

# **Inflecting Change in the New City of Montreal**

A Contemplation Before Action

**Cameron Charlebois**

*Formerly Assistant General Manager, Economic and Urban Development  
City of Montreal*



McGill-  
McConnell Program:  
Master of  
Management  
for National Voluntary Sector Leaders

**McGill University, Montreal, Canada**

October 2003

Copyright 2003, 2005 by Cameron Charlebois

---

## Contents

Abstract .....	4
Introduction .....	7
Methodology .....	8
1. The Challenges for the New City	
The Board of Trade Symposium .....	9
The Montreal Summit .....	11
Departmental Challenges .....	12
The Collaboration Umbrella .....	12
2. How the City Functions.....	15
The New City Organizational Structure.....	15
Analysis of Strategy .....	17
3. The Emerging Reality	
Institutionalization .....	22
Patterns of Institutionalization .....	23
Detecting Patterns of Institutionalization.....	24
Conclusion: A Paradox .....	31
4. Exploring the Paradox: Toward a Collaborative Mindset	
Obviating Conflict .....	32
July First: A Case Study .....	36
What Transpired .....	37
Conclusion .....	39
5. Instituting a Collaborative Mindset	
Learning through Community.....	43
Constructing Community at the City .....	45
Defining the Field .....	45
The Challenge of Community at the City .....	48
“Constructing” the community .....	49
Appreciative Inquiry .....	49

---

Conclusion ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

6. Implementation: A Question of Leadership

Bibliography ..... 65

## Tables

TABLE 1. The Ten Schools of Strategy Formation ..... 19

TABLE 2. Organizational Tendencies ..... 24

TABLE 3. Institutionalization Patterns ..... 29

TABLE 4. Choice of Approach ..... 33

TABLE 5. Collaborative Capacities ..... 38

TABLE 6. Collaboration Conditions ..... 40

TABLE 7. Community Construction ..... 50

## Figures

Figure 1. Actors in the Domain of Regional Competitive Advantage ..... 10

Figure 2. New City of Montreal Municipal Structure ..... 16

Figure 3. Organization of Urban and Economic Development ..... 16

Figure 4. Characterization of Behaviours ..... 30

Figure 5. The Change Cube ..... 36

Figure 6. The 1 July 2002 Process ..... 37

Figure 7. The Formal Core ..... 46

Figure 8. Extended Core ..... 47

Figure 9. Surrounding Community ..... 48

Figure 10. The 4D Cycle ..... 51

---

## Abstract

In 2001 the new City of Montreal was created by amalgamation or merger of all existing municipalities on the Island of Montreal. This paper examines the challenges of change management amid emerging patterns of institutionalization within the new city's organizational structure. Can professionals working within hard-edged operating units collaborate to the degree necessary to succeed in the new urban reality? That collaboration around primary challenges is possible despite the tendency for rules-based institutional patterns to develop over time was demonstrated when City of Montreal departments, volunteers, police, NGOs and the provincial government mobilized jointly to meet an anticipated housing crisis in July 2002. Drawing on the work of Kanter, Mintzberg, Pinchot and others, the author shows that a collaborative mindset can be developed by applying the techniques of appreciative inquiry, in which "intervention gives way to imagination and innovation," and by exercising leadership through the "three M's" of mastery, membership and meaning.

---

*Rather than speak of contemplation and action, we might speak of contemplation-and-action, letting the hyphens suggest what our language obscures: that one cannot exist without the other. When we fail to hold the paradox together, when we abandon the creative tension between the two, then both ends fly apart . . .*

*In the stage of integration . . . action becomes more than a matter of getting from here to there, but a contemplative affair as well, a path by which we may discover inner truth. Contemplation becomes more than a luxury to be indulged when the worries of the world are behind us, but a way of changing consciousness that may have more impact on the world than strategic action can have. Contemplation-and-action are integrated at the root, and their root is in our ceaseless drive to be fully alive.*

Parker Palmer  
*The Active Life*



*People's ideas or concepts, commitment . . . trust with partners . . . are what set apart great organizations. All these requirements can be enhanced by leaders, but none can be mandated. . . . Times of rapid . . . change produce upheavals that can be viewed as either threats or opportunities. To stay ahead of change, to anticipate and create the future, requires a culture with the momentum to seek constant innovation and productive change; without this culture, and without leaders to direct it, you could just be spinning your wheels.*

Rosabeth Moss Kanter  
*Evolve! Succeeding in the  
Digital Culture of Tomorrow*

---

## Introduction

On 11 March 2002 I began a new adventure in my working career. I left the association world after fifteen years – ten as a volunteer and five as CEO of a real-estate association – and joined the ranks of the civil service of the new City of Montreal: the city created from the 2001 amalgamation of all of the former municipalities existing on the Island of Montreal.

My new position is titled Assistant General Manager, Economic and Urban Development. I report directly to the General Manager of the City, and I have responsibility for three municipal services: Economic Development, Urban Development and Housing. The position is akin to that of a sector vice-president reporting to a CEO in the corporate world, and gives me the responsibilities of a senior manager of the new city.

In a section of his book *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning* dealing with brain research as related to strategy formulation and management, Henry Mintzberg says that “managerial work appears to be more simultaneous, holistic, and relational than linear, sequential, and orderly. Managers likely prefer oral forms of communication, not only because they tend to bring information earlier and easier, but also because they provide a sense of facial expression, gesture, and tone of voice. . . . If managers have to ‘see the big picture’ and create strategic ‘visions’ – clearly more than just metaphors – then their perceptions require the soft, speculative information they favour, which is better suited to synthesis than to analysis.”

This paper attempts such a synthesis on the basis of what might be considered “soft, speculative” information. But more to the point, it is a contemplation of sorts, on the way to right action.<sup>1</sup> Parker Palmer calls contemplation “any way that we can unveil the illusions that masquerade as reality and reveal the reality behind the masks.”<sup>2</sup> In that

---

<sup>1</sup> Right action refers to action that is harmonious with our own reality and the reality around us (see Palmer, 65–77).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

---

regard, though quite analytical in spirit, this paper seeks higher understandings of the probable reality before me, even if “truth” can be an evasive concept these days.

One difficulty in writing this paper has been that the situation that I am writing about has been changing and shifting as work has progressed. Although that fact hasn’t changed the fundamental characteristics of the challenge I am exploring, it has at times produced a confusing picture that hasn’t made my task any easier. For this reason, and to give more scope to the contemplative aspect of my task, I wrote the majority of this paper during a vacation period, when it became possible to gain at least some degree of distance from the situation I was writing about. This of course raised other problems, because of the slight amount of time in which to write. There is more than an even chance that parts of my exploration may be inconclusive, or provisional at best, and that the writing may not be as precise and emphatic as I might have wished.

## **Methodology**

This paper follows an inductive process, synthesizing responses and answers on the basis of observations and analysis. My observations are drawn primarily from within my own experience in my job, while the analytical work and much of the synthesis is supported by assorted readings and class notes of the McGill-McConnell Program.

The paper is organized in four distinct parts, of which two are analytical and two are works of synthesis. The first part explores the basic nature of the challenges that the new City of Montreal is facing as it seeks to ensure its own development and that of its citizenry. The second part looks at the nature of the organization emerging since the new City has been up and running, in order to determine how well it is responding, so far, to the challenges it faces.

The analytical part of the paper concludes with the discovery of a paradox involving the nature of the challenges, on the one hand, and the emerging patterns of action (institutionalization), on the other. This leads to the third and fourth sections, which attempt to develop some managerial and leadership responses that will rise to the level of the richness of the paradox, if not resolve it within a better organizational context altogether.

---

## 1. The Challenges for the New City

Shortly after my arrival at the City of Montreal in March 2002, while I was sizing up the organization I had to work with, two specific events occurred that brought into focus the nature of the challenge that lay before the operational units under my responsibility, not to mention in large measure the entire City body.

### The Board of Trade Symposium

First, in April 2002, the Montreal Board of Trade held a symposium on what should be the vision for the amalgamated City of Montreal on its 375th anniversary in 2017. Among the many speakers and pundits, two stood out as having messages for a new way of seeing cities' challenges into the future.

The first speaker, Gérard Divay, Director of the University of Quebec's National Institute of Scientific Research – Urbanization, Culture and Society, presented the chart shown in Figure 1. It shows that in every area of competitive advantage within a given region, the municipality is merely one of four types of key players having varying degrees of influence over strategy. Divay suggested that the modern city must see itself in relation to other players when acting in these areas, and would be well advised to prepare itself to collaborate actively with them so as to add its own strategic value. This particularly includes the three directorates under my responsibility, since their mandates involve several of the factors in Divay's chart.

The second speaker, Dr. Richard Florida of Carnegie Mellon University in Philadelphia, presented the results of his recent research regarding the rise of a new class of workers: the creative class. In his talk as in his book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, he described the importance of the creative class as the engine of development of modern urban centres, and the attributes that successful cities must possess in order to attract members of this key socio-economic group.



---

the case for urban, economic and cultural development. This implies that these departments will either have to compete with each other or collaborate in the setting and execution of strategy.

### **The Montreal Summit**

Not long after the Board of Trade symposium, the Mayor's Montreal Summit was held from 4 to 6 June 2002. This event took place in two stages. The first was a day-long colloquium involving 800 people, who workshopped proposals coming out of twenty-seven borough mini-summits and fourteen sectoral summits, on topics such as local economic development, economic development, cultural development, downtown city cores and urban planning, among other matters. The results of these workshops were then brought to the actual two-day summit where the delegations<sup>4</sup> present at the summit table received the workshop reports and approved or modified the various action proposals contained in them.

These proposals then received the commitment of Mayor Gérald Tremblay for systematic implementation during his first term of office. Premier Bernard Landry also agreed to write several of the proposals into a five-year contractual agreement to be signed by the City of Montreal and the Government of Quebec. This agreement is meant to recast the relationship between the government and the City according to four principles<sup>5</sup> favoured by the Mayor: (1) new levels of funding for agreed-upon projects; (2) obligation to attain agreed-upon results; (3) verification of results after the fact instead of requiring prior approvals for investments; (4) the obligation to report regularly on progress.

The follow-up to the Summit has taken the form of numerous taskforces to carry forward the projects approved during the event. Each taskforce is headed by a volunteer from the community and is made up of a pair of senior managers (one borough director and one director of a central unit), with support staff, assisted by volunteers who participated in

---

<sup>4</sup> The delegations included individuals drawn from all sectors and walks of Montreal life, and were structured along general thematic lines of "communities" such as gay and lesbian, visible minorities, people with disabilities, and "themes" such as heritage and urban development, culture and economic development.

<sup>5</sup> Akin to "minspecs" (minimum specifications) in the context of managing a complex adaptive system (see Zimmerman et al.).

---

the three-day event. As such, each “site” draws upon the resources of several operating units and requires the involvement of interests from outside the City itself.

In general, the Summit proposals are multi-stakeholder in character; they do not relate exclusively to any one operating unit or level. In order to carry them out, therefore, professionals from many different units will have to collaborate with one another, and with individuals from the community at large.

### **Departmental Challenges**

Finally, there are the challenges facing my own department. These involve major planning exercises over the next two years, including preparation of an urban development master plan, an economic strategy and a housing policy, as well as multi-department involvement in issues and projects. And there are the boroughs: twenty-seven of them, with which some responsibilities are formally or informally shared. Although there is not yet any established crosscutting approach to these operations or with the boroughs, it is already clear that there will be value added to the efforts in one area by timely and structured input from the others on an ongoing basis.

### **The Collaboration Umbrella**

A common thread runs through Divay’s and Florida’s presentations, the Summit “sites” and the challenges faced by my department. They all require a deep-seated capacity for collaboration, in order for the many different actors in the municipal field to come up with effective development strategies.

