

Remaking Jobs and Organisations: A Schatzkian Practice Perspective

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Certificate of Authorship/Originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

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List of Publications

The following list represents my published book chapters, journal articles and refereed conference papers. Some of these publications are referenced throughout this thesis document to support my points on the conceptualisations of remaking of jobs and organisational practices from my investigation.

Book Chapters:

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Abstract

This thesis is an empirical study of aspects of the work of three Australian organisations in order to show how a Schatzkian view of 'practice' can illuminate conceptualisations of organisations, change, jobs, workers and knowing in ways that challenge prevailing managerialist theorisations of the same. In particular, this thesis draws on Schatzkian notions of practice and social site (Schatzki, 2002, 2005, 2006), where workers and organisations are positioned as interconnected in a mutually constitutive relationship through practices.

By adopting an overarching ethnographic approach, using multiple case studies, narrative inspired semi-structured interviews, observations and document reviews, this thesis demonstrates empirically the mutually constitutive relationship among organisations and social site, as it emerges through the phenomenon of change. Through the interplay of practices in and beyond organisations, ongoing change and stability are explicated as co-occurring phenomena and as inherent features of organisations and social site. By drawing attention to the day-to-day activities of workers, this research demonstrates further the mutually constitutive relationship among workers and organisations. Through workers' enactments of job and organisational practices in their day-to-day work, they are changing and remaking those practices, and at the same time, workers' possibilities of such change and remaking are framed by already existing organisational practices. Finally, by considering how workers come to know what to do, this research demonstrates the ways in which workers, as they actively remake their jobs and organisational practices, are at the same time remaking their own and organisational knowing in practice.

This research makes a number of contributions. It extends, in a small way, the organisational, management and practice literatures by bringing together, in a critical discussion, the multiple and diverse perspectives for understanding organisational phenomena. Second, the empirical application of Schatzkian theorisations of practice and social site demonstrates the robustness of these theorisations – how these theorisations hold up *in practice*. Finally, by bridging Schatzkian theorisations with the work of other practice theorists that focus on knowing in practice, this research extends Schatzki's work by making explicit links

between Schatzkian notions of practical intelligibility and organisational practice memory with theorisations of knowing in practice.

Chapter 1

Introduction to Remaking Jobs and Organisations

1.1 About this chapter

This chapter is an introduction to this thesis. This thesis has been written in an adult education and workplace learning research context. As a cross-disciplinary study, this thesis draws together ideas from distinct knowledge domains – the practice, management and workplace learning/knowing literatures. In bringing together these three distinctive literatures this thesis attempts to contrast and discuss how these distinctive ways of ‘knowing’ have shaped understandings about phenomena such as organisations, change, jobs, workers and knowing in practice. I begin this chapter by outlining the central concerns of the thesis. Next, I discuss how this thesis emerged from the integration of my work as a student/researcher as part of an Australian Research Council Discovery Project in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: Education, University of Technology, Sydney, and my own experiences over my twenty-year career as a management practitioner. Third, I present and discuss the research questions investigated in this thesis. Fourth, I introduce the methods and the research sites that have sustained the empirical elements of this thesis. I conclude this chapter with an overview of the structure of this thesis and the key ideas that I present in subsequent chapters.

1.2 The central concerns of this thesis

In this thesis I trouble existing managerialist views that position organisations as entities, change as linear, jobs as easily describable and knowledge as a thing that is embedded in workers’ minds. I challenge these managerialist views and the underlying individualistic and positivist ontologies, which privilege the individual over the social, and maintain that phenomena may be best described in terms of cause and effects models. To this end, I draw on Schatzkian notions of being which maintain a view that is neither individualistic or societist, but one which unites both perspectives through conceptions of practice and social site. Schatzkian notions of practice and social site enable a meso level of analysis, which interconnects the individual and the social in a mutually constitutive relationship. When extending these notions to the study of organisations, this mutually constitutive interrelationship

unfolds by interconnecting workers and organisations through practices (Schatzki, 2006).

There are a number of implications that flow from applying Schatzkian notions of practice and social site to the understanding of organisations, change, jobs and knowing. First, organisations are understood as social phenomena, as special kinds of sites, best described as “bundles of practices and material arrangements” (Schatzki, 2006, p. 1863). Second, change is understood as occurring through the ongoing interplay of practices in and beyond the organisation and through workers’ enactments of practices in their day-to-day work. Third, workers are understood as co-constructors of jobs and organisational practices and they are implicated in the perpetuation and variation of those practices. Finally, in the enactment (perpetuation and variation) of job and organisational practices, workers are implicated in reshaping knowing in practice and organisational practice memory.

My argument for adopting Schatzkian notions of practice and social site for understanding organisations, change, jobs and knowledge is presented and discussed both theoretically and empirically throughout this thesis. In the theoretical discussion I contrast Schatzkian understandings of organisations, change, jobs and knowledge with prevailing managerialist views of the same. The managerialist perspective, which represents the bulk of the management and organisational literature and informs much of western management theory and education, is underpinned by individualist and positivist ontologies which maintain organisations as stable entities and workers as individuals (with varying degrees of agency) acting in and as part of organisations to achieve certain kinds of outcomes. Included in this view, organisations as stable entities are characterised by structures, hierarchies of authorities, procedures, work and job design and episodic change initiatives — deployed as technologies to enable organisational goals to be achieved (Robbins, Bergman, Stagg, & Coulter, 2003; Robbins, Judge, Millet, & Jones, 2010; Tsoukas, 2001; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005; Weber, 1947). I argue that this view is insufficient. These existing representations of organisations, change, jobs and workers, fail to account for the emergent, and somewhat open-ended nature of organisational life as it happens and is enacted by workers every day (Schatzki, 2005, 2006).

