in individual behaviors. Zone 6 themes were adult development, evolution, self-management x 6, self-organization x 3, and transparency. These themes arose around the organizational structure.

**Systems and society.** Zone 7 themes were be of service x 3, integrating with other industries, neighborhood regeneration, partnership x 3, professionalism equals client focus, prototyping, and systemic evolution. These seven themes were present around communication and processes with the larger environment (i.e., with other industries and with society in general). Zone 8 themes included be of service x 2, and systemic evolution, indicating that organizational structures existed that foregrounded these themes when interacting with shareholders and society at large.

**Organization 3 summary.** The nine most frequent themes for Organization 3 (those occurring more than once) were self-management, be of service, partnership, transparency, self-organization, adult development, community, healthy relating, and systemic evolution. They are presented in Figure 9, along with the zone and STAGE scores from the data point from whence the themes originated. The most frequent theme was self-management, with nine instances across three zones, accounting for 19.6% of the data. The second most frequent theme was be of service, with six instances across three zones, accounting for 13% of the data. Partnership was the third most frequent theme, with five occurrences across three zones, accounting for 10.9% of the data. Next was transparency, with four instances across two zones, amounting to 8.69% of the data. Self-organization was the fifth most frequent theme, with three instances in one zone, accounting for 6.52% of the data. Finally, tying for sixth place, with two occurrences each across

one and two zones respectively, were community and healthy relating, and adult development and systemic evolution, each accounting for 4.37% of the data. Cumulatively, the most frequent themes for Organization 3 made up nearly two-thirds (58.9%) of the data.

Tracing the self-management theme around the spiral in Figure 9 reveals a subtle, collective, interpenetrative (4.5) cultural value of self-management, subtle, collective, reciprocal (4.0) business functions and processes with self-management as a core operating tenant, and several subtle, collective, reciprocal (4.0) business structures designed to foster self-management.



3's individual subjective (Zone 1) and collective/cultural value (Zone 3) to care for others, and a cultural (Zone 3) and systemic (Zone 7) value of trust, could be said to deeply inform an organization with values (Zone 3), functions and processes (Zone 5), and structures (Zone 6) in which self-management and transparency are foregrounded, partnership is a practiced cultural value (Zones 3 and 4), and self-organization is the default organizational structure (Zone 6). A full list of these themes can be seen in Table 16.

Table 16

*Participant 3 and Organization 3's Similar Themes by Zone and by Stage.*

Zone	Stage	Participant 2 themes	Organization 2 themes
1	4.5	care for others	
3	3.5	care for others	
3	4.0	trust	trust
3	4.0		be of service
3	4.0		partnership
3	4.5		self-management
4	4.0		partnership
5	4.0		self-management
5	4.0		self-management
5	4.0		transparency
5	4.0		transparency
5	4.0		community
5	4.0		healthy relating
5	4.0		healthy relating
5	4.5		community
5	4.5		transparency
5	4.5		adult development
6	2.5		self-management
6	2.5		transparency
6	4.0		self-management
6	4.0		self-organization
6	4.0		self-organization
6	4.0		self-organization
6	4.5		adult development
7	4.0		be of service
7	4.0		partnership
7	4.0		partnership
7	4.5	trust	
7	4.5		be of service
7	4.5		systemic evolution
8	4.5		be of service
8	4.5		be of service
8	4.5		systemic evolution

In the following chapter, a summary of the analysis and synthesis of these findings is presented, followed by final conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS, SYNTHESIS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter analyzes and discusses the previously presented findings, as suggested by Bloomberg and Volpe (2012), “in light of the study’s research questions, literature review, and conceptual framework” (p. 10). The question guiding this study was: “How effectively does the combined transdisciplinary, integral, and STAGES approach allow for the identification of whether a Founder/CEO’s stage of human development informs the stage of development of an organization?” The combined approach was found to be very effective in identifying that a Founder/CEO’s stage of human development does indeed inform the stage of development of an organization.

Although the primary inquiry of this study, by necessity, was methodological, it was first necessary to answer the secondary question, as the fidelity of the answer to this question in turn indicated the effectiveness of the approach. Thus, this chapter begins with an analysis of the findings using pattern-matching (Yin, 2009), which led to a case inspired Next-Stage Organizational Profile. This is followed by a synthesis of the methodological, theoretical, and conceptual frameworks of this study, resulting in a Transdisciplinary and Integral Model of a Next-Stage Organization, modeled using Banathy’s (1996) three lenses: systems, functions/structures, and processes/behaviors.

A summary of the study is then followed with a discussion of the research design’s efficacy, appreciating that research design is more than a technical, step-by-step overview of what was done to collect and analyze data. Research design also means the logic used to create the study, starting with the philosophical underpinnings of the study that inform the research question, theory, methods, and reporting of findings and results (McGregor, 2017; Yin, 2009).

The research design is one of the defining contributions of this doctoral research. The chapter wraps up with concluding thoughts and recommendations.

### **Analysis**

The case study data were analyzed using the pattern-matching technique. To recap, pattern-matching involves determining if found patterns coincide with anticipated ones. Explanation-building, a special case of pattern-matching, involves building an explanation about the case with critical evidence to support that explanation, with better case studies reflecting some theoretically significant propositions. This showed the findings to be in alignment with McCauley et al.'s (2006) propositions of adult development, while thematic coding resulted in organizational themes in alignment with Cacioppe and Edwards (2005) descriptions (Table 5). Cross-case analysis compares any found patterns across all cases comprising the study (Yin, 2009). This provided a case-inspired descriptive explanation of a Next-Stage Organizational Profile. Finally, the research results corroborated Laloux's (2014) assessment of the three organizations in this study as Next-Stage Organizations. His research is a composite representation of an organization operating at the 4.5 Strategist Stage (i.e., Teal).

### **Pattern-Matching**

In a case study, the predicted patterns are the theoretical propositions arising from the conceptual frameworks guiding the study (Yin, 2009). The propositions in question pertain to adult development and organizational development. A complete list of the seven propositions of adult (human ego) development (McCauley et al., 2006) was presented in Chapter 2. These propositions pertain to identifiable patterns of meaning-making and making sense of the world that present at stages, orders or levels of developmental movement, which influence what people notice or are aware of and, therefore, what they can articulate, reflect on, and change. As a

caveat, although the purpose of this study was not to validate McCauley and colleagues' propositions, it is of note that none of them were violated. Also of interest to me in creating this study was whether the propositions and methods of assessments of adult development carry over to assessments of organizational stage development; that is, are the two interrelated?

A comparison of study findings against these propositions showed that all three participants and organizations had constructed identifiable stages of development from which they were stably operating—McCauley et al.'s (2006) propositions 1 and 2—while also including aspects of earlier and later stages (Proposition 4). All three participants and organizations were at postformal stages of development, with case 2 showing the greatest complexity because Participant 2 was at a later, post-postconventional stage of development (Proposition 5). The interviews with all three Founder/CEOs yielded a similar origin story in that a societal need and a developmental cusp coincided in the founding of their organization (Proposition 6). Finally, the organization then became a form of evolutionary learning company for the Founder/CEO to continue on his or her human developmental path.

Germane to this study is how the stage of development and, by correlation, the Founder/CEO's system of beliefs informed the stage development and worldview of an organization. All three participants and their organization showed relatively similar distributions of scores across stages and zones, as well as similar coded themes, noted in Chapter 5. This finding is relevant because although the STAGES assessment of each participant was done independently of the organizational assessments, similar scores and themes appeared. Also important to this study was whether individual scores from applying the STAGES' three questions (see Appendix C) to the various zones of an organization would yield a developmental

score that correlated to both adult and organizational development theory in general. To help discern this, the frequent themes across all cases are presented in Table 17.