Such multi-participant strategies mean ultimately that those working in urban and economic development (the particular sectors I am responsible for) must be able to catalyze effective action, both among themselves and with actors from other fields – sometimes fields of a quite different nature. As this seems imperative for success, it follows that the key players in our field should be skilled collaborators – and be given the means to make the most of their collaborative skills.

---

In their 1999 paper “Collaboration and Institutional Entrepreneurship,” Tom Lawrence, Cynthia Hardy and Nelson Philips define collaborations as “a co-operative, inter-organizational relationship that is negotiated in an ongoing communicative process, and relies on neither market nor hierarchical mechanisms of control.” They refer to such collaborations as taking place in an inter-organizational field whose structuring process typically follows four steps: (1) an increase in interaction among the organizations in the field, (2) the emergence of patterns of domination and coalition, (3) an increase in information load and (4) the development of their awareness in a common enterprise.<sup>6</sup> They posit that the practice of such collaboration will transform the participating organizations “in a different way than do markets and hierarchies. The negotiations associated with collaborations often require intense interactions that lead to new understandings, norms, and practices which, in turn, may be transmitted throughout the field.”<sup>7</sup>

This is a useful outlook because it shows the depth and breadth of collaboration as a model for getting things done. It also suggests that collaboration happens by intent, requires skills, and has reciprocal impacts within the organizations (and people) taking part. Since the majority of the challenges facing my areas of responsibility involve collaboration on some level, it seems appropriate to consider collaboration *per se* as a strategic approach to carrying out the mission of the organization. Lawrence, Hardy and Phillips refer to this as “strategic style.” More to the point, Mintzberg and Watters would consider it an “umbrella strategy” because it is a strategic approach within which sub-strategies are pursued.<sup>8</sup> Also, collaboration requires a particular set of skills which taken together form a competence. Because this competence constitutes a core capability needed by the organization to be effective and succeed in a variety of domains, it could be considered a core competence as well.

---

<sup>6</sup> Lawrence et al., 4, citing P. J. Dimaggio and W. W. Powell, “The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in institutional fields,” *American Sociological Review* 48, no. 2 (April 1983).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>8</sup> The question of collaboration as an appropriate umbrella strategy for the new City of Montreal will be examined later in this paper.

---

However one looks at it, collaboration is destined to be an overarching theme in all the work performed of the areas under my responsibility, both internally and externally, and with a wide variety of partners in negotiation.

---

## 2. How the City Functions

The reader should not assume that municipal departments and staff members are great collaborators by nature; nor should it be assumed that they are incapable of collaboration. In reality, we can't know for sure without taking a close look at where they have come from, under what circumstances, and what direction they are likely heading in.

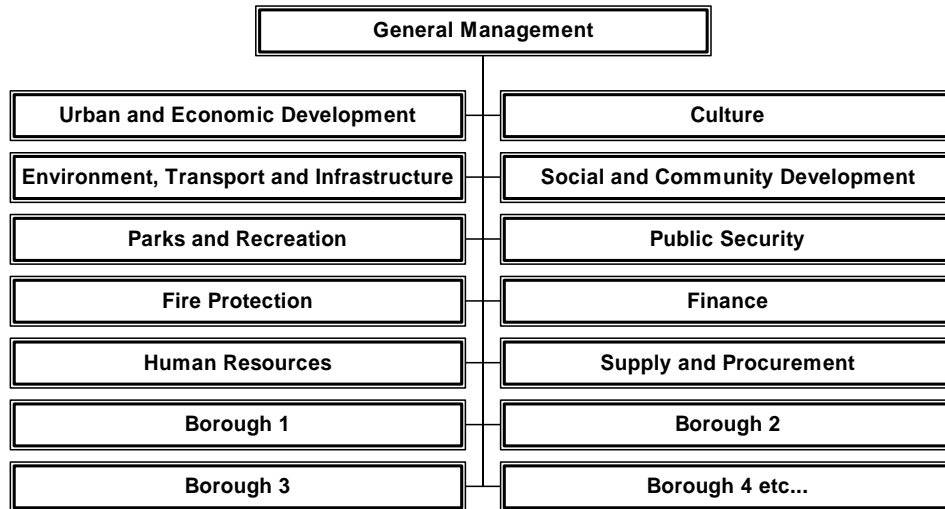
The birth of the new City of Montreal was a difficult process. Although it has often been called a merger, the Quebec government did not in fact conduct a merger process; instead, in one fell swoop, the government *abolished* all existing municipalities on the Island of Montreal, and replaced them with *one* new city, called Montreal. Only then was a Transition Committee (consisting of non-elected members) formed and charged with the task of setting up the structures and budgets over the period of a year, in order for the new city to be up and running as of 1 January 2002. Given the time and resources that it had at its disposal, the Transition Committee was able to accomplish only part of its mandate, the rest being left to the new administration to deal with once in office.

### The New City Organizational Structure

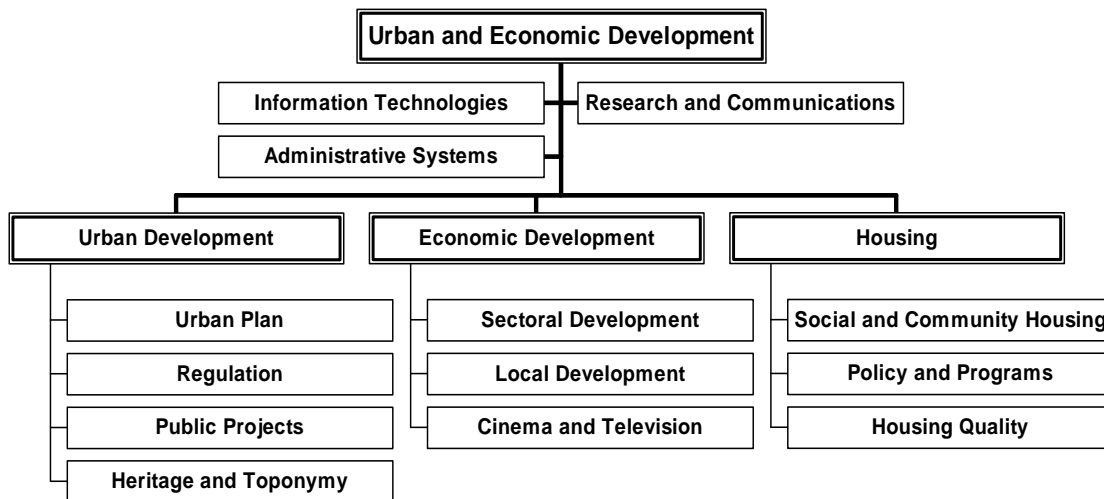
The Transition Committee's first move was to put in place an operating structure under which the entire City is organized as a conventional bureaucracy. As Figure 2 shows, the delivery of city services is organized in functional units with specific line and staff mandates, both on a corporate level and on a territorial level. In practice, each unit is coupled with a political appointee who is a member of the Executive Committee whose members are elected officials. In the case of the boroughs, there is an autonomous borough-elected council.

Each box on the chart has a mandate to deliver several services on a city-wide level, except for the boroughs, each of which offers front-line municipal services within its own territory. In theory, the boroughs are situated at the core of the municipal structure, and the "corporate" services are seen as supports to the boroughs. In practice, however, there are legal and functional demands placed on the "corporate" services that put them in juxtaposition, and often in competition with the boroughs in the same areas of service.

This is particularly true in matters of urban planning, culture, economic development and infrastructure.



**Figure 2. New City of Montreal Municipal Structure**



**Figure 3. Organization of Urban and Economic Development**

Figure 3 describes in more detail my area of responsibility, Urban and Economic Development: a traditional bureaucratic arrangement of services structured according to specific areas of municipal operations, albeit with a flavour of corporate services rather than the more front-line services one would find in the boroughs.

---

Another feature of this structural arrangement is the choice made by the new Mayor for the make-up of the city's Executive Committee. Consisting exclusively of elected councillors, this committee, which is the decision-making level for virtually all operational issues (except specific items that must be approved by City Council), has been organized along the lines of a government cabinet of ministers, with one designated Executive Committee member responsible for each of the three services shown in the diagram – Urban Development, Economic Development and Housing – so that the leaders of these units, who report to me, also relate to a “minister” on the political side. This political linkage reinforces the perceived autonomy of each service.

### **Analysis of Strategy**

It is a fact that the Government of Quebec has put in place a system that it expects will adapt more or less organically in meeting the challenges that lie ahead. I would argue, however, that the government was proceeding in quite a different, and much more traditional, manner within its role as a level of socio-political control.

First, acting through legislation, the government chose to impose a radical transformation on the municipal structures of the Montreal area.<sup>9</sup> Accordingly the Transition Committee, empowered by law, designed a structure and processes which were then prescribed by a new law in the form of a new municipal charter. Finally, as of 1 January 2002, the ship was launched to fend for itself and navigate the turbulent waters to full realization.

Several critics, even those who were pro-merger, felt that the government should have taken more time beforehand to reflect, consult, and reconsider the overall structures and processes that were put into the merger law, before anything else was decided. Indeed it was suggested that elections should have taken place and the newly elected officials be given a year to organize the new city as they saw fit, living within the *status quo ante* in the meantime. These critics were in effect suggesting that the city organization emerge from a needs analysis, as opposed to government-imposed structures and procedures. No one will ever know if this alternative approach could have worked, however preferable it

---

<sup>9</sup>The government's action also imposed municipal amalgamations elsewhere in Quebec, in Hull (Gatineau), Quebec City and Sherbrooke.

---

may seem as an empowerment model. In any event, in not following their advice, the government was making another kind of strategic choice that is important to understand in order to inform the management and leadership challenges that will flow from it.

Change can occur piecemeal, in “chunks”;<sup>10</sup> sometimes, however, comprehensive change may be necessary, leading to the transformation of an entire organization. In these cases, “the trick for management is to figure out where it can intervene, what it can change and leave others to change, when, how fast, and in what sequence. Start small and build up, or do something dramatic? Begin by replacing people, reconceiving vision, or redoing the chart? . . . Change everything at once or ‘chunk’ along?”<sup>11</sup>

In *Strategy Safari*, Henry Mintzberg and his colleagues outline ten basic approaches to strategy making, which they call the “ten schools” of strategic thought. Table 1 describes the government’s approach in comparison to the ten schools in order to determine which set of strategic parameters are actually at play in the new city.

As the table shows, the strategic approach of the government is one of *configuration* by virtue of the fact that the government’s intent in imposing the mergers was a radical *transformation* of the municipal domain in Montreal. This transformation is actually a strategy for ulterior strategic motives, in that it seeks to put in place a structure and processes within which the new municipality will develop competitive strategies in economic development, fiscal policy and other domains.

The authors of *Strategy Safari* describe six premises for the configuration school. One look at the municipal mergers in light of these premises confirms the government’s approach.

---

<sup>10</sup> “Chunking: Don’t get bogged down...just grab something and change it.” – Tom Peters, quoted in Mintzberg et al., 330.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 331.