I go on to contrast Schatzkian understandings of organisations, change and jobs with an emerging second view underpinned by process philosophy (see for example

James, 1909/1996). In this processual view, the notion of organisation as an entity is replaced with that of organising processes. Organising is a means of making (temporary) sense of the ongoing (and processual) unfolding of life. Workers are often understood as both creators and enactors of organisation as a fundamental means of making sense of the world before them (Tsoukas, 2001; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). Organising processes, categorisations of meanings and routines are key concepts in this perspective. Change is not seen as a programmed technology of management for the achievement of managerial goals or competitive advantage *per se*. Rather, change is understood as the fundamental and ongoing nature of life. This perspective posits organising as an ongoing and indeterminate becoming that is non-linear and open to fields of possibilities. I find that this processual view, like Schatzkian notions of practice and social site, rejects the ways in which organisations and change are described and understood in the bulk of the management and organisational literature (Chia, 1999). In the end however, this processual view, not unlike the managerialist view, gives way to individualistic ontology. This slippage is seen in the way in which the processual view positions individuals as cognitive agents, as the creators of the categories and meanings that enable organising (Nayak & Chia, 2011; Schatzki, 2001a; Tsoukas, 2001). It is the way in which Schatzkian notions of practice and social site bring together both individual and social ontologies that for me positions this as a more comprehensive approach than the processual and managerialistic views discussed above.

I continue the theoretical discussion by adopting Schatzki's (2002, 2005, 2006) theoretical reconceptualisations of organisations as "bundles of practices and material arrangements" (Schatzki, 2006, p. 1863). I discuss change phenomena in terms of practice recomposition and practice reorganisation — this provides an alternative perspective to the prevailing dichotomy of episodic and ongoing change which has emerged from the managerialist and processual perspectives discussed above. In Schatzkian notions of practice, I maintain that both stability and change may be understood as occurring at the same time. Understandings of stability and change as occurring in organisations at the same time, I believe, are best described when adopting a practice perspective. Practices, according to Schatzki, are at the same time stable and open-ended. These characteristics of practices are most visible in the context of organisations as workers enact practices. Workers perpetuate practices by enacting some of the doings and sayings that pertain to those practices and at the same time workers vary those practices in some ways.

However, such variations are framed by existing and persisting practices, which reflects a mutually constitutive relationship. Practices therefore encompass both notions of change, adjustment and accommodation of doings, sayings, meanings and purposes, as well as the persistence of these beyond the enactments by individuals.

By adopting Schatzki's (2002, 2005, 2006) theoretical reconceptualisations of workers as enacting organisational practices, the managerial concept of a job and its associated artefact of a job description become less useful in accounting for what workers do. I argue that as workers enact organisational practices they at the same time perpetuate and vary those practices in some ways. Thus, what workers do in organisations is difficult to capture and describe in terms of a job (and job description); what workers do is in part emergent and sustained by their understandings and readings of their context *in situ*. At the same time, what workers do in organisations, and how they enact the practices of their organisations, are framed by the multitude of practices that pertain to their organisation and that are enacted at the same time by other organisational workers. I propose that in these enactments of organisational practices, possibilities exist for the emergence of new practice, the remaking of some organisational practices and the termination of others.

Finally, by employing the Schatzkian notions of practice and social site together with the work of Gherardi (see for example Gherardi, 2000, 2008, 2009b; Gherardi & Nicolini, 2000) and Orlikowski (2002) on knowing in practice, I further discuss the interrelationship between practice and knowing. In line with the work of these authors, I maintain that knowing is inherent in practising and that practices carry knowledge in some form. In the context of organisations, such knowledge, I suggest, exists as part of organisational practice memory. As workers enact organisational practices they demonstrate their knowing in practice, how to do at least some of the doings and sayings of those practices. Further, I argue that the perpetuation and variation of practices that emerge as workers enact organisational practices plays a role in the reshaping of existing knowing in practice and the emergence of new knowing.

My empirical analysis and discussion focuses on demonstrating the empirical strength of Schatzkian notions of practice and social site for explaining

organisational phenomena. I draw on the data generated from my study of three Australian organisations: a community college, a local government council and a public utility. In these organisations, I take as my focus the newly introduced organisational practices of, customer service at the community college, commercialisation at the local government council and project management at the utility. I discuss the implementation of these organisational practices by drawing on five key aspects of Schatzki's work – social site, practice recomposition and reorganisation, practice perpetuation and variation, knowing how and organisational practice memory. Schatzki's notions of social site and practice recomposition and reorganisation sustain my discussion of the ways in which the introduction of the new practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management stemmed from shifts in the context (or social site) in which the community college, local government council and utility organisation operated. A shift in the priorities, goals and ends of the practices in the context of the three organisations necessitated the introduction of these new practices.

Schatzki's notion of practice perpetuation and variation sustains my discussion of the ways in which new and existing workers talked about their jobs and organisations. In the empirical accounts of three new workers responsible for embedding the newly introduced practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management, these workers talked about doing something different in terms of their jobs. In enacting the new practices as part of their new jobs, these new workers were perpetuating and at the same time varying these newly introduced practices in some ways. I named what these workers were doing 'remaking'. These new workers' remaking not only pertained to the newly introduced practices, but also to other existing organisational practices. At the same time as workers were remaking, existing organisational practices were found to frame these new workers' possibilities for remaking. In the empirical accounts of existing workers, workers also talked of doing something different in terms of their jobs. These existing workers, in responding to the implementation of the practices newly introduced in their organisation, also told of how they had been enacting the practices of their jobs differently. These workers had been remaking. In remaking the practices of their jobs these workers were also implicated in the remaking of existing organisational practices. In a similar way as it was noted for the new workers, the existing organisational practices were found to play a role in framing existing workers' possibilities for remaking.