Table 17

*Most Frequent and Similar Themes Occurring Across All Three Cases by Zone and Stage*

Zone	Stage	Organization 1 themes	Organization 2 themes	Organization 3 themes
1	3.0	be of service		
1	3.5	adult development		
1	3.5	be of service		
1	3.5	healthy relating		
1	4.0	be of service		
1	4.0	be of service		
1	4.0		community	
1	4.5	adult development		
1	4.5		be of service	
1	4.5			care for others
2	4.0	be of service		
2	4.0	honor all stakeholders		
3	3.5			care for others
3	4.0	adult development		
3	4.0	community		
3	4.0	partnership		
3	4.0	compassion		
3	4.0			be of service
3	4.0			partnership
3	4.5	be of service		
3	4.5	be of service		
3	4.5	be of service		
3	4.5	community		
3	4.5		better way	
3	4.5			honor all stakeholders
3	4.5	self-management		
3	5.0		intuition	
4	3.5	community		
4	4.0	community		
4	4.0	healthy relating		
4	4.0		hierarchies of complexity	
4	4.0		self-management	
4	4.0	honor all stakeholders		
4	4.0			partnership
4	4.5	intuition		
5	3.5	hierarchies of position		
5	4.0	healthy relating		
5	4.0	self-organization		
5	4.0		transmuting tension	
5	4.0		sense and respond	
5	4.0			community
5	4.0			healthy relating
5	4.0			healthy relating

Zone	Stage	Organization 1 themes	Organization 2 themes	Organization 3 themes
5	4.0			hierarchies of actualization
5	4.0			self-management
5	4.0			self-management
5	4.5	adult development		
5	4.5	adult development		
5	4.5		transmuting tension	
5	4.5			adult development
5	4.5			adult development
5	4.5			community
6	2.5	compassion		
6	2.5			self-management
6	3.5		adult development	
6	4.0	be of service		
6	4.0	self-organization		
6	4.0	self-organization		
6	4.0	self-organization		
6	4.0			self-management
6	4.0			self-management
6	4.0			self-management
6	4.0			self-management
6	4.0			self-management
6	4.5			
6	4.5	self-organization and service		
6	4.5		adult development	
6	4.5			evolution
7	3.0	evolution		
7	4.0	adult development		
7	4.0	be of service		
7	4.0			be of service
7	4.0			partnership
7	4.0			partnership
7	4.0			partnership
7	4.5	be of service		
7	4.5		honor all stakeholders	
7	4.5			be of service
7	4.5			be of service
7	4.5			prototyping
7	4.5		prototyping collective evolution	
7	5.0		evolution	
7	5.5		prototyping collective evolution	
8	4.0	be of service		
8	4.5	be of service		
8	4.5	honor all stakeholders		
8	4.5		partnership	
8	4.5			be of service
8	4.5			be of service

In the spirit of pattern-matching, these themes were compared to Cacioppe and Edwards' (2005) summary of integral theory, spiral dynamics, corporate transformation, and action inquiry, presented in Table 5. In this way, descriptions of each quadrant for each stage are easily found and compared to the organizational themes. Comparing theme by theme revealed that the (non-statistical) correlation of theme and stage with the descriptions was very strong. Case 1 contains 10 themes. To illustrate the pattern-matching, the *service* theme for Case 1 is used as an example (the following quotes are extracted from Cacioppe and Edwards's [2005] chart; see also Table 5). Zone 1 and 2 STAGES relate to *Leadership Consciousness* (see top row of Table 5). Scores of 3.5 and 4.0 indicate, respectively, that "leaders have high drive to achieve and compete, success and achievement defines identity" and are "aware of the needs of others...seek consensus but not manipulative." Zone 3 (*Organizational Culture*), with scores of 4.0 and 4.5, indicates, respectively, an organizational culture that both "values individual rights and fairness, consensus decision making, diversity and equity in workforce culture" and "values a balance of individual and collective views...[and] community involvement in development." A Zone 6 (*Organizational Behavior*) score of 4.0 indicates an organization that "is based on multiple goals, triple bottom line, internal cooperation when commitment is present at all levels."

To continue the illustration using Cacioppe and Edwards's (2005) chart, Zone 7 and 8 (*Organizational Systems*) scores of 4.5 indicate systemic interactions of the organization including system traits such as "technology unifies yet allows for diversity, external systems focus, links with industry and community, triple bottom line." A Zone 8 score of 4.0 indicates an "integration of systems for cooperating and effectiveness to achieve local and total goals, [and] high use of CIT." In other words, regarding pattern-matching, as theory (i.e., propositions) predicted, the organization, just as the individual, operated at multiple stages at once, with a solid

base at one stage, with earlier- and later-stage systems, structures, and behaviors and so on occurring depending upon respective needs and contexts. Continuing the process for Case 2 adds a Zone 1 score of 4.5, a description of *Leadership Consciousness* – being “aware of the entire spectrum of needs, balanced conscious activity, caters for individual and team wellbeing.” Case 3 reiterates Case 1, adding more 4.0 connections in Zones 3 and 7, and more 4.5 connections in Zones 7 and 8.

### **Case-Inspired Next-Stage Organizational Profile**

The collection of most frequent and similar themes occurring across all three cases (see Table 17) forms a narrative description of a postformal organization, one that *matches* (Yin, 2009) with the later stage descriptions presented in Table 5. In short, this narrative reads, thusly, salted with “themes” identified in the analysis: a postformal organization is continuously “prototyping collective evolution” by looking for a “better way” to “be of service” and “care for others” in the “community.” To do so, it is important to “honor all stakeholders” and work with “compassion” and in “community” and “partnership,” “prototyping” “self-management” and “self-organization,” while “transmuting tension” by learning “healthy relating” and engaging actively in “adult development” as “hierarchies of actualization” come to replace hierarchies of domination.

Minus the distracting quotation marks, this inaugural Next-Stage Organizational Profile reads as follows: *A postformal organization is continuously prototyping collective evolution by looking for a better way to be of service and care for others in the community. To do so, it is important to honor all stakeholders and work with compassion and in community and partnership, prototyping self-management and self-organization while transmuting tension by*

*learning healthy relating and engaging actively in adult development as hierarchies of actualization come to replace hierarchies of domination.*

As Cook-Greuter (2013) noted, the postconventional stages of development reflect gaining deeper understanding, recognizing assumptions, seeing whole dynamic systems, stripping away illusions, transforming oneself and creating conditions for others to transform. All three cases clearly displayed these qualities to varying degrees. The following section contains a synthesis of these findings related to the literature about the methodology, theory, and conceptual frameworks that guided this study, presented in Chapters 2 and 3 (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

### **Transdisciplinary and Integral Model of a Next-Stage Organization**

Figure 10 is a graphic synthesis of the methodology, theory, and conceptual frameworks that guided this study, including Banathy's (1996) three lenses as a framework for modeling the findings. The transdisciplinary Hidden Third is portrayed as moving in and out of each zone and quadrant. Figure 11 intersperses the 10 themes found in the study (see Table 17) with the eight Integral Methodological Pluralism zones, anchored in integral theory's four quadrants (i.e., I, IT, WE, ITS). Finally, the themes are used as rich descriptions to build a composite model of a Next-Stage Organization by using Banathy's (1996) three lenses. Figure 10 presents the *unique* contribution of this doctoral research—the integration of transdisciplinarity, integral theory, and adult and organizational development frameworks to gain insights into postformal Next-Stage Organizations.