**TABLE 1. The Ten Schools of Strategy Formation**

<i>School of strategic thought</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Relation to government action</i>
<b>Design</b>	Strategy is developed as a process of conception. It takes the form of a unique, planned perspective, and is cerebral, simple and deliberate. It is prescriptive in nature. It is used for occasional, quantum change.	The structural design of the merger was not intended to be strategic.
<b>Planning</b>	Strategy is deliberately developed as a formal process. It is the result of plans broken down into sub-strategies and programs. It is prescriptive in nature. It is used for periodic, incremental change.	By imposing an overall structure as its primary act, there was no particular strategic plan or program except that the mergers should make <i>Quebec</i> more competitive.
<b>Positioning</b>	Strategy is developed as an analytical process. It takes the form of planned generic economic and competitive positions or ploys in the market place. It results from a systematic, deliberate approach. It is prescriptive in nature. It is used for piecemeal, frequent change.	The mergers do not envision a determined position, except (in some small way) in relation to the fact that large cities are more competitive than small ones in the global economy.
<b>Entrepreneurial</b>	Strategy is developed as a visionary process. It comes from a unique, personal vision or perspective as a niche in the market. It is visionary, intuitive, largely deliberate, and emergent within the overall vision. It is descriptive in nature, and is used for occasional, opportunistic and/or revolutionary change.	The mergers were not the result of personal, entrepreneurial vision. Other than the stubbornness of the minister herself, it was an act of the whole government.
<b>Cognitive</b>	Strategy is developed as a mental process. It comes from a mental perspective – a particular individual concept. It is an emergent process, descriptive in nature. It is used for infrequent, resisted and mentally constructed situations of change.	The government was not acting from a purely intellectual construct of strategy. Mergers had been talked about in many different scenarios by a variety of agencies and commissions as a more effective form of local government.
<b>Learning</b>	Strategy is developed as an emergent process. It is unique and is emergent, and comes from an emergent, informal, messy process. It is descriptive in nature. It is used in situations of continual, incremental or piecemeal change, with occasional quantum insight.	The strategy formation here was anything but emergent, although by imposing a structure and letting the horses run subsequently, there is an emergent quality to the downstream aspects of the strategy.
<b>Power</b>	Strategy is developed as a process of negotiation. It takes the form of political and co-operative patterns and positions, as well as overt and covert ploys. It arises from conflictive, messy, aggressive processes and is emergent or deliberate in micro or macro situations respectively. It is descriptive in nature and is used in frequent piecemeal change situations.	There were power dimensions in the merger process. There was vociferous protest all along, and negotiations, so that the processes were conflictive and messy. The fundamental difference however, is that the mergers were prescribed, not negotiated except in some of the form, and the power relationship was not the strategic purpose.
<b>Cultural</b>	Strategy is developed as a collective process with a unique, collective perspective. It is ideologically, collectively constrained and deliberate in nature. It is descriptive, and occurs in infrequent, ideologically resisted change situations.	The mergers were not a collective process representing a collective perspective. If anything, they were by and large denounced as contrary to the collective perspective.
<b>Environmental</b>	Strategy is developed as a reactive process. It takes the form of specific generic positions, and arises in passive, outside-imposed emergent situations. It is descriptive in nature. Its use can be for rare and quantum change, or piecemeal when used as contingency.	There was some environmental content to the merger strategy in that it was responding to competitive threats from other economies in North America, although it was not specifically intended as such a response.
<b>Configuration</b>	Strategy is developed as a process of transformation. It can employ any of the approaches above depending on the context. Its processes are integrative, episodic, sequenced as well as those described above, depending on the context. It can be descriptive for configurations or prescriptive for transformations. It applies to often to occasional, revolutionary change.	The point was transformation. It was occasional (it has never happened before on this scale, and will likely not happen again any time soon), revolutionary (the progressive, <i>evolutionary</i> approach was disregarded), integrative (combining all municipalities in the territory) and prescriptive (imposed by law).

SOURCE: After Mintzberg et al., 4–5, 354–59.

---

*First, there was a prolonged period of prior stability.* Although municipal re-organization was debated frequently over the last twenty-five years, nothing was done about it, and Montreal and its neighbours did engage in particular activities and strategies during that period of stability that were seen as increasingly harmful to the competitive position of the Quebec economy.

*Second, the period of stability has been interrupted by a “quantum leap to another configuration,”* i.e., the new City of Montreal. This intentional interruption must have appeared as the only strategy capable of achieving transformation in order to change behaviours that had become ingrained in the status quo.

*Third, successive periods of transformation and stability order themselves over time into patterned sequences.* The new city is a successive state of configuration and period of transformation according to a pattern, which, though hard to identify, has nonetheless evolved over several generations.

*Fourth, there must be an ability to manage the disruptive process without destroying the organization.* In this case, the disruptive process was “managed” by holding new elections and the putting in place of a new structure as a first step, and then letting the system self-manage.

*Fifth, the process of strategy can be one of conceptual designing or formal planning, systematic analyzing or leadership visioning, cooperative learning or competitive politicking, focusing on individual cognition or collective socialization, or simple response to the forces of the environment.* In this case it was clearly a process of conceptual designing, although the government would claim that it was a response to the forces of the environment.

*Sixth, the resulting strategy has taken the form of a pattern* in the shape of the new municipal structure and powers, as opposed to a position, perspective or ploy, as the premise would suggest.

As it turns out, then, with the creation of the new City of Montreal, the Government of Quebec is pursuing a configuration strategy intended to throw the entire municipal structure of Montreal into a transformational process, leaving it up to the structures and

---

roles put in place as part of the strategy to make the new city become a reality. The transformation is now underway and is having profound effects on the operation of the system.

---

### 3. The Emerging Reality

No doubt it is just as well to have all structures and processes laid out and in place. But it does not follow that the transformation is complete. Each and every operating unit must now develop from its generic structural definition and new staff contingent into a completely functioning entity, and all such entities must ultimately work together as one organization.

This process will take time and will require leadership and direction, although there is some question as to whether or not such transformation can actually be managed. Indeed, Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel suggest that “managing change” may well be a myth. Despite a range of real responses and reactions, it is possible that change cannot be “made to march to some orderly step-by-step process.” What Mintzberg and his co-authors propose instead is that “perhaps the best way to ‘manage’ change is to allow for it to happen – to set up the conditions whereby people will follow their natural instincts to experiment and transform their behaviours.”<sup>12</sup>

#### **Institutionalization**

While all this change is happening, life goes on. The city and its various departments and staff must after all provide services to citizens, regulate the municipal domain, service the municipal debt, collect taxes, and so forth. Thus people are engaged in specific activities related to the purpose or mission of the domain or unit within which they have been placed.

Insofar as the actors within the domains, or operating units as the case may be, are acting rationally and are applying their energies productively to useful tasks, they are engaging and interacting with others both formally and informally, through structures, processes and specific actions. Over time, patterns will inevitably emerge within each unit and

---

<sup>12</sup> Mintzberg et al., 325–26.

---

between units, and practices and relationships will take root.<sup>13</sup> These patterns, once engrained, will ultimately define the culture of each unit and of the entire organization.

Lawrence, Hardy and Phillips call this process “institutionalization,” on the analogy of the “internalization” process that takes place in “learning organizations.” The authors mention that institutions are constructed through the formal or informal adoption of rules, practices and technologies<sup>14</sup> and refer to the “institutions – rules, practices, technologies” of an inter-organizational domain, and “institution creation” within the domain.<sup>15</sup>

### **Patterns of Institutionalization**

It seems to follow that the organizational units of the new City of Montreal are going through a process of institutionalization as the city develops its own “rules, practices and technologies” through the actions of its people and operating units.

Lawrence, Hardy and Phillips define each of these terms as<sup>16</sup>

- Rules: understandings of legitimate behaviour by and among the actors in the domain of activity
- Practices: patterns of action as they occur during the activity
- Technologies: methods for solving problems

Because of the emergent nature of the institutionalization occurring within my areas of responsibility (and everywhere else in the new city, for that matter), the situation is changing constantly. As institutionalization evolves, routines are established and relationships take hold among the various actors and units. It is to be expected that tendencies will emerge, showing the predominance of one or the other of these factors, depending on the nature of the organization. It would follow that for each of the three

---

<sup>13</sup> In this respect, there is an inescapably *emergent* quality to change, even when it is mandated from outside the organization – as has happened here.

<sup>14</sup> Lawrence et al, 17.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 4, 17.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

there is also a predominant type of institutionalization which accompanies it, and which will characterize the way the organization is inclined to meet new challenges and undertake new initiatives. This would produce three characteristic organizational tendencies, as shown in Table 2.

**TABLE 2. Organizational Tendencies**

<i>Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
<b>Rules-based</b>	As understandings of legitimate behaviour, rules order the relationship between individuals and structures through prescribed processes and procedures. A situation heavily governed by rules therefore would signify that the actors in it are structure-bound, and that it is the structures that predict their behaviours.
<b>Practices-based</b>	When people’s responses form a pattern within a certain sphere of activity, this pattern may indicate an ability to improvise through relationships that enable people to work together in an emergent fashion; on the other hand, it can indicate mere conformism and reliance on rote procedures for the accomplishment of tasks.
<b>Technologies-based</b>	If behaviours demonstrate particularly strong attachment to methods and processes, then it could be deduced that the actors concerned are motivated by the particular set-up of their task, e.g., a certain type of project to be carried out.

### **Detecting Patterns of Institutionalization**

In order to fulfil my role as leader in this emerging, changing context, it is necessary to know how the organization ticks. Clearly, a highly practice-based organization will not respond well to long-drawn-out planning exercises, while rules-based organizations will not necessarily respond readily to leadership’s calls for improvisation. Practically all new organizations have a certain mixture of all three tendencies to varying degrees, and it is the balance among these tendencies that really matters. When we are able to strike this balance, it then becomes possible to adopt a leadership style and program that can address our particular organizational mix. Knowing what predominant type of organization my area of the City is at this stage, according to the three tendencies shown above, will provide enough information in that regard to be able to reflect on the leadership challenge intelligently.

Determining the predominant tendency within a given organization obviously requires systematic observation of people’s behaviour. What follows is a representative sampling

---

of five important activities that have been under way since the new City was established, and which involve my areas of responsibility. Each is then described in Table 3 in terms of the three factors of institutionalization.

### *1. The Notre Dame Highway Project*

Upon arriving in office, the new Montreal administration was called upon to take a position on a Quebec Ministry of Transport proposal to complete the extension of the downtown Ville-Marie Expressway along Notre Dame Street East and link it to the rest of the provincial highway system near the Louis-Hyppolyte Lafontaine Tunnel in the east end of the city. The administration took a position against the government proposal, and suggested a fundamentally different type of link. After considerable public debate, the City's approach was retained, and preparatory work on the final concept was started. Since it is a provincial government project, the Ministry of Transport is the agency responsible; the City of Montreal was represented on the project management team by its Transport Department.

As work progressed, a malaise crept into the organization, and came to a head when the management committee decided to consult with the other municipal departments whose mandates related to the highway project in one way or another. It became evident that there had been little or no attention paid to urban integration issues around the highway, which, when finished, would pass in close proximity to several sensitive residential neighbourhoods. A crisis erupted, with the result that a multi-disciplinary team including an outside urban designer was put in place to rework the project from a point of view more in keeping with sound urban planning. Adjustments were made to the concept, and a joint announcement by all of the project stakeholders was issued a few weeks later. Unfortunately, as the project now enters its design development stage, the project management committee has returned to its former practices of consulting after the fact.

### *2. The July First Housing Emergency*

In July 2001, the City was taken by surprise when the traditional 1 July moving day saw scores of families – most of them economically or socially disadvantaged – unable to find rental accommodation after having terminated their lease rights in their existing flats. Because vacancy rates have continued to drop over the past year, it was anticipated that

---

this year again there would be a similar crisis, potentially of even greater proportions. And so it was that in April 2002, three months into the new City mandate, the Housing department convened an ad-hoc strategy group. This group included every municipal and government agency responsible for public housing and the regulation of rental accommodation (the Rental Board). A strategy was laid out involving communication with the community groups that were in contact with households at risk, in order to encourage them not to cancel their leases. Allowances were sought to enable households on social assistance to share accommodation without the normal penalty. It was a massive operation that continued through “D-Day” and for a week after, and succeeded in defusing in large part what could have been a human and political disaster. In fact, on 1 July the City Emergency Services Centre was put into service, coordinating the accommodation of families in temporary shelters, storing their goods and subsequently finding them affordable apartments or arranging rental subsidies where affordable housing was unavailable. Throughout the exercise, the Mayor and the Minister of Municipal Affairs were on the ground and received regular debriefings from the Emergency Services director. This was the first such operation covering the entire Island of Montreal, and it was noted that it bore some resemblance to the mobilization for the Ice Storm disaster of 1998.