Finally, new and existing workers described the remaking of jobs and organisational practices as creating tensions for them. These tensions emerged as new and existing practices in jobs and in the organisation were becoming enmeshed. The Schatzkian concept of knowing how and organisational practice memory, Gherardi's notion of "acquire[ing] knowledge-in-action" (Gherardi, 2000, p. 214) and Orlikowski's (2002) notions of knowing in practice, together, have been useful in understanding these points of tension as sites where knowing was being reshaped and where new knowing emerged. In this research, workers could be said to "acquire knowledge-in-action" (Gherardi, 2000, p. 214) by interacting with others as they remade jobs and organisational practices. In remaking jobs and organisational practices these workers were also reforming and reshaping their knowing in the enactment of practices. I maintain that this also contributed to the reshaping of organisational practice memory and knowledge embedded in practices.

1.3 The emergence of this thesis

This thesis emerged from within a three-year Australian Research Council Discovery project entitled: *Beyond training and learning: Integrated development practices in organisations*. The overall focus of the *Beyond Training* project was on identifying organisational practices that formed part of everyday work and that at the same time facilitated learning. In contrast to traditional understandings of workplace learning as formal or informal and encompassing formal training practices that have a specific learning focus, the *Beyond Training* project looked to uncover how learning occurs in ways that are situated in the enactment of everyday organisational work practices. These kinds of practice were labelled Integrated Development Practices (IDPs) and understood as practices that are "Not part of training or education; managed and implemented by people whose primary job function is not training or learning; introduced as practices that attempt to invoke an organisational influence of some sort" (Boud, Chappell, Scheeres, & Rhodes, 2005). Examples of IDPs included somewhat commonly deployed organisational practices such as continuous improvement, recruitment, induction, performance management, team work and workplace projects (Boud et al. 2005). In the initial findings of the *Beyond Training* project, examples of practices described as IDPs were found. Among these organisationally generated IDPs other kinds of practices were also uncovered

(Chappell, Boud, Rooney, & Scheeres, 2007; Price, Rooney, Boud, & Scheeres, 2007).

I became interested in further exploring one of these 'other' kinds of practices — the ways workers simultaneously maintained and altered the practices of their jobs. On an intuitive level, the notion that workers simultaneously maintain and alter the practices of their jobs made sense. In my practical experiences of over twenty years as a manager and worker, I often experienced tensions between organisational representations of the jobs I was employed to do and the ways in which I enacted those jobs. As a prospective job candidate, I used job descriptions as a means of demonstrating to my future employer the ways in which I could fulfil all requirements of the job and how my previous experience, education and knowledge would support the achievement of organisational outcomes. As a worker, however, I found that the documented representations of my jobs were at best a static description of what the Human Resource Department and my managers thought that at a particular point in time the job I was employed to do might entail. There was so much of my job that was not (and could not be) captured on the pages of a job description, these unwritten aspects were left up to me to invent or create. Similarly, as a worker I experienced organisational change. What I noticed through these experiences was that the espoused change program and its practical application never quite matched, and that program goals were at best partially achieved and the old and the new continued to co-exist, often in tension. Consultants came and went, workers were made redundant, and those workers who remained often had to make do and work through the conflicting structures and processes that resulted from the change program. Inventing new ways to make things work in the organisation became part of everyday work.

I began formulating the framework of this thesis by examining further a small subset of preliminary data I had collected as part of the *Beyond Training* project and by interrogating literature across a number of research domains. Through the preliminary analysis of this data, it became evident that the simultaneous maintenance and alteration of practices occurred on a number of interconnected levels. On one level workers, through enacting their jobs, were simultaneously maintaining and altering the practices that their jobs encompassed, and I characterised this as remaking of one's job. On a second level, the remaking of practices encompassed in one job also extended beyond the parameters of the one

job and impacted on the jobs and practices undertaken by other workers. Finally, the remaking of organisational practices also extended beyond the related jobs or functionally related practices, to organisational practices that had a wider scope. Thus, as reflected in the interrelated levels of remaking that emerged from the preliminary data, the practice of remaking could be implicated not only in changes in one's job and the practices extending from that job, but also across other organisational practices and as wider organisational change.

The second aspect of developing the framework of this thesis involved examining various literatures across different research domains. Having previously completed studies in organisational psychology and management, I was familiar with the literature pertaining to jobs and organisational change that stemmed from these research domains. Although I found this literature helpful in some ways, it did not provide sufficiently robust frameworks for explaining the empirical phenomena that were emerging from my preliminary data. To this end I extended my examination of the literature in other directions. I became familiar with the practice theorisations put forward by Bourdieu (1977), Giddens (1984) and Schatzki (2002); the application of practice theorisations to learning and knowing in organisations put forward by Gherardi (2006), Orlikowski (2002) and Fenwick (2008b); and the considerations of practice theorisations for understanding organisations put forward by Schatzki (2005, 2006). It is through the exploration of the work of these authors that I began to understand 'practice' as a useful theoretical frame for sustaining this thesis. In particular, I found most useful the ways in which practice theorisations provide a level of analysis which interconnects the individual and the social (i.e. organisation) in ways that privileges neither. I understood practice theorisations as a robust frame for uncovering the ways in which worker and organisational practices become shared, enmeshed, carried forward and at the same time remade.

1.4 Research questions of this thesis

As discussed above, the framework for this thesis emerged from my preliminary analysis of data gathered as part of the *Beyond Training* project, and my independent interrogation of a number of literatures from diverse research domains. More specifically, my examination of Schatzki's (2005, 2006) theoretical discussion of practice as a frame for understanding organisations and organisational phenomena triggered my interest in further exploring the Schatzkian notions of

practice and social site in the context of organisations. In particular, I adopted Schatzkian notions of practice and social site as both theoretical and empirical means for understanding the simultaneous maintenance and alteration of practices by workers enacting their jobs, and the relationship of this phenomenon to change and knowing in organisations. I formulated the following research questions:

- How can Schatzkian theoretical notions of practice and social site account for organisations, change, jobs and knowing in ways different from prevalent managerialist views of the same?
- How can Schatzkian theoretical notions of practice and social site account for organisations, change, jobs and knowing as empirical phenomena?