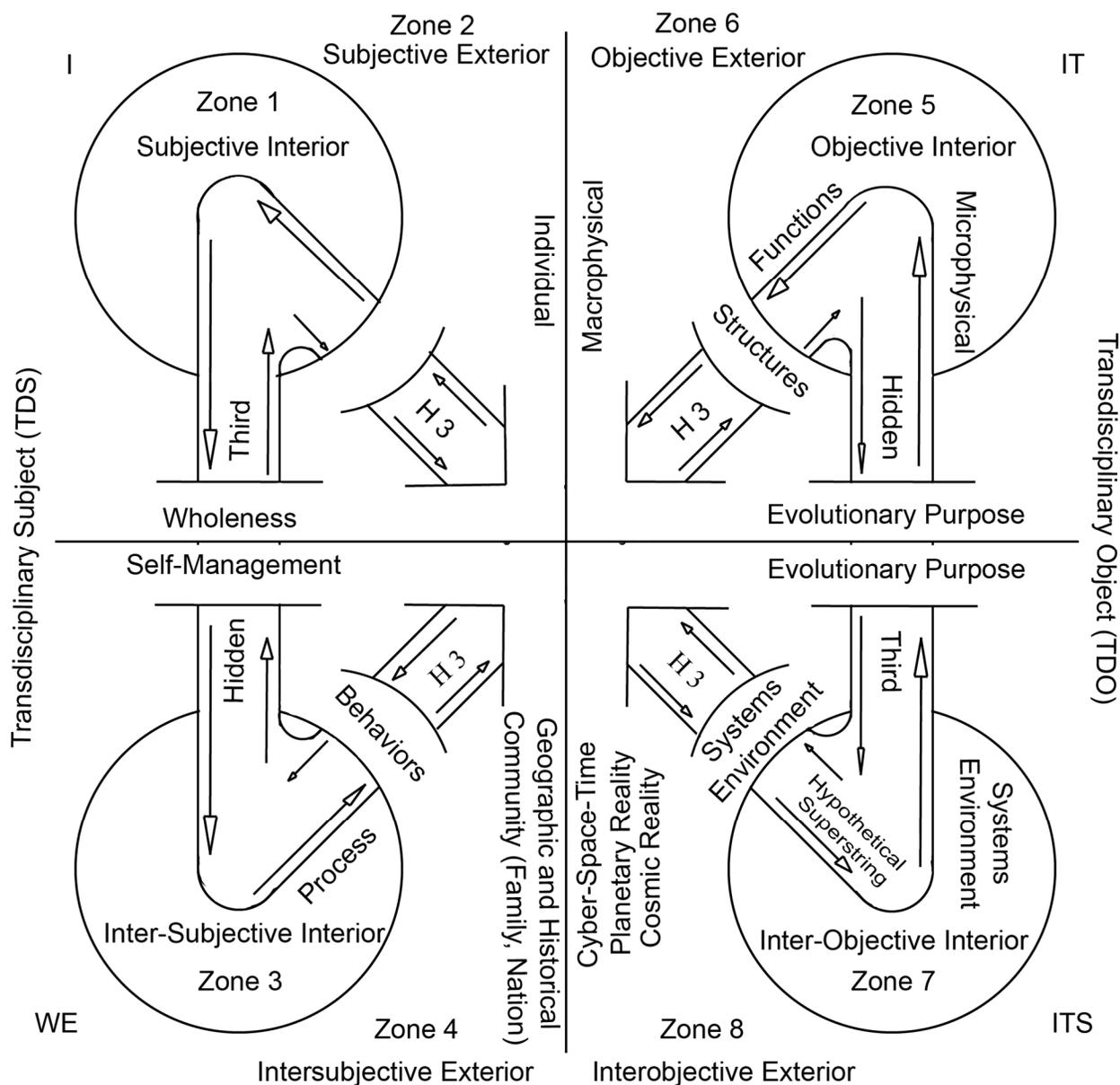


Figure 10. Graphical synthesis of Nicolescuian transdisciplinarity, Integral Methodological Pluralism, Banathy’s three lenses, and Laloux’s three breakthroughs.

Regarding Figure 10, together, the Upper and Lower Left quadrants make up the Transdisciplinary Subject, in singular and plural forms, while the Upper and Lower Right quadrants constitute the Transdisciplinary Object. Furthermore, Nicolescu’s (2010) levels of

reality can be seen on either side of the  $y$  axis of the diagram, while Laloux's (2014) three breakthroughs are represented in the center above and below the  $x$  axis.

In more detail, the Upper Left quadrant represents the individual level of reality in which wholeness is an expression of the ongoing expanding nature of adult development. Likewise, the Lower Left quadrant denotes the Geographical and Historical Community (nation, family) levels of reality, where Laloux's (2014) Self-Management is a later-stage organizational breakthrough. Banathy's (1996) Process/Behavior lens model covers Zones 3 and 4.

The Upper Right quadrant includes the macrophysical (observable with naked eye) and microphysical (microscopic) levels of reality, akin to Nicolescu's (2010) Internal and Sacred levels of reality, as well as Banathy's (1996) Structures/Functions lens, in Zones 6 and 5, respectively. The Lower Right quadrant consists of Nicolescu's (2010) external Cyber-Space-Time, Planetary, and Cosmic levels of reality, which have been mapped here to Zone 8, and the hypothetical superstring level, which is mapped as a hypothetical medium of the transdisciplinary Hidden Third. Also, in the Lower Right, Banathy's (1996) Systems Environment covers Zones 7 and 8. Laloux's (2014) third breakthrough, Evolutionary Purpose, is where the health and evolution of the Transdisciplinary Subject meets the best and highest purpose of the Transdisciplinary Object. Banathy's (1996) three lenses are now teased out in more detail as they apply to the study findings: systems, functions/structures, and process/behavioral. Figure 11 represents the relevant matching themes from Table 17, organized by Wilber's (2001, 2007) four quadrants and eight Zones.