An effective response to this emergency required the active participation of a multitude of agencies. From the very beginning, each one of them including the Quebec Housing Corporation, the provincial housing regulation agency, various government departments, the City Emergency Response team, security services, blue collar workers, several boroughs and a variety of community support groups participated actively in the planning and problem solving necessary for an effective solution. The result was a great success and a rise in credibility of the city in the eyes of government, stakeholders, politicians and media.

### *3. Urban Renewal Program*

The Quebec Government and the City have together created a \$62-million fund to improve infrastructure in disadvantaged neighbourhoods across the City. The Urban Development department was asked for a proposal on how to spend the money, and what projects and type of management should be applied. The impulse of the Director of the department was to create a project team with funding from sources other than the

---

program fund. The job of this team would be to identify, design, manage and stage projects across the Island.

Immediately, however, as soon as the political leadership became aware of the direction the proposal was taking, debate arose over whether a central “office” was necessary at all. Some politicians suggested instead that the money be simply distributed to the boroughs – to be used within criteria to be determined. This alternative solution would require at most one or two managers overseeing the program, instead of an entire team of architects, planners, engineers and other experts. The seesaw continues.

#### *4. Benny Farm*

When Canada’s soldiers returned from service in the Second World War, the federal government built veterans’ housing everywhere in Canada. One such Montreal project, known as Benny Farm, was built on federally owned land in Notre Dame de Grace on the west-central side of the city. Like its counterparts across the country, Benny Farm was built quickly, with little concern for site layout or construction quality. In the early 1990s the site was slated for redevelopment, and the remaining veterans were re-housed in new buildings that were built on a corner of the property. The redevelopment attempts were carried out under the auspices of federal government agencies, including Canada Lands and the Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation (CMHC). At every turn, the project stirred up controversy among a broad variety of conservationists, neighbourhood groups, social housing activists and other stakeholders, all of whom shared a common disapproval of the federal government’s proposals – without, however, agreeing with each other on just what should be done. In fact, it appears that for every position stated there was an opposite position, held with equal conviction. Even the City got into the act this past May, by having another plan prepared to try to resolve the impasse; the plan may have just muddied the waters even more.

To this date, the Benny Farm buildings stand empty, and Canada Lands has had to go back to the beginning in the search for a solution. It has decided to stage a multi-stakeholder collaboration to identify directions and objectives that the various points of view can share, thus calming the passions in the community so that a project can some day go ahead in peace. Clearly, if this cannot be achieved, there is no political locus capable of imposing a solution, even if everyone agrees that there is a housing crisis.

---

## 5. *Festival Place*

Early this year, the provincial government and the City announced the creation of a new public space in the downtown core, to be named Festival Place, which will serve as a venue for outdoor events throughout the year – especially during the Montreal International Jazz Festival. The task of developing Festival Place came to the Urban Development department, although one of the leading agencies in the project is the Cultural Affairs department, which is under the direction of a different Assistant General Manager.

This is an example of a project started by direct political mandate, after effective lobbying by the promoter of the Jazz Festival. However, when it came time to translate the political will into a plan and a project, the challenge became less a matter of planning than of multi-stakeholder relationships. The first idea of the planning staff assigned to the Festival Place project was to work up a plan for the site as a conventional public place. At the first presentation of the plan internally to the Cultural Affairs department and various politicians, it became clear that the program of intended uses was insufficiently defined, and ought to be clarified. Subsequently, at a presentation to the Jazz Festival promoter, it became crystal clear that the entire internal structure of the city was out of harmony with his needs and intentions, and there was in fact not yet any agreement.

Table 3 presents the above five stories in terms of the three factors of institutionalization and derives the “institutional pattern” taking place in the story. Figure 4 takes the information from Table 3 and maps each story as high or low, according to each institutionalization factor. As we can see, the overall approach in these initiatives is primarily grounded in structures that dictate roles from top to bottom. This suggests that the predominant institutionalization pattern is *rules-based*. While this may not appear entirely surprising, considering that the new city is after all a bureaucracy, it is nonetheless a significant finding, because the emerging institutionalization patterns could equally have been technologies-based or practices-based, had the circumstances been different.

**TABLE 3. Institutionalization Patterns**

<i>Story</i>	<i>Rules</i> (Understandings of legitimate behaviour by and among the actors in the domain of activity)	<i>Practices</i> (Patterns of action as they occur during the activity)	<i>Technologies</i> (Methods for solving problems)	<i>Institutionalization Pattern</i>
<b>Notre Dame</b>	The various operatives in the file were strictly confined to their structures and procedures except for the (brief) interlude during which a project team was set up.	There were almost no improvisations or emergent patterns in this file. The closest example was the introduction into the file of the Port Authority, which until then had been a closed door.	During the intensive or “project team” period of the event, there was a rich approach to problem-solving methods by the confrontation of ideas and positions	The rules-based approach predominated in this file, and continues to plague it as work continues. The intensive part of the pre-announcement was however somewhat counter-balanced in favour of a technology in the form of a multi-disciplinary approach to a design solution.
<b>July First Housing</b>	Each individual played the role negotiated in advance and ascribed to his or her agency and position, including a clearly defined leadership role for the city relative to all other actors, clear political mandates etc.	Well in advance of the 1 July operation, there were months of preparation during which decisions were made collaboratively, while avoiding groupthink. People moved easily into a responsive adaptive pattern of action.	During the actual “D-Day” operation, all actors were pooled in one command centre, where communications were immediate and responsive solutions could be developed on the spot. This empowered, mission-central approach was the chosen technology.	Throughout this event, each organizational style predominated at the appropriate time. It represents an excellent example of a well-constructed collaborative domain.
<b>Urban Renewal</b>	The action plan was conceived and programmed so as to remain within a single operating unit, which assumed control over the entire operation.	The overall approach was to follow standard project design and implementation procedures, as in any professional project office setting. There was little emergent quality in this situation.	The problem-solving technology was a traditional liaison approach between consulting and advising stakeholders, with appropriate responses to their various concerns (where deemed valid).	A rules-based approach predominated, in that actions and plans were conceived within the existing organizational framework.
<b>Benny Farm</b>	All interested parties remained within their organizational structures for planning and action. Politicians tried to call the shots, planners proposed plans, etc. – all to no avail, until the adoption of a new approach.	This was an example of mindless improvisation by individuals reacting from within prescribed roles.	The only solution considered in response to problems was to draw more and more plans. “Technologies” were not considered until the adoption of a multi-stakeholder approach to reconciling stakeholder concerns before doing a plan.	This was a rules-dominated event. Although improvisation characterized the event, it was a type of improvisation constrained by the exercise of pre-existing roles, as opposed to a responsive, emergent organizational style.
<b>Festival Place</b>	This issue demonstrated a distinct inability to do business with an external promoter who had proposed a public project partially for his own benefit. Internally, planners tried to lead the other stakeholders, because of their unit’s primacy in the file.	The prevalent pattern of action was a conventional approach: to draw plans, present them and then debate with other stakeholders.	All problem solving took the form of technological solutions to what were perceived to be architectural and planning issues. There was little inclination to test new methods or approaches.	Festival Place was a practices-based and rules-based situation, with a large deficit in technologies.

In the area of practices (patterns of action), there is little emergent quality (therefore little improvisation) in the responses and initiatives contained in the stories.<sup>17</sup> A notable exception was the July First exercise, in which the various actors were able to develop practices that made possible an effective response to the Montreal moving day crisis. The practices developed during the July First exercise were also part and parcel of the problem-solving technologies deployed, namely the creation of a task force environment with clear lines of leadership and communication within which problems were solved by on-the-spot communication, challenge, brainstorming, etc. In other words, the practices were aligned throughout with effective problem-solving techniques appropriate to the particular circumstances of the situation.

Story	Factor					
	Rules		Practices		Technologies	
	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
<b>Notre Dame</b>	X			X	X	
<b>July First</b>	X		X		X	
<b>Urban Renewal</b>	X			X		X
<b>Benny Farm</b>	X			X	X	
<b>Festival Place</b>	X			X		X

**Figure 4. Characterization of Behaviours**

This points to the third area of interest in the behaviours demonstrated in these examples: technologies. There seems to be, albeit largely on an individual basis, a discernible consciousness of (not to say appetite for) the need to try new technologies for problem solving. This is evidenced in at least three of the five cases: the multi-stakeholder process being tried in Benny Farm, the very effective “mission control” approach in the July First example and the multi-disciplinary design approach (temporarily) to the problem of the Notre-Dame expressway.

<sup>17</sup> This ought to be of some comfort in a public administration, where extemporizing would be quite anxiety-inducing to politicians called upon to answer for the actions of their bureaucrats.

---

## Conclusion: A Paradox

The results of this analysis turn up a disconnect between the collaborative nature of the primary challenges facing my areas of responsibility and the rules-based institutional patterns taking root as time goes on. This condition is a paradox, best expressed in the form of a “wicked question”:<sup>18</sup>

*Can professionals working within hard-edged operating units, where a rules-based institutionalization process is in full swing, collaborate to the degree necessary to succeed in the new reality?*

The balance of this paper explores ways to progress within this paradox.

---

<sup>18</sup> A “wicked question” frames a paradox facing an organization or exposes underlying assumptions. See Zimmerman et al., 150–155.

---

## **4. Exploring the Paradox: Toward a Collaborative Mindset**

This paradox – that professionals working within hard-edged operating units in an environment where a rules-based institutionalization process predominates, must nonetheless collaborate in order to carry out their work successfully – presents a certain organizational and management dilemma. How can tasks that should be worked across boundaries be fed into the system or delegated, without being gobbled up within one part of the system? How can strategy be developed with the participation of several different areas, without the exercise becoming a competition for resources or for primacy in the later action phase, ultimately to the detriment of a coherent strategy? How can the organization achieve efficiencies and some synthesis of thought and identity, if individuals identify almost exclusively with their one home unit?

In effect, the paradox bespeaks a potentially antagonistic situation within the organization. On the one hand, people work within organizational units, where identity and culture develop, and which tend to become de facto the basis for the organization of work; on the other hand, the environment of each unit, both internally and externally, in calling for a collaborative approach in the accomplishment of most significant tasks, would seem to suggest a denial of these units, asking people to be free agents available to work in unknown and unpredictable relationships. Unless these two sides of the dichotomy are somehow reconciled, individuals within the organization will be placed in a conflictual dynamic because of the messages and instructions received from their superiors, the organization at large and their own instincts as experienced civil servants coming from another or prior system.

### **Obviating Conflict**

In order to avoid creating conflict, it will be necessary to intervene in some fashion. If the situation is left to itself, the rules-based institutionalization process underway will take care of matters, to the ultimate detriment of the collaborative agenda.