These research questions are explored in the chapters that follow. In Chapter 4 the theoretical and empirical aspects of organisations and change are explored. Chapter 5 explores the theoretical and empirical aspects of jobs. Finally in Chapter 6 the concept of knowing is explored theoretically and empirically.

1.5 Overview of methods

In this thesis I adopted an overarching ethnographic approach using multiple case studies that sought, through recounts and stories, to understand workers' lived experiences of organisational life across three research sites – a community college (henceforth the College), a local government council (henceforth the Council) and a public utility (henceforth the Utility). My intent in selecting these organisations as the research sites was not one of undertaking a comparative study. Rather, I sought to examine whether the identified practice of the remaking of jobs and organisational practices emerged in three diverse organisational contexts.

I noted both similarities and differences across the three research sites. First, workers across these research sites talked about the ways in which they simultaneously maintained and altered practices in their organisations. Second, workers across these research sites talked about having experienced organisational change in some form – as something that they did as part of their everyday work as well as something that the organisation as a whole had undergone. Despite the similar experiences reflected by workers across these research sites, each site was characterised by significant contextual differences. First, each research site

participated in a different sector of the Australian economy. The College participated in the not-for-profit adult and community education sector, the Council participated in the local government sector and the Utility participated in the energy distribution and retail sector. Second, each research site employed different kinds of workers with different skills and experiences who undertook different kinds of work, served different kinds of customers and worked towards different kinds of goals and outcomes.

I interviewed and observed a total of 30 workers. I draw on the data of 22 workers for this thesis, five workers from the College, 10 from the Council and a further seven from the Utility who discussed the ways in which from their perspectives, the phenomena of change, jobs and knowing played out in their organisations. My reasons for selecting these workers in particular were that they either/and/or:

- Had been part of organisational change initiatives and talked about how these had impacted on their organisations;
- Were new workers who talked about the ways in which they had remade their jobs and organisational practices;
- Were existing workers who talked about the ways in which they had remade their jobs and organisational practices;
- Talked about the ways in which, in remaking their jobs and organisational practices, they had been learning.

1.6 The research sites

This thesis draws on data from the three Australian organisations briefly introduced above. As outlined in the previous section of this chapter, College, Council and Utility vary in size and scope of operations and each provides distinct kinds of services to their customers and stakeholders. One similarity that emerged across the three research sites during data collection was that each organisation has undergone large scale change. The change experienced and described by managers and workers across College, Council and Utility echoed wider shifts in Australian governments (State and Commonwealth) as well as in the industry sectors to which College, Council and Utility belong.

In the context of the College, decades of policy changes culminated in shifting the role of the State Government from provider to regulator, increased private funding of vocational education and the introduction of public funding formulas based on demonstrable outcomes. This meant that community education colleges, (including the College) sought to access other sources of funding (e.g. Commonwealth Government funding for vocational education and labour market programs as well as from private sector clients). These policy and funding changes coupled with societal shifts that included increased demand for education by adults and greater demand for ongoing workforce development and lifelong learning, had implications for programs offered by community education colleges. These changing demands and funding formulas also led the College to reframe its understandings of what it meant to be a community education college in Australia.

In the context of the Council, the NSW State Government's New Public Management (NPM) agenda, the introduction and the enactment of the Local Government Act (NSW) and the introduction of National Competition Policy (NCP) by the Commonwealth Government, reflected a shift in the goals and ends for the NSW State Government and subordinate governments, such as local government councils. For the local government sector these changes, which were aimed at encouraging local government councils to become more accountable to their local communities, meant a shift in the goals and ends of these organisations and local government as a sector. The new focus was efficiency in service delivery and resource management and the adoption of the principles of competition, market contestability and commercialisation (*Local Government Act (NSW)*, 1993; National Competition Council, 2010; NSW Department of Local Government, 1999).

Finally, in the context of the Utility, the application of the National Competition Policy at the NSW State Government level, coupled with the NSW State Government deregulation of its utility functions and services, saw a major restructuring of the utilities industry. This restructuring included the establishment of corporatised entities for the generation, transmission, distribution and retailing of utility services to customers and the establishment of a national utility market. In the context of the utilities industry, the incorporation of these once public organisations significantly altered the drivers and structures of the industry at large and modes of operations for the organisations operating within it.

1.6.1 The College

Overview

The College is a not-for-profit community training and education organisation located in the inner suburbs of the City of Sydney. It is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) with the NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board and is accredited to provide training and recognition of prior learning services in line with the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). The College imperative is to provide innovative education and training in ways that enrich lives and build communities while maintaining a self-sustaining not-for-profit status. The success of the College is highlighted by the vast number of students (over 14,000 annually) who participate in one or more of the 300 courses offered across its 10 Sydney venues.

Background and history

The College traces its philosophy back to the 1880s when community and evening colleges were formalised. Community and evening colleges, for the past 100 years, have played a significant role in the provision of post-secondary education to various sectors of the community including adult students wishing to achieve school qualifications, post-war reskilling of soldiers and migrants wishing to learn English. More recently generations of workers who have needed to become familiar with information technology or achieve industry-specific licences and accreditations (e.g. security licenses or responsible service of alcohol accreditation) have relied on community colleges for the provision of such training.