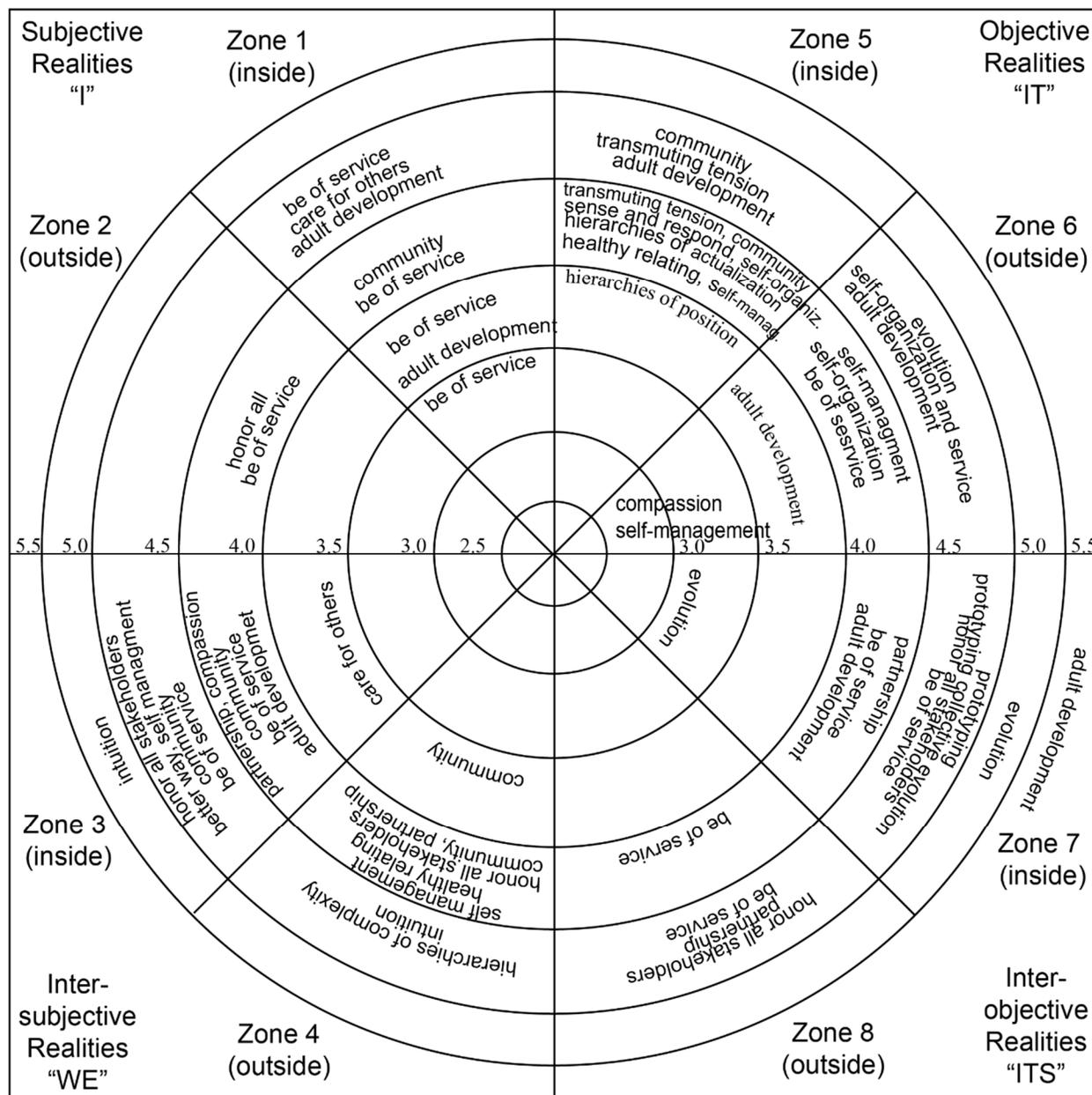


Figure 11. Ten themes found in the study by zone and stage.

**Systems Environment Lens**

Still in reference to Figure 10, the systems environment lens provides an overview, or birds-eye view, of the system being studied. As Banathy (1996) noted, its function is to map “the

space in which the system lives. It portrays systems-environment relations and tells us why the system exists” (p. 81). He explained that this perspective includes four areas of consideration, those being the (a) definition of system boundaries, including inputs and outputs, (b) mode of self-regulation, (c) embeddedness of this system, and (d) a map of the suprasystem.

Respectively, inputs and outputs comprise three types: definition, resource, and noise. Definition types comprise such things as environmental expectations, demands, policies, and requirements that exist in the environment, as well as any constraints or rules under which the system operates. Resources are those things needed for the system to function, including, but not limited to, people, information, knowledge, money, materials, and facilities. Finally, a large and unorganized collection of “undefined” information is classified as noise. Self-regulation refers to how the system receives inputs and adjusts its output in response (Banathy, 1996).

In reference to the study findings, given the disparate industries, products, and services, and profit versus non-profit status of the three organizations investigated in this study, the similarities are particularly compelling. Among the three cases, both services and products were rendered in for-profit and non-profit organizations in three different industries, from two different countries, all three of which have global markets. Thus, aside from people as one of their resource inputs, the concrete aspects of each of these three organizations were different, while the subtle boundary definitions overlapped.

For example, themes in Zones 7 and 8 indicate how a Next-Stage Organization defines itself in regard to the larger systems environment (see Table 17). Although the delivery of high-quality goods and services is important and is a recognized aspect of each of these organizations, it is their commitment to *being of service* to their employees, communities, and society at large that differentiates them from non-Next-Stage Organizations. The Founders/CEOs saw

themselves as embedded in a larger planetary system, midwives responsible for the healthy birth and survival of a nascent planetary species, gifted with the awesome, planetary scale powers of the Anthropocene, while at the same time faced with the existentially threatening wicked problems and VUCA conditions of a paradigm on its way out. They were prototyping collective evolution as they were of service to and honoring all stakeholders and in partnership with all stakeholders for the purpose of adult development and evolution. Again, aside from concrete measures of quality products and service, the regulation of inputs and outputs for the Next-Stage Organization places importance on *honoring all stakeholders* and *being of service*. Ultimately, people, not rules, are the decision makers.

### **Functions/Structures Lens**

“The functions/structures [lens] depict what the system is at a given moment in time and how it is structured” (Banathy, 1996, p. 81). In this study, this refers to Zone 5 for functions and Zone 6 for structures in the context of a quadrivial analysis of the Next-Stage Organization (see Figure 11). This lens further refines the system of interest by identifying its purpose, functional model, and components.

Once again, the concrete aspects of these three organizations had little or no overlap, meaning what they actually *do* (whether they offer products or services, or are for profit or non-profit), where they do it and even much of how they do it (i.e., different organizational structures) was different. However, the subtler aspects of why and how what they do affects themselves and others were similar. Profit and growth are important, but not at the expense of person, place, or planet. A Next-Stage Organization functions as a community, for the community, transmuting tension while sensing and responding to their evolutionary purpose of facilitating adult development through hierarchies of actualization that promote self-management

opportunities commensurate to developmental capabilities. Their structures are designed to foster evolution and adult development by making both self-management and being of service core tenets of their organizational structure.

### **Process/Behavioral Lens**

The process/behavioral lens “helps to represent how the system behaves as a changing, living social system in the context of its environment....[It] tells us how the system operates and lives through time” (Banathy, 1996, pp. 80–81). This refers to Zones 3 and 4 as they illuminate the cultural practices and behaviors that make up a Next-Stage Organization (see Figure 11). Paramount here, again, are the themes of caring for others, adult development, being of service, community, partnership, healthy relating, self-management, and honoring all stakeholders (see Table 17). Further, a commitment to continually finding a better way to be of service and trusting in intuition both lead to the ongoing development of the organization, along with its Founder/CEO and stakeholders.

### **Summary and Discussion**

To recap, the question driving this inquiry was: “How effectively does the combined transdisciplinary, integral, and STAGES approach allow for the identification of whether a Founder/CEO’s stage of human development informs the stage of development of an organization?” To answer this question, the research design (see Table 18), especially involved applying Murray and O’Fallon’s (2015) three-question method for scoring the STAGES adult development assessment tool (i.e., SCT) to a potential Next-Stage Organization and then comparing the results to a STAGES assessment of the Founder/CEO. Nicolescuian transdisciplinarity served as the philosophical and methodological foundation of the study, while integral theory (and integral methodological pluralism plus other theories) provided the

theoretical framework to be able to meaningfully collect, analyze, and compare data on an individual and organizational basis. The disciplinary fields of adult development and organizational development served as the sources of associated conceptual/propositional frameworks on which the case study was grounded.

Table 18

*Research Method*

Methodology	Theory	Conceptual Frameworks	Methods
<p>Nicolescuian Trandisciplinarity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Ontology: Multiple Levels of Reality mediated by the Hidden Third (reconciles contradictions)</li> <li>· Epistemology: Knowledge as complex, emergent, embedded and cross fertilized</li> <li>· Inclusive logic</li> </ul>	<p>Wilberian Integral Theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· All quadrants (I, IT, WE, ITS)</li> <li>· All levels, lines, stages, types</li> </ul> <p>Integral Methodological Pluralism (Wilber)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· 8 Primordial Perspective (Zones) - ensures a deeper holism by including many approaches to knowledge creation</li> </ul> <p>Banathy's Social System Design approach (three lenses used to develop profile of postformal NGO):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· systems</li> <li>· functions/structures</li> <li>· processes/behaviors</li> </ul> <p>Laloux's Next-stage Organization (NSO) approach (leaders are creating different organizational models by using new structures, practices, practices, principles, systems and cultures to work in powerful, soulful, purposeful and meaningful ways)</p>	<p>Human (ego) Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· O'Fallon's STAGES of human development (three tiers, 12 levels, scores 1.0-6.5)</li> <li>· McCauley et al.'s seven adult development propositions</li> </ul> <p>Organizational (group) Development</p> <p>Cacioppe and Edward's Organizational STAGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Leadership consciousness</li> <li>· Organizational behavior</li> <li>· Organizational culture</li> <li>· Organizational systems</li> </ul> <p>O'Fallon's three STAGES' questions used to assess organizational group development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· interviews</li> <li>· document collection</li> <li>· field notes</li> <li>· O'Fallon's Sentence Completion Test</li> <li>· case studies</li> <li>· thematic analysis</li> <li>· quadrivial analysis of NSOs</li> <li>· pattern-matching using theoretical propositions</li> </ul>

## Methodological Efficacy

The study was methodologically framed by Nicolescuian transdisciplinarity with boundaries provided by Wilber's integral theory and his accompanying Integral Methodological Pluralism. The transdisciplinary perspective is particularly important here as it hints to a far wider realm of collective inquiry for the scientific establishment. Nicolescuian transdisciplinarity provided complexly relating, independent and yet interdependent, layers of reality that is different from the flat, narrow, and materialistic nature of the Newtonian universe. Just as modernity marked a transition from the metaphysics of premodernity to physics, transdisciplinarity marks a shift from Newtonian to the quantum perspective, which allows for "more than meets the eye" when understanding the universe. Everything of importance happens in the quantum vacuum that is not empty but ripe with emergent potential. Chaos is seen as order emerging and not order lost. Complexity rather than simplicity is the cornerstone of life.