**TABLE 4. Choice of Approach**

Intervention required	Impact on Individuals	Operational Feasibility		Organizational Impact	Conclusion
		Systems	Structures		
<p><b>1. Reaffirm the organizational units, achieving collaboration when necessary through formal processes, procedures and directives.</b></p>	<p>This approach maintains the way individuals currently relate to the organization and to their jobs. Many of the staff have had working relationships together for many years. Meanwhile, amalgamation and decentralization have sent many of their colleagues to the boroughs. This approach would avoid further disruptions in the short term.</p>	<p>Such a body of policy would be exhausting to produce, difficult to enforce and its effectiveness would be impossible to evaluate.</p> <p>It would introduce costs into the system for its production supervision, as well as potential inefficiencies in operations.</p>	<p>There would be no change in structures – no cost and no impact.</p>	<p>The effects on collaboration <i>outside</i> the specific domain under control would be haphazard at best, since the policies in question could only bind the domain under control and not the others.</p> <p>There is nothing to arrest or even slow the institutionalization process under way.</p>	<p>This would be a quite typical public-sector approach to new challenges: add more on to what is there already, without incurring any meaningful change in the values-base (culture) of the units themselves.</p> <p>Implementation of this approach would require significant management resolve, coherence and solidarity over the long term. Therefore, it would likely be unsustainable in the long term.</p>
<p><b>2. Eliminate the units, organizing the individuals within them in collaborative task-based groups instead, as determined by management from time to time.</b></p>	<p>Deprived of any unit to belong to, individual staff would have to develop an entirely new relationship to their work and colleagues.</p>	<p>It would be necessary to develop an entirely new approach to budgeting resources, organizing work, and managing people and obtain City Council approval for it.</p>	<p>This approach would consume several months of energy to prepare the proposal and convince the administrative and political levels of the City of its usefulness, if it were even possible to do so.</p>	<p>There would be little if any effect on units outside of the domain of control, and would make the domain hard to understand to outsiders.</p>	<p>This approach, however valiant, would require a significant reform of the entire municipal apparatus to make any sense. Although it may be desirable in many ways, it is clearly not achievable in any cost-effective way in the short or medium term.</p>
<p><b>3. Work within the unit-based structure, but add flexibility by developing a collaborative mindset.</b></p>	<p>This approach will require tools and voluntary buy-in – first by management, then by staff – in order to be effective. However, individual staff members will stand to gain within a stable and largely familiar environment.</p>	<p>The organization’s budget and human-resource base remain unchanged.</p>	<p>This approach, in starting from what exists, would incur manageable costs and no major discontinuities.</p>	<p>This approach requires no actions from outside the domain of control, and ensures continuity of the department in a form recognizable to outsiders.</p>	<p>This approach makes it possible to bring about change at relatively low cost to all levels of the organizational complex. It is not without risk, however, because without the active buy-in of staff and leadership and effective capacity building, it could go nowhere.</p>

---

There are several different types of intervention one could consider in such a situation. There are communications exercises intended to transmit the importance and value of the collaborative mindset. There is the introduction of incentives and penalties to encourage self-initiated collaboration. And there are more direct interventions in the actual make-up of the organization. The first of these three approaches is of little interest, because its effects (if any) would not be lasting; communication exercises tend to yield diminishing returns as people become inured to the message. Incentives too are unproductive, in part because of limited resources to encourage self-motivated collaboration for reward, and in part because such collaboration would probably have unpredictable and non-strategic results.

The third approach – intervening in the make-up of the organization – offers the best chance for sustainable, strategic results. There are three choices within this approach:

1. Reaffirm the organizational units, and “force” collaboration when necessary through formal processes, procedures and directives.
2. Eliminate the units, and reorganize the individuals within them into collaborative task-based groups, as determined by management from time to time.
3. Work within the unit-based organizational structure, but add flexibility by developing a collaborative mindset within each unit, instead of imposing collaborative strategies from the outside.

Each of these three choices will incur certain tangible and less tangible costs for the organization. In order to choose the optimal approach, an evaluation of each is necessary in terms of its effects on three major dimensions of all organizations – individuals, operational feasibility (systems and structures), and the organization itself. The option that produces the greatest change at each of these levels, and at the least cost, would be the one to pursue.

Table 4 examines each option in these terms. It shows that making the first option work necessitates a top-down, coercive approach. This will be burdensome, introduce costs into the organization and be difficult to sustain over the long term. The second approach – eliminating the units – would be nothing short of revolutionary – a *tour de force*; but it would inevitably be out of harmony with the organizational culture. The analysis

---

concludes that the third option – maintain the structures and introduce a collaborative mindset – will have the most immediate impact, and will offer the greatest possibility of achieving sustainable, progressive change over the long term.

Clearly, however, there will be some resistance to collaborative models within a rules-based organization, in which work processes and individual behaviours are naturally aligned with local operating units. Unless there is value placed on collaboration and the capacities to match the challenges of doing so, this approach cannot work.

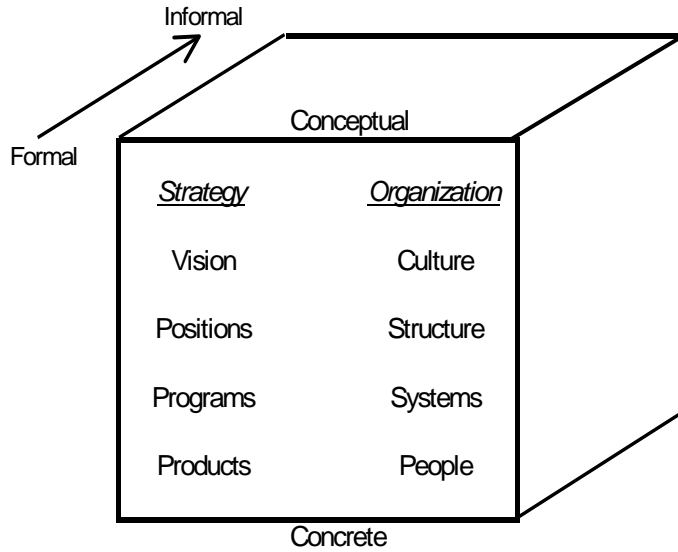
Attempting to introduce a new, additional mindset into an organizational situation is in effect an attempt to modify the culture that is taking root.<sup>19</sup> Such change is complex and difficult, and requires starting somewhere. In *Strategy Safari* (1998) Mintzberg and his colleagues suggest that change occurs in organizations at four levels, progressing from the most concrete to the most conceptual. The four levels in ascending order are: people, systems, structures and culture.<sup>20</sup> They maintain that changing culture requires making changes at the level of people, systems and structures in that order, and that cultural change *will result* from changes at the other three levels.

To illustrate this, Mintzberg and his colleagues present the Change Cube (Figure 5) which depicts two dimensions along which change takes place in organizations – strategic and organizational, ranging from conceptual to concrete along a vertical axis, and from formal to informal along the axis of the depth of the cube. The left side of the cube represents strategy (action of the organization relative to the outside world). The right side represents the organization itself: culture, structure, systems and people as elements of change. To create change or affect the direction in which change is occurring requires intervention on one or the other of the levels of the cube, more or less formally. The levels are cumulative in that to change one in particular requires intervening also in the ones below it.

---

<sup>19</sup> “Culture is essentially composed of interpretations of a world and the activities and artefacts that reflect these. . . . We thus associate *organizational* culture with collective cognition. It becomes like the ‘organization’s mind,’ if you like, the shared beliefs that are reflected in traditions and habits as well as more tangible manifestations – stories, symbols, even buildings and products.” Mintzberg et al., 265. Kanter characterizes culture as “Shared understandings, common language and disciplines . . .” (*Evolve!*, 19).

<sup>20</sup> Mintzberg et al., 324–27.



SOURCE: Mintzberg et al., 326. Reprinted by permission.

**Figure 5. The Change Cube**

So the starting point in introducing a collaborative mindset into the organization (or even just enhancing what is there) is at the level of the people themselves (as opposed to playing around with structures or processes first). In order to determine how this can occur, it would be useful to examine in some detail at least one successful collaborative experience, and observe people’s behaviour in order to identify the ingredients for success on a more generalized basis.

### **July First: A Case Study**

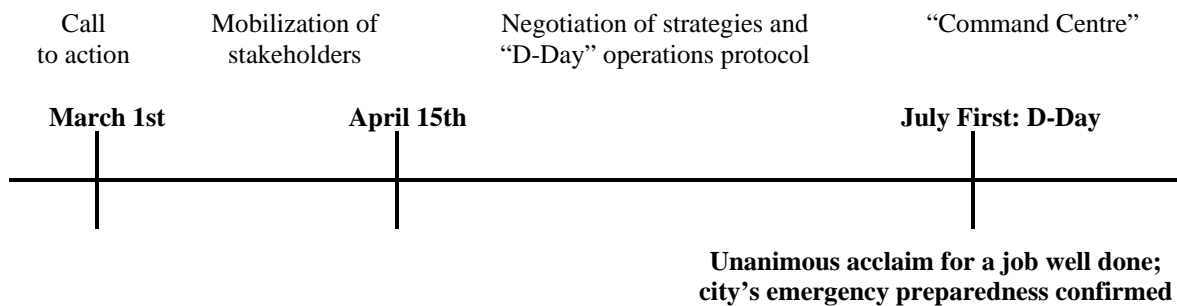
For this purpose, the July First exercise described earlier in this paper is a useful case in point. In that experience, a significant mobilization of forces in a collaborative effort both within and outside of the City of Montreal, in response to a housing availability crisis<sup>21</sup> anticipated to take place on 1 July 2002, ultimately involved seven City agencies or departments, volunteers, the police, five independent community service agencies (NGOs) and five agencies of the provincial government, as well as the Mayor of Montreal and the Minister of Municipal Affairs of the Province of Quebec, in a broad-based collaborative effort.

<sup>21</sup> See above, 24–25.

The July First exercise was an unqualified success. Several hundred households were assisted in the search for new lodgings. Others were provided with temporary shelter, including storage of their possessions. Still others were admitted into assisted housing units or rent supplement programs for which they had not known they were eligible. An extremely effective command control centre was established, and all media communications were well managed, with news briefings twice a day. Ultimately, the Mayor and the Minister were able to reassure the public that everything was under control, and that in fact the City was ready to handle just about any crisis.

### What Transpired

The entire process went through several stages (see Figure 6), starting in early March 2002, following the publication of various statistics on the Montreal housing market, revealing a stark picture in terms of availability of housing units as of 1 July – Montreal’s traditional moving day. The municipal administration issued a call to action in order to avoid a human catastrophe similar to the one that took place on 1 July 2001, when several dozen households ended up sleeping in the street.



**Figure 6. The 1 July 2002 Process**

During the first stage, there was an intensive mobilization of the wide variety of agencies that needed to be involved for an effective response: provincial housing authorities, various municipal services, public security, community action groups and independent NGOs. This exercise had two main purposes: (a) to establish a shared sense of purpose among all stakeholder groups, and (b) to establish a shared interpretation of all the facts.

The second stage – setting strategies and the operating protocol for “D-Day” itself – was an intensive period of multi-party negotiation. It was during this time that roles were assigned and authority conferred for different actions and elements of response. In effect, in order to be effective on D-Day under a wide variety of conditions and in various locations throughout the entire Island of Montreal, individuals had to be empowered to make snap decisions on the use of resources and to find solutions to situations within their respective areas of responsibility. Also during this period, resources – temporary shelters, food, vehicles, computers, communications equipment, call centres, etc. – were pooled (give-and-get) and acquired both from within the group and outside of it.

**TABLE 5. Collaborative Capacities**

<b>Stages in the 1 July 2002 Process</b>			
<b>Call to Action</b>	<b>Mobilization of Stakeholders</b>	<b>Determination of Strategies and “D-Day” Operations Protocol</b>	<b>“Command Centre”</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Believe</li> <li>- Communicate</li> <li>- Know networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge of issue</li> <li>- Listen/speak</li> <li>- Trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Negotiation</li> <li>- Logistics</li> <li>- Ingenuity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contribute resources</li> <li>- Commitment</li> <li>- Energy</li> </ul>

Overall, judging from the results, the July First exercise was a successful collaboration. But it was successful because the right capacities were always present in the right place at the right time (see Table 5).

Rosabeth Moss Kanter writes that collaborations succeed when the participants in the collaborative domain meet eight conditions of good partnering, what she calls “Eight I’s That Make We.”<sup>22</sup> Table 6 shows how these eight conditions applied to the staff of the Housing department during the July First exercise. The table shows convincingly that the people who participated were quite effective in virtually all aspects of collaboration

<sup>22</sup> Kanter, 144. See also “Becoming PALS: Pooling, Allying, and Linking Across Companies,” *Academy of Management Executive* (1 August 1989), 183–193.