A pivotal point in the history of community and education colleges occurred during the late 1970s and the mid-1980s when TAFE (Technical and Further Education) colleges became established as the key providers of post-secondary education. Over the next 20 years, many community and evening colleges could no longer sustain operations as a result of declining enrolments. Many ceased operations or amalgamated with neighbouring colleges. These newly created colleges, with the support of the then Board of Adult Education, were restructured into self-managing community-based organisations. These new structures included the transfer of management responsibilities from the NSW Department of Education to community-based committees or college councils, the retention of course fees to support financial independence and the appointment of a full-time Principal responsible for

the daily operations of colleges. It is since this period of sector restructuring that the College has experienced a period of significant growth.

Product and service offering

The College offers a diverse range of over 300 community and adult education courses. These include adult literacy (e.g. Written and Spoken English), languages (e.g. Arabic, Cantonese, French), business skills (e.g. Small Business Management, Workplace Training), computing (e.g. Microsoft Word, Excel, Publisher), lifestyle (e.g. Psychology, Meditation) and hobby (e.g. Boating, Wine Appreciation, Jewellery Making) courses. Course duration ranges from weekend courses to semester-based certificate courses.

Governing structure

The College is governed by the College Council. The College Council comprises 12 community members who are elected annually. The College Constitution outlines the role of the College Council which encompasses planning and strategic management (e.g. educational policy and program decisions and financial management) as well as management operations.

Operational structure

The management structure of the College has minimal hierarchy, with few levels. The Principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of the College including appointing of teaching and support staff, budget management and planning. In addition to this management role, the Principal is also an Ex-Officio member of the College Council. In his capacity as an Ex-Officio member of the College Council the Principal reports to the College Council on a monthly basis and undertakes an advisory role in educational matters.

Three Faculty Managers report to the Principal. The Faculty Managers are responsible for a group of tutors in their assigned area of responsibility (i.e. Business and Computing, English and Other Languages, and Lifestyle and Hobby Courses).

Working alongside the Faculty Managers and also reporting to the Principal are the Customer Service Manager, the Bursar and a Marketing and Promotions Manager. These managers lead small work teams comprising both full-time and casual

employees that include Customer Service Officers, Site Coordinators and the Accounts and Payroll Officer. In total the College employs about 10 full-time employees, 10 casual employees and over 300 session tutors. The College operates across 10 sites located in the inner western suburbs of the city of Sydney. Of these, two sites are established College sites, while the other eight sites are co-located within other educational facilities.

Financial structure

The College's revenue streams are multifaceted and amounted to a total of \$2.2 million for the period 2009-10 (Traynor, 2009). The revenue includes that generated from course attendance fees, Commonwealth Government funded programs (e.g. Australian Work Skills Voucher Program, Work-for-the-Dole Program) and NSW Department of Training and Education BACE Funding. Programs are also funded through partnerships with other agencies such as the NSW Department of Juvenile Justice, Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service, Neighbourhood Centres and Aboriginal Community Organisations.

1.6.2 The Council

Overview

The Bloomfield City is a large local government area in the Sydney metropolitan area, covering a geographical area of over 70 square kilometres. With a multicultural population of over 180,000 residents, Council empties over 11,000 garbage bins per day, provides services for over 900,000 people through the central and suburban libraries and maintains over 600 kilometres of local and regional roads. In its vision, the Council aspires to grow a vibrant city that values its people, environment and community. In its mission, the Council is focused on good governance and sound financial management, strong community leadership and a strong service delivery culture.

The Council, like other local government councils, represents the third layer of government in Australia. Local government councils are independent organisations with administrative governance and service provision responsibilities for a geographical area over which they have jurisdiction. Councils in NSW are governed under the legislative framework of the NSW State Government. Their powers and responsibilities derive mainly from the *Local Government Act (NSW) 1993*; however

there are many other Acts and regulations that affect the ways in which local government councils operate. The charter for local government councils is included in the Local Government Act (NSW). It outlines the principles and functions of operation for local government councils (NSW Department of Local Government, 2008).

Background and history

As an organisation the Council has also undergone periods of growth, change and rebuilding. The Council's current structure is a result of reforms over some 10 years. These reforms began with the enactment of the Local Government Act (NSW) and the implementation of the National Competition Policy. Both initiatives were designed by the NSW State Government to encourage local government councils to become more accountable to their local communities. At the core of these neo-liberal reforms were efficiency in service delivery resource management and the introduction of principles of competition. The creation of the General Manager (GM) role which replaced the Town Clerk, as the head of operations, was a key change in the State Government's agenda. This replacement was not simply a modernisation of a position title, rather it reflected an overhaul of responsibilities and person requirements. The General Manager role was responsible for the day-to-day management of operations and a redefining of the role of elected Councillors was also a key part of these reforms. As the NSW State Government did not prescribe the approach to be undertaken by Councils in the implementation of these reforms, Councils chose to implement these reforms in ways that best suited their local conditions (Jones, 1999).

The Council began its own reform process some time after the new Act was introduced. The appointment of Young as the new general manager began a new era at the Council. Critical of Council's approach to the community and to employees, Young implemented a radical organisational change solution. Utilising neo-liberal reform tactics of strategy development, customer focus, employee empowerment and competitive service delivery, Young's objectives were to simultaneously improve customer and community outcomes and competitiveness of services (Jones, 2002). Young continued as the General Manager for a period of four years. At the time of this study Young had already left the organisation. The change agenda was continuing to develop under the leadership of the new General Manager, Ron, who had previously been a Group Manager as part of Young's

appointed executive team. Ron described the period under his leadership as consolidation.

Another interesting part of the Council's history surrounds a fire that broke out in the late 1990s. During this time, the Council was in its early stages of the reform process when a fire destroyed the administration building, all information systems and a large proportion of its records. This event had a devastating impact on the operations of the organisation and on the reform process. As a result, the reform process was put on hold for a period while all focus was given to the recovery and re-establishment of services and operations of the Council. A second, and probably an unexpected result of the recovery process, was that it not only created an opportunity for Young to overtly demonstrate his leadership, it also created a sense of cohesiveness among the workers and managers of the Council. The fire and the recovery process has been such a defining event for the Council that stories about the fire and the subsequent recovery were retold not only by workers who lived through that period, but also by those who were not yet employees at that time.