This paradigmatic shift is expressly important as evidenced by this study. Each of the participants and their organizations had methods, systems, functions, processes, and practices (Banathy, 1996) for listening to and honoring the ineffable. It is not enough to simply notice synchronicities (Peat, 2014); postformal Next-Stage Organization leaders must be willing and able to navigate by their light. Traditional organizational wisdom does not disappear here; it is transcended and *included*. It is surpassed, moved to a new space where it exists in concert with transdisciplinary wisdom (Nicolescu, 2014a, 2014b; McGregor & Donnelly, 2014). Nicolescuian transdisciplinarity was the lynchpin for the entire research design and played a key role in philosophically anchoring the study. Nicolescuian transdisciplinarity, which respects emergence, serendipity, complexity, contradictions, and intuition, has proven a fertile ground for conducting research focused on the perils facing humanity in the Anthropocene.

## Theoretical Efficacy

Wilber's (2001, 2007) integral theory and the accompanying Integral Methodological Pluralism proved to be powerful theoretical frameworks for this study. Their theoretical distinctions and classifications provided operational categories to map and navigate the complex territory of interdependently meshed layers of reality for the three Next-Stage Organizations. Regarding the Integral Methodological Pluralism, the 8 primordial perspective zones provided the distinction between and mapping of the inner and outer and singular and plural perspectives of the transdisciplinary object and transdisciplinary subject (Nicolescu, 2010). Using Wilber's Integral Methodological Pluralism approach enabled me to illustrate the powerful connections between the object (external to humans) and the subject (internal to humans) as they were mediated by the Hidden Third (contradiction, mitigation, and perspective fusion). Anchoring the research design in integral theory enabled me further to focus on the true meaning of *integral*. Certain parts may be necessary to the completeness of the whole; their absence would be noteworthy and consequential. As many perspectives as possible are necessary if postformal Next-Stage Organization leaders are to successfully navigate the Anthropocene.

This study was also underpinned by Laloux's (2014) approach to studying Next-Stage Organizations. His notion of a Teal organization (and attendant leaders) recognizes the existential imperative of adding value to people, place, and planet. His approach proved very useful for reaffirming that Next-Stage Organizations originally studied in his work had indeed evolved to a more advanced level of development. The three organizations and their Founder/CEOs all exhibited characteristics that Laloux (2014) referred to as Teal or 4.5 (Strategist – integrative, visioning) on O'Fallon's (2012) STAGES scale, with one of the three

organizations operating stably at this stage. Hence, the use of Laloux's (2014) approach to studying postformal Next-Stage Organizations was justified.

### **Conceptual Framework Efficacy**

Regarding human and organizational development frameworks, ever since Baldwin's (1895, 1896, 1904) theories of social heredity and evolution, and Taylor's (1911) notion of Scientific Management, modern science has grappled with the relationships between individual and group identity, human welfare and productivity, and personal and collective evolution. The findings and results of this study suggest that not only does the stage of development of a Founder/CEO inform that of the organization, but that it has implications for society at large. In short, conceptually connecting human (ego) development (O'Fallon, 2012) with organizational (group) development (Cacioppe & Edward, 2005) was a sound research design decision because it generated valuable data to answer the research question. To illustrate, an analysis of the case study findings showed a strong connection between the STAGE development and worldview of the Founder/CEO and the development and culture of his or her organization. Pattern-matching resulted in an affirmation of McCauley et al.'s (2006) general propositions of adult development theory, showing that the organizational (group) stage of development seems to be directly informed by that of the Founder/CEOs' human (ego) stage of development.

In more detail, McCauley et al.'s (2006) propositions of adult development were useful in pattern-matching during analysis. Important here is the clear and compelling evidence that postformal development of the Founder/CEO is a significant factor in the formation of Next-Stage Organizations. The ability to take multiple perspectives, balance needs of multiple stakeholders, and the desire to do so for the explicit benefit of all stakeholders is a hallmark of these leaders (Laloux, 2014). These abilities are in short supply and will be sorely needed in the

times to come. This study has affirmed that it is possible to profile the essence of Next-Stage Organizational leaders who can serve as role models. Being able to model their approach to leadership in the Anthropocene is a major contribution of this doctoral research. Furthermore, the results of the organizational STAGES scoring were in alignment with Cacioppe and Edwards' (2005) summary of integral theory, spiral dynamics, corporate transformation, and action inquiry (see Tables 2 and 16), confirming O'Fallon's (2012) STAGES three-question scoring technique as a viable method for organizational group assessment (in addition to human ego assessment).

Finally, the research design was based in the premise that postformal organizations are prototypical imaginal cells of a postformal civilization—the seeds of or precursors to a metamorphosis of global culture (Slater, 2008). The study results are promising. The Founders/CEOs, and by extension, the organizations that they formed, were able to envision and enact new possibilities by pushing paradigmatic boundaries. These new possibilities are not simply new ways to provide products or service for a profit. Although they also accomplish this, they do so in a way that is value adding for all stakeholders, becoming a regenerative vehicle for individual and collective development and evolution. Findings and results affirmed that a collection of *specific* organizational values and belief systems were instilled by the Founders/CEOs in the Next-Stage Organizations from their inception. These values and beliefs (i.e., major themes in the findings) included a commitment to personal and organizational growth, an intention to be of service (i.e., to serve), a passion for purpose, and faith in intuition.

### **Method Efficacy**

The methods used for data collection and analysis were also a unique contribution of this study (see Table 18). The combination of (a) integral methodological pluralism to guide data collection and sorting, (b) the O'Fallon STAGES assessment of the Founder/CEO, (c) the use of

O'Fallon's three STAGES questions to assess organizational development, (d) the modeling of said stage-related data using thematic coding, (e) the application of pattern-matching to analyze the case study data (Yin, 2009), and (f) the use Banathy's (1996) three lenses to construct an inaugural profile of Next-Stage Organizations all proved successful. Regarding the use of the three STAGES questions, the correlation of the organizational assessment with Cacioppe and Edwards' (2005) stage descriptions, and the Founder/CEOs' STAGES assessment served to validate the use of O'Fallon's three questions to assess the STAGE of development of the organization (as well as an individual).

### **Conclusions**

This study began by noting that the relationship between the human species and planet Earth has reached a crossroads. We have entered the Anthropocene, a geological epoch in which humans and their technology can and do alter not only the climate, but the very geological development of the planet. By most accounts, the current trajectory of this collective impact, if not changed drastically in the very near future, seriously jeopardizes our civilization's ability to survive.