---

throughout the project. Kanter points out that real power doesn't come from a series of bilateral relationships, but from strong ties among every partner in the system.<sup>23</sup>

## **Conclusion**

What is of interest from the above account is what happened with the people involved in the event: without any significant change in structures or systems, several individuals within the Housing department demonstrated a capacity to be effective collaborators in creating a successful response to the challenge at hand.

On the one hand, it is useful to understand what type of collaboration took place. In their study mentioned earlier on in this paper, Lawrence, Hardy and Phillips examine the behaviour and capacity development of one particular organization through its collaborative involvement with other equally autonomous organizations acting in a shared field of activity. From observations of many different collaborative arrangements – bilateral and multilateral – among a wide variety of organizations doing work with Palestinian refugees, the authors derive two main characteristics of collaborations in general: *involvement* and *embeddedness*. High levels of involvement in collaborative arrangements entail deep interactions among participants, partnership arrangements and bilateral information flows. High levels of embeddedness involve interactions with third parties, representation arrangements and multi-directional information flows.<sup>24</sup>

Put in practical terms, high-involvement collaborations create inter-organizational domains that do not take on the form of new institutions. Participating organizations collaborate for the duration of the exercise, but do not become “embedded” in a new, inter-organizational structure. High-embedded collaborations, on the other hand, take on

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>24</sup> Lawrence et al., 15–16

**TABLE 6. Collaboration Conditions**

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Application</b>
<b>INDIVIDUAL EXCELLENCE</b>	Each participant possesses a high degree of needed skills.	Montreal Housing department staff are recognized as among the most experienced and knowledgeable in their field in Quebec. This gained a certain deference for them when it came to convening the partners and developing the collaboration.
<b>IMPORTANCE</b>	The relationship gets adequate resources, management attention and sponsorship; it has strategic significance.	From the Mayor right through the Executive Committee, this issue and the work of the coalition were given outright priority status as THE strategy. A budget was allocated, staff were assigned and other city resources were called upon during the course of the experience.
<b>INVESTMENT</b>	There is an agreement for longer-term investment, which will help to equalize benefits over time.	This was an ad hoc collaboration. However, it can be re-enacted at the same time next year when the crisis re-emerges, and so on until the housing situation is resolved.
<b>INTERDEPENDENCE</b>	Organizations are interdependent, which helps maintain the power balance.	The Housing department could not have acted alone in this file, and recognized that from the outset. This was also legally true in that modifications to provincial housing programs became necessary, requiring the legislative authority of the provincial minister.
<b>INFORMATION</b>	Each participant is informed about the plans of the others.	Information flowed bi-laterally and multi-laterally quite liberally throughout the project.
<b>INTEGRATION</b>	Appropriate points of contact and communication are established.	The Housing department convened regular meetings and assigned point persons for the resolution of all issues as soon as they emerged.
<b>INSTITUTIONALIZATION</b>	There is a framework of supporting mechanisms, such as legal requirements and social ties.	The collaborators reached the necessary agreements as affairs progressed. Rules were established as to roles, and responsibilities. The partners also developed practices and technologies for problem solving and issue management.
<b>INTEGRITY</b>	Shared values make trust possible.	In general, the (public) housing field in Quebec shares a very strong values base. The City department is no different. In addition to its staff being exceptional experts, there is a values bias in virtually all of the programs they administer. This was especially true in this case.

---

the form of new institutions created among the participants who allow the new structure to represent them, for example. These new structures can take on a life of their own, and may become primary actors in the field of activity alongside each of the constituent organizations.<sup>25</sup> Knowing which of these two primary types of collaboration an event is will help understand in what type of situations people would be more or less inclined to collaborate effectively.

In the July First exercise, the participants did not start up any longer-lasting institutions, nor did they name a common representative. In spite of certain benefits that may have been derived from the experience, as described above, the inter-organizational domain was not institutionalized through the development of domain-specific rules, practices and technologies beyond the duration of the exercise. It is therefore safe to say that this collaboration was high-involvement and low-embedded in nature.

The significance of this finding is this: there is a good chance that the Housing department individuals were able to participate in the collaboration specifically because there was no new (competitive) structure created. In other words, the (future) role of their home unit was never in question. Therefore, the rules-based nature of their relationship with the organization was not called upon to change fundamentally.

As regards the people involved, the July First example also demonstrates a well-developed capacity for collaboration among the individuals of the Housing department. As Table 5 shows, they possess all of the requisite skills – negotiation skills, communication skills, capacity for self-investment – to make collaborative arrangements work.

This is good news. Assuming that the Housing department staff are reflective of the staff elsewhere in the areas under my authority, the situation appears conducive to building a collaborative mindset within the organizational culture without having to introduce major changes at the staff level of the organization.

---

<sup>25</sup> International NGO alliances are a common example of this phenomenon. Often these alliances start out as high-involvement collaborations and evolve into high-embedded ones – sometimes contrary to stated intentions at the onset of the alliance.

---

Having confirmed that a considerable organizational capacity for collaboration, in particular for high-involvement undertakings, can exist within the rules-based organizational paradigm currently in force, the challenge then becomes how to develop this capacity and manage collaborative relationships appropriately.

---

## 5. Instituting a Collaborative Mindset

The results of the foregoing analysis do not mean that no intervention in the organization is necessary. Notwithstanding existing capabilities, as well as the need to manage the nature of future attempts at collaboration, it is still necessary for collaboration to become a significant and visible part of the organizational mindset. For that to happen, it must become much easier for people to enter into high-involvement relationships around common objectives ongoing within their units, and with outside partners as the need arises. This section of the paper examines two ways by which this may be encouraged.

### Learning through Community

At present, ongoing institutionalization is based on people's relationships to the structure within which they work. This has been found to be antithetical to a collaborative mindset, as discussed earlier on in this paper. If the organization continues to institutionalize in the opposite direction, the transformation will not be sustainable. Obviously the only way to prevent this is to change the way people are relating to the organization and to each other.

In a chapter titled "From Cells to Communities" in her book *Evolve!*, Kanter makes the point that pacesetter companies (in the use of the Internet)<sup>26</sup> "tend to have flexible, empowering collaborative organizations. . . .[Web] success involves operating more like a community than a bureaucracy."<sup>27</sup> She goes on to say that community is "an organizing principle that allows people to collaborate quickly and effectively . . . the behavioural and emotional infrastructure that supports those other organizational processes [e.g., collaboration] and makes them effective."<sup>28</sup> In other words, Kanter suggests that success

---

<sup>26</sup> Throughout the references to Kanter, methods of change for Web or Internet-focused operations are considered to be applicable to methods of change for other purposes as well, which is why they can be applied in this case.

<sup>27</sup> Kanter, 169–70. "Bureaucracy implies rigid job descriptions, command and control hierarchies, and hoarding of information, which is doled out top-down on a need to know basis." This description of bureaucracy closely approximates rules-based institutionalization.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*,196.

---

in a modern organization depends upon a community-like structure – a community with the capacity for effective collaboration.

It is not difficult to see the connection between the presence of community and the ability of its members to collaborate both inside and outside that community. Being a member of a community changes the individual's locus of identification from himself or herself or some highly localized structural unit (as one would expect to find in a bureaucracy) to a broader collective domain, where certain values predominate and collective benefits accrue; in other words, a community. If the community takes root then its members will naturally develop a capacity to collaborate with each other, resolving one level of the collaboration objective. And if the community is constructed so as to value collaboration as a way to achieve its goals, then it follows that its members will also value collaboration by virtue of their commitment to and inclusion in the community. Regarding collaboration as a valued aspect of what defines the community then connects the members of the community neatly with collaboration as an umbrella strategy (as described earlier).

But this may be just wishful thinking. Is there in fact a direct cause-and-effect link between the existence of community and the willingness of its members to collaborate voluntarily? In other words, does, or can, the following relationship hold true?

### Collaboration $\propto$ Community

Kretzman and McKnight, in their work on asset-based community development, talk about building community by putting into action the existing assets within a community towards achieving shared community goals. Within that approach, none of the assets in question can achieve the desired goals alone, but must always be deployed in combination or interaction with other assets as well, which is the essence of collaboration.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, once this network of assets is in place and the community takes root, the likelihood of collaboration among the members of the community increases, and this in turn reinforces the sense of community. It follows that such communities are more able to represent their interests, defend themselves against outside threats, take on new challenges and participate with external agents in the search for

---

<sup>29</sup> The authors refer to this as internally focused and relationship-driven.

---

solutions to problems. This outside participation becomes in fact collaboration, and can only be achieved through the actions of individuals. It is these individuals that have or ultimately develop capabilities for collaboration on a sustainable basis precisely because of their participation within the community and its self-building process.

It follows from this argument that an effective route towards sustaining an organizational capacity for collaboration is through the creation of community. This in turn defines the nature of the community itself, at least in part, as a community of purpose – the purpose being the mission of the organization.<sup>30</sup>

### **Constructing Community at the City**

Constructing such a community however is no simple task. The notion of community within organizations is multi-dimensional,<sup>31</sup> and is not something that can be simply laid on or formally mandated. Indeed, the operative notion is that it must be constructed.

### **Defining the Field**

First and foremost, the community itself must be defined. According to Kanter, “Communities are loose aggregations. There may be a formal core that is organized and firm, but around that core are people who come and go, move in and out, and become more active on some occasions and less active on others.”<sup>32</sup> But there are different types of communities: geographic communities, which include all people living within a certain geographic area; communities of purpose, which include all people seeking to achieve a specific goal; and communities of interest, which include people sharing a particular belief or ideal – to give just three examples. In an organizational setting, the community would include the people having some organizational or functional reason to relate to one

---

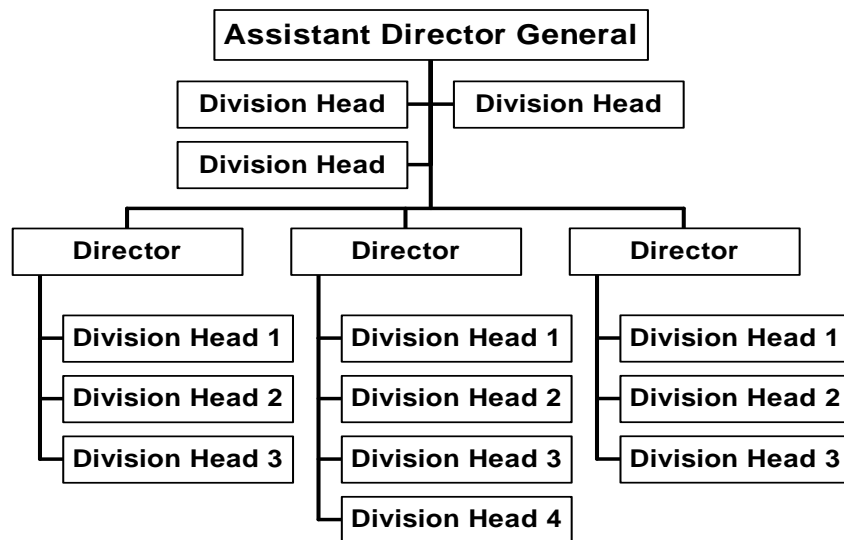
<sup>30</sup> This is in itself a configuration strategy much the same as that described earlier. In creating and developing community, the intent is to transform the organization through the implementation of that community configuration. Thereafter, the transformation will occur by the actors performing their roles within a community paradigm.

<sup>31</sup> According to Kanter (19–20), the ideal community comprises seven elements: (1) membership, (2) fluid boundaries, (3) voluntary action, (4) identity, (5) common culture, (6) collective strength and (7) collective responsibility.

<sup>32</sup> Kanter, 18.