Products and service offering

The Council provides a vast number of diverse services to its local community. Traditionally, Council's functions and service offering has been described as the three 'Rs': Rates, roads and rubbish. Today, local government councils such as the Council continue to levy rates, maintain and build roads and collect rubbish. However, the services provided by these organisations are much broader. The Council's service offering includes the provision of libraries, building development assessment service, street cleaning, parks, sporting facilities and community centres, health and regulatory services as well as community education and development services. All together the Council offers close to 100 services to its local community.

Governing structure

The elected Councillors of the Council comprise 12 politicians who are elected for a four-year term. Councillors are either independent political candidates or affiliated with a political party. As the elected representatives of the local community, the role of the Councillors is to make policy decisions and undertake an overseer role. The role of the elected Councillors may be considered analogous to that of a board of a publicly listed company, where the shareholders are the local community members.

Through involvement in specific committees, the elected Councillors are involved in policy matters on a more focused level. Coordinating the activities of the elected Councillors and presiding at Council meetings is the Mayor who is elected annually by the Councillors.

Reporting to the elected Councillors through the Mayor is the General Manager. The General Manager is the pivotal link between the elected Councillors and employees of the Council. The General Manager is responsible to the Council for carrying out the elected Councillors' decisions and policies and overseeing the day-to-day operation of the Council.

Operational structure

The Council structure is hierarchical. The General Manager oversees all policy implementation and the day-to-day operations across the Council's four divisions. Reporting to the General Manager are four Group Managers who are responsible for the management of specific functional areas of the Council's operations. Within each division the structure includes the positions of Group Manager, Business Unit Managers, Team Leaders and workers.

The Council employs approximately 600 employees across four divisions:

- Corporate Governance Division (GD), responsible for planning, public office and support services including finance, property and security, and records management.
- Ecologically Sustainable Community Division (ESCD), responsible for town planning, environmental policy development, enforcement and education.
- For-Profit Service Delivery Division (FPSD), responsible for operational functions such as development approvals, construction and maintenance units, waste and cleansing units, functions which could potentially be marketable not only to Council but also to other commercial customers.
- Service Commissioning and Contracts Division (SCC), responsible for managing all contractual service purchasing, including contracts for the purchase of services from the now separate FPSD division.

Financial structure

The Council's revenue streams are multifaceted. Annual revenue totalled over \$120 million for the 2006-07 financial year (Colley, 2008). The main sources of revenue include rates and annual charges, user charges and fees, interest and investments, grants and developer contributions. A complexity of the financial structure of the Council (and other local government councils in NSW) is that rate levies charged annually to land owners are determined by the Valuer General based on land values. Any annual increases in rates are capped to a percentage approximately equal to the CPI (Consumer Price Index) (NSW Department of Local Government, 2008).

1.6.3 The Utility

Overview

The Utility is a large organisation that provides utilities distribution at a State regional level. It is one of three major utility services distributors in the sector in the Australian State of NSW. As part of its distribution role, the Utility is responsible for the planning, construction and maintenance of distribution assets in its geographical area. The Utility employs over 2,500 workers in three regional centres. This research project focuses on one of these regional areas of the Utility.

Background and history

The Utility is the second largest state-owned utility corporation in the State, incorporated under the *Energy Services Corporations Act (NSW) 1995*. The utility industry in the State has undergone several permutations over the last 50 years. In the 1950s local utility organisations were responsible for the distribution of utility services. During this period a series of regional amalgamations resulted in a State-based utilities commission that existed until the late 1980s. The State-based utility commission was responsible for the production of utilities services, which it sold to a number of state-based distributors. In the early 1990s the State Government initiated the deregulation of some of its utilities functions (*Energy Services Corporations Act (NSW), 1995*; Roarty, 1998). The Utility was formed through the amalgamation of two State-based utilities in 1996, and draws on a history as a utilities retailer, distributor and network infrastructure manager that spans some 50 years.

Since its 1996 amalgamation, the Utility has undergone a number of structural changes. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Utility began implementing a contestability program in line with the National Competition Policy. Structurally, this meant the organisation was split into a two operational divisions, the Asset Management Division and the Service Provision Division. The Asset Management Division, as the name suggests, became responsible for on-going planning and management of infrastructure and other assets, while the Service Provision Division provided labour and services related to the on-going capital construction and maintenance of the infrastructure and assets. In its provision of those services the Service Provision Division quoted and tendered for work to the Asset Management Division. The Asset Management Division had the option to accept those quotations and tenders or award them to other providers. Part of the commercial role of the Service Provision Division was also to provide capital construction and maintenance services to commercial customers other than the Asset Management Division, with the aim of providing profit dividends to the State Government. In the mid 2000s this approach to the implementation of the National Competition Policy ceased in the Utility. This led to further structural changes and a new organisational focus.

Product and service offering

In addition to being a retailer of Utility services, the Utility also maintains one of Australia's largest utility networks. Servicing a total geographical area of approximately 24,500 square kilometres, on a daily basis the Utility distributes utility services to over 800,000 private and business customers. Taking its utility supply from the State network, it processes it through a series of plants and conversion centres ready for delivery to end use consumers.

Governing structure

The Utility's structure is a complex hierarchical structure. At the highest level of this hierarchy is the NSW State Parliament represented by the Shareholder Ministers and the Portfolio Minister. Reporting to the Portfolio Minister is the Utility's Board of Directors (and its constituting committees). Reporting to the Board is the Chief Executive Officer who is responsible for overseeing operations across six business units. Each business unit is led by a General Manager. Reporting to the General Manager of the Operational Business Unit are three Regional Managers.