At the same time, solutions exist. Within the complex challenges facing humanity lays a potential path of planetary collaboration, one that has the potential to lead us toward a regenerative planetary culture educated to be symbiotic stewards of ourselves and our planet (Wahl, 2006). However, the predicament would not be so dire were this a simple question of cooperation. Indeed, successful navigation of this path, in hindsight, will likely have marked the collective evolution of our species. This is because in order to come to a state of planetary cooperation, humankind must first overcome its adaptive challenge to climate change (O'Brien & Selboe, 2015a, 2015b), which represents the collective inability currently of most humans to

come to terms with the situation and their individual role in it. The goal of this study was to gain insights into postformal Next-stage Organizations and their Founder/CEOs who are addressing these challenges, both in what they do and in how they do it.

The entire history of modern science, if not all of time, has been one of a push and pull arrangement between the paradigm shifting revelations of vanguard thinking individuals and the collective backlash of the established socialized mind in instigating the implied changes. To illustrate, in 1616, the architects of the Roman Inquisition, with much support of many established thinkers of the time, ordered Galileo to recant his support of the idea that the earth revolves around the sun. Newton, one of the greatest alchemists of all time, presents another example. Given the deeply theistic and holistic understanding of its namesake, there is deep irony in the very term Newtonianism (Gleick, 2007). In the realm of physics, Einstein had a similar reaction to quantum theory, being unable to embrace this paradigmatic shift. Baldwin's (1895, 1896, 1904) theories of social heredity and evolution have been largely ignored by mainstream science for over 100 years. Imagine our world if these ideas had been embraced rather than rejected from a position of fear.

The general purpose of the study was to add to existing knowledge about the intersection of the fields of adult development and organizational development by researching Next-Stage Organizations with sensitivity to both (a) the needs of all stakeholders, including the developmental movement of employees, and (b) the environment. The Founders/CEOs of all three Next-Stage Organizations (presented as case studies) were found to be particularly sensitive to stakeholders' needs and the necessity of fostering adult (ego) development within the organization. In terms of environmental sustainability, one CEO/Founder was explicitly active in

this area, while the other two were implicitly supportive. These humble but affirming results bode well for future models of Next-Stage Organizations operating within the Anthropocene.

The most valuable and unique outcome of this research was the inaugural integration of transdisciplinarity, integral theory, and adult and organizational development frameworks to gain insights into postformal Next-Stage Organizations. In all three Next-Stage Organization cases, origin stories of synchronistic, intuitive moments led to the founding and evolution of these organizations. This unique combination of methodology, theory, and conceptual frameworks enabled me to collect invaluable data to answer the research question: “How effectively does the combined transdisciplinary, integral, and STAGES approach allow for the identification of whether a Founder/CEO’s stage of human development informs the stage of development of an organization?” The approach proved to be profoundly effective, and the case-inspired inaugural profile of a postformal Next-Stage Organization attests to the rich connection between the development of the human ego and organizational groups.

This study conceived Next-Stage Organizations as postformal. Such organizations would be less linear and more complexity oriented and theoretically more sensitive and adaptable to their potentially transformative role in business social ecosystems. In that spirit, the research design reflected the researcher’s keen interest in corroborating Laloux’s (2014) prior assessment of the three organizations in this study as Next-Stage Organizations (i.e., Teal). In a rewarding development, the findings were in alignment with Laloux’s (2014) observations. Specifically, these three organizations and their Founder/CEOs all exhibited characteristics that he referred to as “Teal” or 4.5 on the STAGES scale. Although each of these organizations and Founder/CEOs exhibited characteristics at the 4.5 STAGE of development, only one of the three Founder/CEOs and his or her organization could be said to be stably *operating* from the 4.5 STAGE. Although

some of the organizations represented in Laloux's (2014) research (as well as in the current study) did not operate fully at 4.5, their work as a whole provided a composite score of 4.5 or, as he says, a "Teal" organization. This finding affirms justification for this study's use of the larger *postformal* classification of a Next-Stage Organization.

Lastly, this research studied postformal Next-Stage Organizations and their Founder/CEOs to explore any correlation between the leader's individual stage of development and that of the organization. A correlation did emerge. All three organizations were found to be at or below the Founder/CEO's stage of human development, but more importantly with all being at postformal stages of development. This means they already embrace complexity and are theoretically more sensitive and adaptable to their potentially transformative role in business social ecosystems. They were actively creating different organizational models by using new structures, practices, principles, systems and cultures in order to collaboratively work in powerful, soulful, purposeful and meaningful ways (Laloux, 2014). This study also adds to research showing a positive correlation between the stage development of a leader in an organization and the respective business' results, in that all three organizations are very successful enterprises (Laloux, 2014).

### **Recommendations**

Recommendations stemming from the study focus on (a) research design and methods, (b) methodology and theory, and (c) conceptual frameworks.

#### **Research Design and Methods Recommendations**

Because the greater contributions of this study pertain to research design (especially methods, see Table 18), so is the first set of recommendations. Regarding data collection, it is recommended that future studies use a robust system of collecting ample data in each of Wilber's

(2007) 8 primordial perspective (Integral Methodological Pluralism) zones, as well as for each class of stakeholder. The current method was too labor intensive to be useful in an organizational setting. A centralized system for stakeholder participation and individual data input would be ideal.

This criticism of being too unwieldy applies to the modeling of the Next-Stage Organization as well. Banathy (1996) designed his three lenses to be participatory. Therefore, fully applying the three lenses would mean the active participation of stakeholders in data collection, thematic coding (analysis), and subsequent modeling. Further research in this area could affirm that the combination of these methods and stakeholder participation would be a powerful tool for organizational assessment and transformation. The application of stage development models to organizations is a nascent research arc, albeit promising. More research providing a clear description of each primordial zone (Wilber, 2007), at each stage of an organization (e.g., Cacioppe & Edward, 2005), would be useful.

### **Methodological and Theory-Related Recommendations**

The case study findings also inspired methodological (research philosophy) and theoretical recommendations. As discussed earlier, the transdisciplinary methodology was used to provide the ontological, epistemological, and logical boundaries of this study or, more to the point, to expand those of the mainstream scientific paradigm. In each case, the Founder/CEOs and their organizations showed sensitivity to synchronicity, an operational openness to intuition, and an ability to adapt in order to evolve in their value-adding capacities. More research is needed in bridging the transformative state of changing practices and modalities that foster these sensitivities in an organizational setting. Future researchers are encouraged to again use Nicolescu's (2010, 2014a) transdisciplinary research methodology. It views reality as

multifaceted, requiring mediation; knowledge as complex, emergent, embodied, and cross-fertilized; and logic as inclusive (accommodating contradictions).

Two often repeated and much less heeded tenets of adult development are that people are not at stages and later stages are not better. Integral theory and transdisciplinarity allow us to presume that a healthy psyche, as well as a healthy organization, is a complex adaptive system with many parts operating in flux in a continuous, simultaneous flex/flow relationship with the multiple levels of reality in which it is embedded. Trying to copy behaviors, processes, and structures beyond a person or group's developmental capacities can do more harm than good. Thus, research cataloguing the distinction between healthy and unhealthy manifestations of individuals and organizations across lines and stages of development, grounded in Wilber's (2001) integral four quadrants (see Figure 11), would be beneficial as would research into transitioning from unhealthy to healthy manifestations of a given stage. More research about correlating the various stage development models is also highly recommended, given the promising insights arising from this study.

It is also important to note the importance of the design element and the theoretical implications of Banathy's (1996) *Social Systems Design* and K. C. Laszlo's (2001) *Evolutionary Learning Community*. Collaborative action research in designing Next-Stage Organizations and Evolution Learning Communities which provide safe places to foster the leading edge of human development can only accelerate the transition to a postformal human society. This also implies research into how better to engage at risk and marginalized stakeholders, such as capabilities building and the regeneration of gentrifying communities.