---

another on an ongoing basis. The formal core would therefore contain all the staff members in a given location or physical structure, making it like a geographic community; or involved in particular areas of specialization, making it similar to a community of interest. In the case of the new City of Montreal, it is the geography more than interest that prevails, so that it would be more appropriate to consider the community as including all staff positions within a defined organizational field. Any staff person occupying a position within that field would thus be considered a member of the community. However, this is still too broad a definition for the purpose of constructing community in the present case. For example, within my organization there are several levels of support staff and technical personnel whose primary role consists exclusively of carrying out orders issued by an immediate superior. While the people in these jobs must ultimately feel that they are members of the community in the larger sense, they are not necessarily part of the *formal* core for the purposes intended here. Instead, it makes more sense to begin by inculcating a community mindset primarily among people in leadership positions within the organization – leaders who must develop strategies for their specific areas, manage resources, and may be called upon from time to time by actors from outside of my organizational area. These include all positions from the division head level through director up to my level, Assistant Director General (see Figure 7).

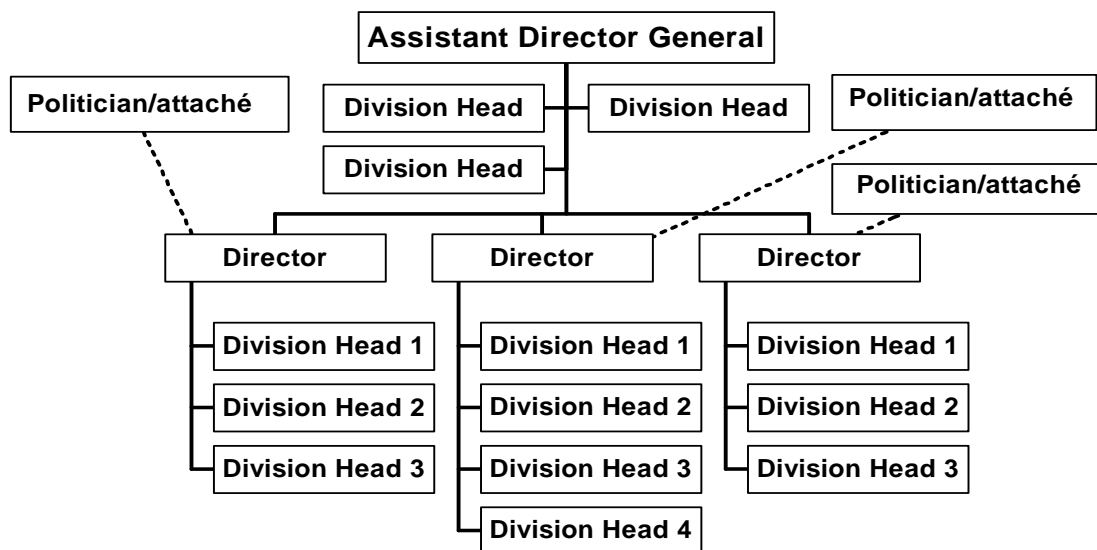


**Figure 7. The Formal Core**

Outside this formal core group, there are several other key figures who could be considered important enough to include within the community, because they interact

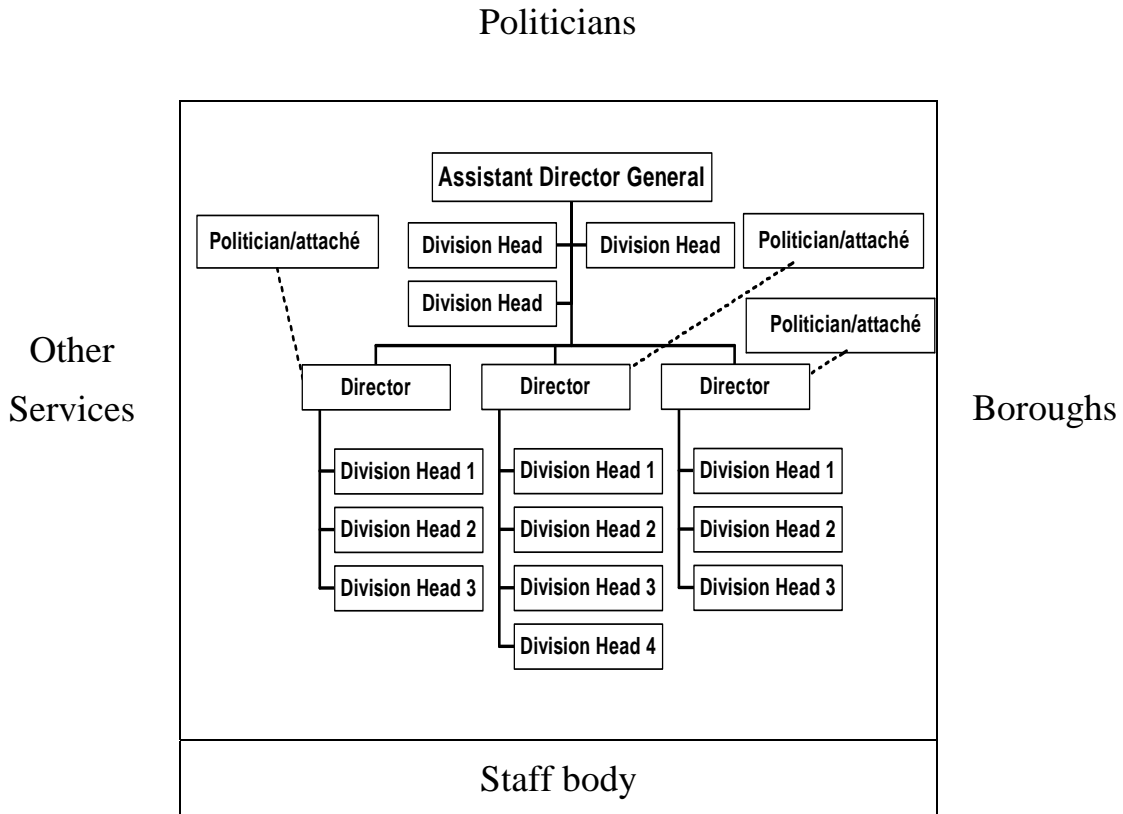
more or less daily with members of the core group. Among these are the political attachés to those members of the Executive Committee who have responsibility for one or another of my divisions. Figure 8 depicts this extended core. It is worth noting also that as the model develops over time, the domain can be adjusted as required.

So far, the actors in this domain are living a rules-based institutionalization process, at least with respect to their own jobs within the organization. This suggests that their primary relationship is to the organizational unit to which they belong and for which they are responsible. This sort of allegiance is no doubt useful and necessary to maintain in the course of day-to-day operations. Nor should it be unduly threatened by the shift to a community mindset, which should rather embrace these roles, enhance them, and add value to them.



**Figure 8. Extended Core**

Beyond the extended core there is the surrounding community, which is made up of kindred structures within the city – the political organs, the boroughs and other departments (see Figure 9). This group does not include members of the public because there is no organizational kinship linkage, which makes them exclusively collaborators, partners, etc. Among this range of individuals are those who “come and go” in and out of the community, as Kanter says, depending on the situation. Kanter refers to this aspect of community as “fluid boundaries.”



**Figure 9. Surrounding Community**

### **The Challenge of Community at the City**

As the community to be built in this case is geographic in nature, every person within the territory is automatically considered a member of the community by virtue of his or her presence. But it does not mean that a defining community spirit exists as yet. For this to happen, there must be a transformation from a geographic community – which today is defined by little more than the fact that the individuals concerned are employed by the same department, and which is going through a rules-based institutionalization process – into the community of purpose suggested at the end of the last chapter.

The Kretzman-McKnight model presented earlier is in fact a proposal about transforming geographic communities into communities of purpose by tapping into the resources present within a geographic community and deploying those resources to build the community to achieve the community’s chosen purpose. Over and above that however, the model represents the belief that building on strengths and valuing assets is the most

---

sustainable way to achieve development. It is *appreciative* in nature, and requires that the community adopt an appreciative approach to the strengths present in its midst. In this regard, the Kretzman-McKnight method is very much akin to, and can be used with, Appreciative Inquiry, as I shall explain shortly.

### **“Constructing” the Community**

In support of this community transformation, it would be worthwhile to promote behaviours that reflect a community presence. In this regard, in the chapter of *Evolve* entitled “Deconstructing and Reconstructing the Organization,”<sup>33</sup> Kanter evokes six elements that contribute to building organizational community with “both a structure and a soul”: a balanced governance structure; shared disciplines and routines; multi-channel, multi-directional communication; integrators; cross-cutting relationships; shared-identity, shared fate. In fact, each of these elements can be seen as an operating guideline of a well-functioning community. Table 7 describes each of Kanter’s elements and suggests how they might apply to the new City of Montreal’s current situation.

### **Appreciative Inquiry**

In order to foster collaboration as an organizational trait among highly motivated, strong-willed professionals, it will be important to increase the value they place in collaboration as a way to leverage their strengths and create a broader scope for their personal achievements. This is especially true in a context where available resources are not expanding, as is the case at present.

One effective way to do this is through *Appreciative Inquiry* (AI). In their publication of the same name, David Cooperrider and Diana Whitney write: “In AI, intervention gives

---

<sup>33</sup> See Kanter, 167–196.