Operational structures

Each Regional Manager is responsible for a region. The regional structures are not identical; however, they have many similarities. This research focused on the Sunnydale Region of the Utility. The Sunnydale Region employs over 300 employees across four depots. In this region there are three operational units, a project management unit and an administration unit. These units are led by Unit Managers and include hierarchical positions such as Coordinators, Team Leaders and workers. In the project management unit there are specialist technical officers including three Project Managers, one Project Officer, one Design Coordinator and eight Technical Design Officers.

Financial structure

The Utility's annual revenue totalled over \$466 million for the 2007 financial year. The revenue mix includes revenue earned from the provision of Utility and other services, network use by other utility providers, contributions from developers and investment returns.

1.6.4 A preview of following chapters

Chapter 2 – Practice

In Chapter 2, I present the conceptual foundations of this thesis and position it within the theoretical frame of 'practice'. I show how practice as a term and as a theoretical concept represents a multiplicity of ideas that share some fundamental understandings about the nature of human existence. Providing a meso level of analysis that interconnects the individual and the social context, practice as a theoretical frame enables one to research workers and organisations not as separate entities but as interconnected aspects of the social site. I contrast the work of Bourdieu (1977), Giddens (1984) and Reckwitz (2002) with that of Schatzki (2002). I argue that the notions of practice and social site developed by Schatzki (2002, 2005, 2006) provide a robust theoretical frame for the study of organisations and organisational phenomena in this thesis.

Chapter 3 – Methodology and research sites

In Chapter 3, I introduce the methods employed in this thesis. Schatzki (2012) suggests that multiple methods may be appropriate for investigating practice, and in particular methods drawn from ethnography. It is against this open-ended backdrop

of methodological possibilities that I discuss the rationale supporting my chosen methods. I discuss how the particular subset of methods adopted in this thesis (i.e. an ethnographic approach coupled with the use of case studies, narrative inspired semi-structured interviews, memoing, theoretical sampling, document reviews and observations) are ontologically and epistemologically congruent. I conclude this chapter with an overview of some practical activities (e.g. ethics approval, research site negotiation and agreements, permission and informed consent) which have been undertaken as part of this thesis.

Chapter 4 – Changing organisations, reorganising, recomposing and enacting new practice

In Chapter 4, I address elements of the research questions of this thesis that pertain to the concepts of organisations and change. I challenge existing managerial and processual views of organisations and change and maintain that Schatzkian notions of practice and site ontology provide a more comprehensive frame through which to understand these concepts. I argue that dualities such as organisation/organising, stability/change, changing/organising, which have emerged in the management and processual literature, may be understood differently when adopting Schatzkian theorisations. In adopting a Schatzkian perspective, organisations and change are understood as mutually constitutive patterns emerging of work activities and interpretations unfolding in and through practices as part of the social site. I support this theoretical discussion by demonstrating empirically how ongoing change and stability in the practices of College, Council and Utility may be accounted for in terms of Schatzkian notions of practice reorganisation, recomposition and social site.

Chapter 5 – Remaking jobs

In Chapter 5 I consider further elements of the research questions of this thesis. In particular, I focus on the concept of job. Through my theoretical discussion, I challenge existing managerialistic views of work, jobs (and job design) and workers and argue that when what workers do is understood through Schatzkian theorisations, notions of practice and site ontology, the concepts of jobs and job descriptions are less useful. I sustain this argument empirically by presenting and discussing the ways in which new and existing workers remake their jobs through the enactment of organisational practices. In the discussion of these findings, I

highlight Schatzkian concepts of practice perpetuation and variation, organisational practice memory and practical intelligibility.

Chapter 6 – Remaking knowing in practice

In this chapter, I address the final problematic of my research questions — knowing. I draw together the phenomena of remaking organisational practices and remaking jobs and consider how these may be implicated in the reshaping of existing knowing and the emergence of new knowing in the organisations that I have studied. I begin this chapter with a theoretical discussion outlining various understandings of learning and knowing in workplaces and contrast these with Schatzkian notions of practical intelligibility, knowing how and organisational practice memory. In the empirical discussion which follows I present and discuss my findings to illustrate these concepts, and the ways in which knowing in practice emerges and is reshaped through workers' enactments of their jobs and organisational practices.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

In Chapter 7, I present my conclusions and contributions. I reaffirm findings of this thesis and the ways in which using Schatzkian notions of practice and social site have been useful in sustaining my thesis. Next, I highlight the theoretical and empirical contributions. In particular I discuss the ways in which (1) the theoretical discussion presented has in a small way extended the organisational, management and practice literatures as these relate to the concepts of organisations, change, jobs and workers; (2) Schatzkian theorisations of practice and social site hold up *in practice*; and (3) I developed a conceptual link between Schatzkian theorisations of practical intelligibility and organisational practice memory with theorisations of knowing in practice put forward by other practice researchers.

Chapter 2

Perspectives on Practice

2.1 About this chapter

In this chapter I discuss the conceptual foundation of this thesis — practice. ‘Practice’ as a term and as a theoretical concept refers to a multiplicity of ideas that share some fundamental understandings about the nature of human life. As a result of this multiplicity, practice may be better understood as a frame rather than as a unified theory or concept. My aim is to highlight the work of key contributors to this frame and then to focus on the particular approach that I found useful. To this end, I begin this chapter by discussing the different ways in which the term ‘practice’ is used. Second, I present a family history of practice. Third, I discuss the various applications of practice in the study of social phenomena including organisations. Fourth, I feature the work of some key contributors and their applications of this theoretical framework. I begin this fourth section with a discussion of the work of Reckwitz (2002) who considers the affinity between practice and cultural theories. Next, I discuss the contributions of social theorists Bourdieu (1977) and Giddens (1984) and highlight the ways in which these authors were influenced by the seminal work of Heidegger and Wittgenstein. I then turn to the work of Schatzki (1996, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2011, 2012) whose approach to practice and site ontology I have adopted in this thesis to explain phenomena such as organisations, change, jobs and knowing in practice.