## **Conceptual Recommendations**

As noted in the previous paragraph, there is a gap between the theory and application of adult development and organizational development, especially as they relate to one another. Thus, it is strongly recommended that future research in each of these fields is designed with the other in mind. In other words, research into the efficacy of organizational change endeavors, coaching practices, efficiency, and so forth might be greatly enhanced by the addition of a developmental lens. Likewise, as the need grows for research into designing organizations, let alone a planetary society, that fosters optimal, healthy human development, it will become more and more important to consider organizational development concepts such as group dynamics, place, and space.

Finally, within the cross section of the realms of adult development and organizational development lies the field of leadership. Recommendations in this area further address the latter half of the second sub-question of this study, “Does the Founder/CEO’s stage of human development inform the stage of development of an organization, and if so, in what ways?” Studies clearly show leaders at later stages of development to be more effective leaders; more research into how and why, and to whether and what degree organizational structures and processes might mimic these functions. Also, research into how later stage leaders can more effectively share their knowledge and vision with those at earlier stages would be useful. Finally, research into the ethics, desirability and effects of bringing developmental education and testing into the realms of civic and educational leadership is paramount for a postformal civilization to successfully ride the wicked VUCA waves of the post-normal times of the Anthropocene.

### **Final Contemplations**

To recap—a red thread ran throughout this study—the wicked, postnormal, complex, peak everything, VUCA conditions facing humanity as we navigate the Anthropocene offer a choice: either we evolve and work together to use our collective potential to turn these challenges into sources of immense potential of creative energy, or a great many of us and other species will die. On the other side of the chaotic, churning condition of humanity is a paradigm shift toward a postformal civilization. What is envisioned here is not a utopia, but a chance at a reality in which the needs of the brilliant many outweigh the desires of a powerful few where everyone is given access to what they need to thrive to their greatest potential. In the past, humans changed how they thought about the world, which changed how they organized, and the world changed; to change the world as it is, we must first change our minds about the world and our relationship with it. Given that Newton was not even a Newtonian thinker, there is hope in confronting the Anthropocene! And an integral, transdisciplinary foundation is the shining light—the connection to the future.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Overview of Stages

#### Overview

Four levels in each of four Tiers

Loevinger	Cook-Greuter	O'Fallon
Unified Tier 4		(Unified Stages)
MetAware Tier 3	6th	6.5 Illumined
		6.0 Universal
	5th	5.5 Transpersonal
		5.0 Construct Aware
Subtle Tier 2	4th	4.5 Strategist
		4.0 Pluralist
	3rd	3.5 Achiever
		3.0 Expert
Concrete Tier 1	2nd	2.5 Conformist
		2.0 Rule Oriented
	1st	1.5 Egocentric
		1.0 Impulsive

## Appendix B: STAGES of Adult Development

### Concrete Stages

#### 1.0 Impulsive Parameters: Concrete | Individual | Receptive

We begin at birth at 1.0 with the parameter descriptions, **Concrete, Individual, Receptive**. This means that the mind is primarily occupied by **Concrete** content, we are focused on our **Individual** self, ("It's all about me!"), and we are learning, and evolving primarily by **Receptivity**.

**Receptive** means the information coming in through the senses: sight, sound, touch, taste, smell and movement. Through these senses, we begin to discover our **Concrete Individual** self. What are the contours of my body? Where do I stop and where does "Not-I" begin? For example, a baby can wave its hand in front of its face not knowing it is its own hand. In time, the senses all start working together and the baby discovers, Aha! That is my hand!

Over the course of 1.0 developmental level, the baby eventually discovers and owns all its **Concrete**, physical parts and distinguishes them from the "Not-I" parts, which is the rest of the world. By the time the baby has all its parts identified and can move them at will, it is growing into the next developmental level of 1.5.

#### 1.5 Egocentric Parameters: Concrete | Individual | Active

At 1.5 the only parameter shift is the **Learning Style**, moving from **Receptive** to **Active**. This one little shift does not seem like much, but this one little shift is the difference between a baby laying helplessly on the bed and a toddler pushing a chair up to the counter to get into the cookie jar. It's a revolution of consciousness (and makes for a whole lot more work for the parents!) The child has not just learned to define its physical self, it now knows how to use it.

#### 2.0 Rule Oriented Parameters: Concrete | Collective | Reciprocal

At 2.0 the child's consciousness takes another important shift of two parameters. The perspective moves from an **Individual** focus to a **Collective** one, and the **Active** parameter moves to **Reciprocal**. What does it mean to have **Collective** and **Reciprocal**? The child now understands friendship.

It takes a **Reciprocal** understanding to make and keep friends, and it requires an understanding that another person is a full human being, with their own feelings and thoughts (just like me). Thus, this shift ushers in the world of family, friendship, and eventually romance.

At 2.0 we are subject to amazing peer pressure. Whatever enters the social milieu becomes something to be in **Reciprocity** with. Thus, as the group goes so do we. Often this can get us into trouble.

#### 2.5 Conformist Parameters: Concrete | Collective | Interpenetrative

The shift from 2.0 to 2.5 only requires one parameter to change. The **Learning Style** shifts from **Reciprocal** to **Interpenetrative**. However, the impact upon our consciousness is no small matter.

The shift to **Interpenetration** means we become one with our principles. By standing on our principles we are no longer at the beck and call of the group dynamic and can stand on what's right regardless of what is happening around us. This allows for stable relationships, stable religions, stable governments and ushers in a personal sense of safety and stability.

## Subtle Stages

### 3.0 Expert Parameters: Subtle | Individual | Receptive

The 3.0 level is the first level in the **Subtle Tier**. As we move from 2.5 **Concrete Tier** into the 3.0 **Subtle Tier**, we see that there is a three parameter change. The **Tier** grows from **Concrete** to **Subtle**; the **Social Preference** moves from **Collective** back to **Individual** and the **Learning Style** changes from the **Interpenetrative** parameter back to the **Receptive** parameter.

While there is a three parameter change from 2.5 to 3.0, only one parameter changes from the first STAGE in the **Concrete Tier** (1.0) to 3.0: the **Tier** parameter. The whole parameter set is the same except the **Tier**. The **Tier** changes from **Concrete** to **Subtle**. We are entering a whole new world, and so we will go through the same **Social Preference** patterns and the same **Learning Style** patterns to master the **Subtle Tier**. We will repeat the same sequence we did in the **Concrete Tier**.

What this means for our consciousness is we are now beginning to perceive the **Subtle** world of objects. So instead of seeing a tree, or visualizing a tree (thinking about **Concrete** objects) we can now reflect on our thoughts. Instead of just having thoughts, and feelings, we step back and can observe the thoughts and feelings. This shift to the **Subtle Tier** allows for fascination with philosophy, theology, advanced mathematics—in other words, relating to how our mind operates. There are so many new ways of discovering the world around us and those new ways of discovery help us to realize the world is often quite different from, and larger than what we had previously believed. Just like the baby is learning the contours of its own physical body, at 3.0 we are learning the contours of our mind.

### 3.5 Achiever Parameters: Subtle | Individual | Active

At 3.5, one parameter changes. The **Learning Style** shifts from **Receptive** to **Active**. This one shift allows us to move beyond expanding our understanding of the mind to learning how to actually operate it. 3.5 is a **Tier** up-shift from the 1.5 stage, so just like a 1.5 child learns to be **Active** with their body a 3.5 individual starts learning how to be **Active** with their thinking and feeling: thinking about their thinking, thinking about their feeling, feeling about their thinking, and feeling about their feeling.

As a result, they begin to shift the building blocks of their mind into new configurations that work better. What new thoughts will I create in my own mind that will help me succeed better? What new feelings do I need to create so I function better? Since we can now produce any new **Subtle** thoughts, we begin to project these creations into the **Subtle** future with increasing precision. We make plans and create sophisticated ways of making those plans come to fruition in real life.