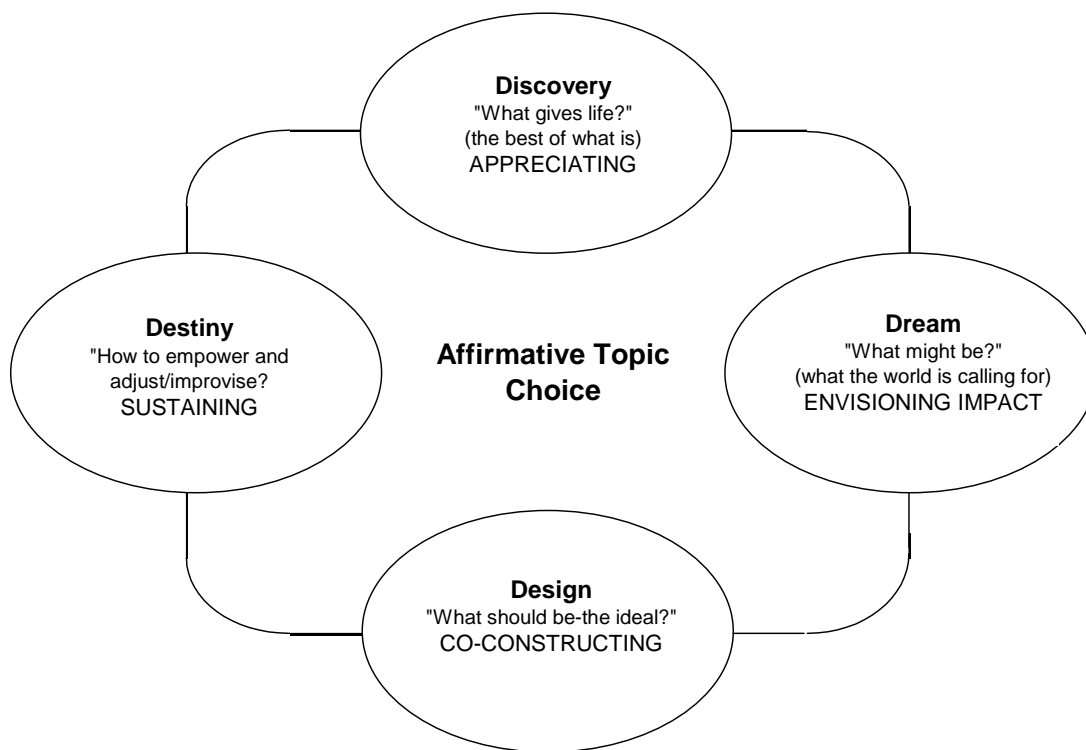
**TABLE 7. Community Construction**

<i>Element</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Application</i>
<b>A balanced governance structure</b>	Formal structures signal importance, clarify responsibilities and include those whose input will make a difference. Activities that touch every part of the company cannot be managed by committees. Someone needs to be clearly in charge. But they can't work without linkages to the rest of the organization either.	The presence of hierarchy within the make-up of the community cannot be completely set aside. Management should play a strong role as champions of the community model and ensure that space is made for it within the day-to-day lives of their units. Division heads must do the same with their staff groups. Also, the governance process should allow the Assistant Director General and the managers the space and opportunity to steer the development of the community towards desired outcomes.
<b>Shared disciplines and routines</b>	Collaboration is nearly impossible without a common vocabulary and common language. It is facilitated by common tools and disciplines that make it easy to do routine things quickly.	Planners and architects, to some extent, share a common language; politicians and economic development professionals, however, do not. These disparities must be dealt with in the community building process, and it is here that the openness of the individuals to new technologies discovered in the institutionalization analysis can be put to use.
<b>Multi-channel, multi-directional communication</b>	Communities are communication-intensive. They spread more information to more people more regularly through every medium.	Responsibility for communication must belong to individuals appointed by the community itself. Over time, this role will extend to every unit and individual in every department, as part of the strategy to expand the community in a deliberately inclusive manner.
<b>Integrators</b>	Communities are built through networks of people who cross domain boundaries to meet and share knowledge. Such networks can be structured and formal, or loose and informal. Unlike committees, networks are fluid and open-ended. But they do not organize themselves spontaneously, and they work best when actively managed.	Creation of these networks must be encouraged within the community-building process. Some networks already exist, thanks to past initiatives of individuals and teams already in place. Others will have to be initiated on common themes and community-building projects to be determined.
<b>Cross-cutting relationships</b>	Personal relationships are vitally important. It helps to have people with strong social skills who are team oriented and collaborative. Communities are built around people who know each other, understand each other, like each other, and have a shared history	There must be ample opportunity to get to know the person inside. Among professionals, this often happens best in a learning environment. Occasions should be created for knowledge development, according to the community's expressed needs.
<b>Shared identity, shared fate</b>	Collaboration is not altruistic. It stems in part from people's identifying with one another's interests and their belief that they share a common fate. Incentives that induce co-operation are a starting point. Collaboration works best when it is mutual and every participant "gets something out of it."	Community governance must develop some incentives that will get people to participate Linking it with annual evaluations is one approach, although somewhat coercive. Another is the celebration by the community of individual contributions to its successes, or of recognition gained by an individual that brings honour to the entire community.

---

way to imagination and innovation; instead of negation, criticism, and spiralling diagnosis there is discovery, dream and design. AI assumes that every living system has untapped, rich, and inspiring accounts of the positive. Link this ‘positive change core’ directly to any change agenda, and changes never thought possible are suddenly and democratically mobilized.”

According to AI theory, transformation occurs through the enactment of a four-stage process called the “4-D Cycle” (see Figure 10). This cycle takes participants through a process using *appreciative interviews* in order to “uncover what gives life to an organization, department, or community when it is at its best. They discover personal and organizational high points, what people value, and what they hope and wish



SOURCE: Cooperrider and Whitney, 11.

**Figure 10. The 4D Cycle**

---

for to enhance their organization's social, economic, and environmental vitality."<sup>34</sup> Finally, the cycle surrounds the choice of an *affirmative topic* that is at the heart of the transformation initiative: what is it that the community wishes to achieve or be great at.

In the current circumstance, AI could apply as follows:<sup>35</sup>

- ***The Affirmative Topic Choice.*** In this case the affirmative topic choice would be how to make the organization a model of effective collaboration in the accomplishment of its mandate.
- ***Discovery.*** Participants would discover the effectiveness of collaboration in leveraging strengths and augmenting impact, and would see how the people and the organization were at their best when collaboration was at its highest.<sup>36</sup>
- ***Dream.*** Participants would be asked to imagine a state of affairs in which collaboration could make the organization more effective, and individuals within the organization more successful.
- ***Design.*** Dialogue would begin when participants share their discoveries and dreams, and co-conceive an ideal place for collaboration in the life of the organization and how the organization design might change to accommodate.
- ***Destiny.*** Participants would co-construct how the organization might reach the desired state – how community might develop, while remaining grounded in past realities. This could range from skills development and role creation, to performance measurement and organizational structural rearrangement.

Although this is merely an illustration of the method, it seems clear that this approach could be effectively adapted to support the transformation towards a collaborative mindset among the staff group and away from a predominately rules-based

---

<sup>34</sup> Cooperrider and Whitney, 11.

<sup>35</sup> Based on a lecture by Ron Fry, Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior, Department of Organizational Behavior, Weatherhead School of Management, Case Western Reserve University, to Class 2, Module 2 of the McGill-McConnell Program (McGill University, 10 September 2000).

<sup>36</sup> The July First story described earlier is one example of when the new City organization operated at its best due to collaboration.

---

institutionalization. The application of this process within the city offers many interesting benefits:

- What people have to offer is appreciated without calling into question their existing positions and roles. Instead, it offers the possibility of developing other dimensions of their capabilities, professional and otherwise, within a peer group that values their gifts.
- Knowledge of each other's gifts will undoubtedly result in new ways to frame problems and develop new technologies for problem solving.
- A group of highly professional people functioning as a community will inevitably become a source of new visions and potentials within reach of the organization because of the confidence and knowledge of the strengths of each person.
- The community will be a place where conflicts originating in territorial or professional jealousy will be defused, because worth will not be attached solely to position.
- The administrative burden on individual managers should diminish because of the self-managing aspect of community.
- Putting the model in place will get people's attention and let them know that "something is happening here" – that there is change afoot.
- This, in turn, should diminish the reach of the rules-based institutionalization process taking place and open people's minds to other approaches – namely, collaboration.

---

## 6. Implementation: A Question of Leadership

Flowing from all of this change is a specific mandate of leadership if community is to be created within my organization.

In his article “Creating Organizations with Many Leaders,” Gifford Pinchot III, the inventor of “intrapreneuring,” who supports the pursuit of community instead of chain-of-command bureaucracy within corporations as a way of unleashing potential, writes: “Effective leaders use the tools of community building to create an environment in which many leaders can emerge. . . . Community is a phenomenon that occurs most easily when free people with a sense of equal worth join together voluntarily for a common enterprise. Great leaders create a sense of freedom, voluntariness and common worth.”<sup>37</sup>

Great leaders also gain the commitment of their people. In her discussions about talent (people), Kanter<sup>38</sup> raises the issue of obtaining commitment. She suggests that commitment on the part of highly skilled, highly motivated people has three dimensions: Mastery, Membership and Meaning.

- *Mastery* means satisfaction and success coupled with increasing opportunity to achieve success in the future. This involves the chance to learn, speak up and be heard; focus, clarity and discipline as aids to mastery; and opportunity, options and ownership. Mastery also means that a broad range of types of intelligence and learning styles can be accommodated.
- *Membership* has both collective and individual dimensions. It involves cohesion – warm and strong – among members. It also implies respect for individuals and their differences. Membership includes being welcomed into the community; feeling that someone will watch over you; honouring personal interests; recognition; supporting life outside of work; trust and respect.

---

<sup>37</sup>Gifford Pinchot, “Creating Organizations with Many Leaders,” in Hesselbein, 27.

<sup>38</sup> Kanter, 204.

- 
- *Meaning* implies belief that the work itself has meaning, that the company's output creates social value, and that belonging to the organization provides a chance to help change the world for the better.

It is the job of the community leader to ensure that the community provides mastery, membership and meaning to every member.

Kanter's three M's are in fact very similar to Kretzman and McKnight's notion of the asset-based community. To paraphrase, Kanter's conception of mastery underscores the idea that the person is a *valuable* asset in that it deals with learning and skills – the development of the asset itself. Membership suggests the notion of a *valued* asset, in that the community recognizes the contributions and celebrates the successes achieved by the person with that asset. And Meaning, in turn, implies a *value-added* asset, in that the investment of the person's capabilities betters the local community and the world at large.

Pinchot provides a portrait of community leaders able to do just this:

*They contribute inspiring visions of a shared vision to align everyone's energies.*

*They care for and protect their employees.*

*They listen and do their best to accept the contributions and divergent ideas of employees as honest attempts to help.*

*They give thanks for the gifts of ideas, courage, self-appointed leadership that employees bring to the community.*

*They discourage backbiting and politics.*

*They do their best to treat each member of the organization as a spiritual equal worthy of respect.*

*They share information so that everyone can see how the whole organization works and how it is doing.*

---

*They publicly celebrate the community's successes.*

*In tragedy they mourn its losses.*<sup>39</sup>

Such leadership is human, appreciative, authoritative and requires a good deal of “emotional intelligence” to create the conditions for future success.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> See Hesselbein, 27–28.

<sup>40</sup> Goleman, 80. Goleman demonstrates that out of six leadership styles – coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetter, coaching – the authoritative style was the most effective in impacting “climate,” i.e., in terms of six key factors that influence an organization’s working environment: flexibility, responsibility, standards, rewards, clarity and commitment.

---

## Bibliography

- Beer, M., R. A. Eisenstat and B. Spector. "Why Change Programs Don't Produce Change." *Harvard Business Review* (November–December 1990), 158–66.
- Cooperrider, David, and Diana Whitney. *Appreciative Inquiry*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1999.
- Florida, Richard. *The Rise of the Creative Class*. New York: Basic Books, 2002.
- Goleman, Daniel. "Leadership That Gets Results." *Harvard Business Review* (March–April 2000), 79–90.
- Hesselbein, Frances, ed. *The Leader of the Future: New Visions, Strategies and Practices for the Next Era*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996.
- Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. *Evolve! Succeeding in the Digital Culture of Tomorrow*. Harvard Business School Press, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Becoming PALS: Pooling, Allying, and Linking Across Companies." *The Academy of Management Executive* (1 August 1989), 183–93.
- Kotter, J. P. "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail." *Harvard Business Review*, (March–April 1995), 59–67.
- Kretzman, John P. and John L. McKnight. *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*. Chicago: ACTA Publications, 1993.
- Lawrence, Thomas, Cynthia Hardy and Nelson Phillips. "Collaboration and Institutional Entrepreneurship: The Case of Mère et Enfant (Palestine)." Department of Management Working Paper in Operations and Strategy No. 1. University of Melbourne (Australia). June 1999. <http://www.management.unimelb.edu.au/Research/papers/wpos1.pdf>.
- Mintzberg, Henry. *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning: Reconceiving Roles for Planning, Plans, Planners*. New York and Toronto: The Free Press, 1994.
- Mintzberg, Henry, Bruce Ahlstrand and Joseph Lampel. *Strategy Safari: A Guided Tour Through the Wilds of Strategic Management*. New York: The Free Press, 1998.
- Mintzberg, Henry and James A. Watters. "Of Strategies, Deliberate and Emergent." *Strategic Management Journal* vol. 6, no. 3 (1985), 257–72.
- Palmer, Parker. *The Active Life: A Spirituality of Work, Creativity and Caring*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990.

---

Pinchot, Gifford. "Creating Organizations with Many Leaders." In *The Leader of the Future: New Visions, Strategies and Practices for the Next Era*, ed. Frances Hesselbein. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 1996, 25–39.

Prahalad, C. K., and Gary Hamel. "The Core Competence of the Corporation." *Harvard Business Review* (May–June 1990), 79–90.

Weick, Karl. "Improvisation as a Mindset for Organizational Analysis." *Organization Science* (September–October 1998), 543–55.

Zimmerman, Brenda, Curt Lindberg and Paul Plsek (1998). *Edgeware: Insights from complexity science for health care leaders*. Irving, TX: VHA Inc. Also available on line at [http://www.plexusinstitute.org/services/Edgeware\\_archive/index.html](http://www.plexusinstitute.org/services/Edgeware_archive/index.html).