### 4.0 Pluralist Parameters: Subtle | Collective | Reciprocal

At 4.0 there is a two parameter shift from **Individual** to **Collective**. We also shift the **Learning Style** from **Active** to **Reciprocal**. This is an up-shift from the 2.0 perspective in the **Concrete Tier**. If you look at 2.0 you will see the same pattern, the only difference is the **Tier** shift from **Concrete** to **Subtle**.

In 4.0 we want to dive into the co-creative world of the **Collective**. We want to discover our deeper more authentic self—to see ourselves as others see us and to drop into the deeper intimacy that the depth of **Subtle Reciprocity** provides. Just like playing with toys takes a background to creating friendships in the shift from 1.5 to 2.0, so too do we background our individual goals and strivings for the deeper experience of **Subtle** intimacy with others.

While we find this intimacy on the outside with others, we also find it on the inside with our interior selves. There is a whole interior **Collective** we discover within. This interior **Collective** is made up of many voices, personas or "ego states" each with their own passions, desires, thoughts, impulses and motivations. We seek to be intimate with each of these interior selves just like we seek to be intimate with others in the outside world. By developing intimacy with each of these personas and having each persona develop intimacy with each other our life becomes more whole, happy and meaningful.

### 4.5 Strategist Parameters: Subtle | Collective | Interpenetrative

At 4.5 we make a one parameter shift. We shift the **Learning Style** from **Reciprocal** to **Interpenetrative**. As a result, our consciousness includes getting to know others, our interior voices, and many cultures as in 4.0; but in addition, we can create systems that allow for the greater good to occur for everyone involved.

How can we organize our own mini-culture to create the best experiences for those around us? How can we best design an interior mini-culture for all our interior voices? How can we use our understanding of our own interior to make a better exterior world, and how can we use the understanding of the exterior world to make a better interior life? We see all the social, contextual, cultural, and psychological feedback loops and begin to adjust them so they will create the best outcomes for everyone.

## MetAware Stages

### 5.0 Construct Aware Parameters: MetAware | Individual | Receptive

At 5.0 we enter the **MetAware Tier**. This is a three parameter shift from 4.5 to 5.0. The **Tier** shifts from **Subtle** to **MetAware**, the **Social Preference** shifts from **Collective** to **Individual** and the **Learning Style** shifts from **Interpenetrative** to **Receptive**.

As you can see, this is an up-shift from 1.0 and 3.0. It has the same configuration. The only difference is the object of our awareness. The new object of our awareness is awareness itself. Now that awareness itself is an object, we begin to watch it and become more familiar with what the world of awareness means.

In this stage, we are discovering the contours of our own individual awareness. Just like the baby discovered the contours of its body and the early adult discovered the contours of its mind, at 5.0 we begin to discover there are contours of our own individual awareness. This allows us to experience the very nuanced differences of word meaning and individual definition of boundaries that are unique to us. Once we bring awareness to our own word meaning and boundary configuration we begin to see that this is true of everyone. We receive the understanding that the structure of words and boundaries in and of themselves are without meaning—we construct that meaning in our own minds. This puts us on the journey of a new identity. We up-shift from the 1.0 entry identity of our **Concrete** self to the 3.0 entry identity of our **Subtle** self, to the 5.0 entry identity of our aware self that we are beginning to become aware of; thus, the term, **MetAware**.

This shift into meta-awareness has profound implications. Awareness begins to transcend thought as the dominant way of understanding the world. As a result, the world of thought, conceptualization, and belief gradually fades into the background and individual awareness itself moves into the foregrounded edge of experience. The move into awareness as the "self", allows for the exploration of a whole new world—a whole new way of experiencing life.

### 5.5 Transpersonal Parameters: MetAware | Individual | Active

5.5 has a one parameter shift. The **Learning Style** shifts from **Receptive** to **Active**. At this point our individual awareness takes on a life of its own and actively plays with its awareness of all the **Concrete** and **Subtle** objects, and the shifting meaning and boundaries. Like the toddler who becomes **Active** with their body and the 3.5 adult becomes **Active** with their thoughts, feelings, planning and aspirations, 5.5 awareness becomes actively creative with awareness itself.

This includes all of what has come before, using its capacities to redefine, reconfigure and reify these new creative processes. And it moves beyond that as well. Eventually, this **Active** exploration of awareness and what it can do with meaning and meaninglessness, boundaries and the boundary-less, ushers them into the world of the timeless and the boundless.

### 6.0 Universal Parameters: Subtle | Collective | Reciprocal

6.0 involves a two parameter shift from 5.5. The **Social Preference** shifts from **Individual** to **Collective** and our Learning style shifts from **Active** to **Reciprocal**.

Just like the 1.5 shifts from toys to friendships as it moves into 2.0, and the 3.5 shifts from personal goals to the 4.0 deep authentic relationships with others, so too does the 5.5 **Individual** awareness enter the vast inter-connected space of the **MetAware Collective**. The **MetAware Collective** expands into all objects of manifestation in an interconnected whole.

The experience of this massive interconnected whole in **Reciprocity** with awareness provides a unique, deeper and broader intimacy than ever before. It offers a garden for the interconnection between the timeless local and nonlocal fields of awareness with the intimate experience of the whole eternity and infinity of the universe. While astoundingly vast, it is equally deeply connected and intimate.

### 6.5 Illumined Parameters: Subtle | Collective | Interpenetrative

6.5 provides a one parameter shift. The **Learning Style** shifts from **Reciprocal** to **Interpenetrative**. **Interpenetrative** stages see trajectories. Like the 2.5 can see the physical developmental trajectory from birth to death, and the 4.5 level can see the psychological developmental trajectory of humans, the 6.5 level opens to the embodied understanding of the developmental trajectories that occur from the beginning of the universe (fullness) and also of timeless awareness (emptiness).

As well as 2.5 and 4.5, 6.5 begins a process of **Interpenetration** which prepares the movement to the next **Tier**. At 2.5, one **Interpenetrates** with their principles upon reflection; at the 4.5 level one sees the **Interpenetration** of self with other through their projections, upon reflection, and here at the 6.5 level, the fullness of all manifestation from the beginning of the universe and the emptiness of all levels of awareness **Interpenetrates** and is seen upon reflection.

**Appendix C: The STAGES Matrix and the Three Questions**

PP	Question 1: Is the object of awareness <b>Concrete, Subtle,</b> or <b>MetAware?</b>	Question 2: Is the experience <b>Individual</b> or <b>Collective?</b>	Question 3: Is the experience <b>Receptive, Active,</b> <b>Reciprocal,</b> or <b>Interpenetrative?</b>	STAGE NAME
	TIER	SOCIAL PREFERENCE	LEARNING STYLE	
1.0	<b>Concrete</b>	<b>Individual</b>	<b>Receptive</b>	Impulsive
1.5	<b>Concrete</b>	<b>Individual</b>	<b>Active</b>	Egocentric
2.0	<b>Concrete</b>	<b>Collective</b>	<b>Reciprocal</b>	Rule Oriented
2.5	<b>Concrete</b>	<b>Collective</b>	<b>Interpenetrative</b>	Conformist
3.0	<b>Subtle</b>	<b>Individual</b>	<b>Receptive</b>	Expert
3.5	<b>Subtle</b>	<b>Individual</b>	<b>Active</b>	Achiever
4.0	<b>Subtle</b>	<b>Collective</b>	<b>Reciprocal</b>	Pluralist
4.5	<b>Subtle</b>	<b>Collective</b>	<b>Interpenetrative</b>	Strategist
5.0	<b>MetAware</b>	<b>Individual</b>	<b>Receptive</b>	Construct Aware
5.5	<b>MetAware</b>	<b>Individual</b>	<b>Active</b>	Transpersonal
6.0	<b>MetAware</b>	<b>Collective</b>	<b>Reciprocal</b>	Universal
6.5	<b>MetAware</b>	<b>Collective</b>	<b>Interpenetrative</b>	Illumined