2.2 Ways in which ‘practice’ as a term is used

‘Practice’ is a term that is used in numerous ways. In a literal sense, practice “refers to the action of doing something” (Boud & Lee, 2008a, p. 25; see also Green, 2009b; Kemmis, 2005, 2010, 2011). Second, the term ‘practice’ is used to reflect the doing of an activity to achieve goals or ends. In this sense, the term refers to practising, that is, for example, practising playing a musical instrument to become more competent at playing (Schatzki, 1996). ‘Practice’ as a term is also used to refer to the activities encompassed in the context of work, to describe a discipline or profession (Corradi, Gherardi, & Verzelloni, 2008; Green, 2009a; Kemmis, 2009). For example in human resource management practice (Johnson, 2000), accounting practice (Ahrens & Chapman, 2007) or occupational therapy practice (Boniface et

al., 2008) the term practice encompasses contextualised examples of ways of doing (i.e. practising), including techniques and applications that are framed by that practice (Green, 2009b). As part of understandings of practice as profession or discipline, 'practice' is also used to reflect accepted standards as in quality practice, best practice and codes of practice (Boud & Lee, 2008b; Green, 2009b; Symes & McIntyre, 2000).

The term 'practice' is commonly used in the academic context. In this context, the term has traditionally been used as a counterpoint to theory (i.e. practice versus theory) or as an application of theory. This view of the theory-practice relationship reflects the scientific tradition where the development of theory may be understood as the production of knowledge that may be applied to practice. In accordance with the "scientific knowledge" view (Schwandt, 2005, p. 320), knowledge is generated, removed from practice, and then applied "to practice" (p. 320). This detaching of knowledge development from understandings of practice promises a certain amount of scientific rigour — detached examination of facts, validity and objectivity. At the same time, such benefits are tempered by the limitation that knowledge is generated devoid of contextual peculiarities (and messiness) that are embedded within practice and characterise it in daily execution.

A second way of understanding the relationship between theory and practice is described as the "embedded [or practical] knowledge view" that emerges from the "practical knowledge traditions" (Schwandt, 2005, p. 320). Here, practice is aligned with everyday action, engagement in everyday life, and participation in society. This view is underpinned by ideas of "shared understandings and values, connected to everyday experiences" (p. 322) that are embedded in the here and now context of life. Validity, objectivity and generalisation are not understood as representations of scientific rigour, rather these are embedded and enacted through practitioners' everyday "deliberations" (p. 329) and enactments of practice. In the daily context of performing work, practitioners instead draw upon theoretically informed practice (often gained through formal professional training and education) and knowing that emerges in "action and participation" (p. 328) in and of practice.

In line with Schwandt (2005), I accept that both the scientific and the practical knowledge views, which describe the theory-practice relationship, coexist in tension rather than in opposition. I accept that these views may exist in a complex

relationship of mutuality and interconnectedness (Zundel & Kokkalis, 2007) necessary for the persistence, perpetuation and variation of a practice (Schatzki, 2005). In the preceding paragraphs I outlined different ways in which the term 'practice' has been used and presented different notions of practice in relation to knowledge creation. In the next section I consider the family resemblances of practice theorisations through a discussion of their social constructivist roots.

2.3 Understanding the family resemblances of practice¹

As discussed in Section 2.2 above, practice both as a term and as a theoretical concept refers to a multiplicity of ideas. This multiplicity stems from theorists of practice working towards addressing a diversity of issues/concerns (i.e. subjectivity, individualism, non-individualism, agency-structure, activity, everyday action) from a variety of perspectives, including philosophical, theoretical and empirical (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Schatzki, 2002, 2003, 2012). As a result of this multiplicity, practice may be better understood as a frame rather than a unified theory or concept. Theories within a practice frame share a fundamental understanding that "knowledge, meaning, human activity, science, power, language, social institutions and historical transformation" (Schatzki, 2001a, p. 11) are elements of and unfold as part of the field of practices. Furthermore, there is agreement among theorists within this frame that practices may be understood as "embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared practical understanding" (Schatzki, 2001a, p. 11)

Practice as a theoretical frame has its origins in the social philosophies of Heidegger (Heidegger, 1962, 1977, 1978) and Wittgenstein (1957). Later explorations of notions of practice beyond the work of Heidegger and Wittgenstein may be seen in the work of social theorists including Bourdieu (1977) and Giddens (1984) and cultural theorists including Foucault (1979, 1990), Garfinkel (1984) and Taylor (1985), and more recently in the work of Reckwitz (2002) and Schatzki (1996, 2001b, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2012).

In tracing a genealogy of practice thinking, Rasche and Chia (2009) suggest that practice as a theoretical frame spawned from two traditions in social constructivism,

¹ The analogy of family resemblance was noted in Wittgenstein's (1958) *Philosophical Investigations* (trans. G.E.M Anscombe), 3rd ed. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

structuralism and interpretivism. Specifically, these authors suggest that the emergence of practice was a result of the work of theorists who began to challenge the tenets of structuralism (see for example Bourdieu, 1977; Foucault, 1979) and interpretivism (see for example Goffman, 1977; Taylor, 1985), and worked towards the creation of 'neo' forms of these traditions (i.e. neo-structuralism and neo-interpretivism). These emergent theories in turn have sustained the development of practice traditions including that of Giddens (1984) and Schatzki .

From the structural tradition in social constructivism, the theoretical moves initiated by Bourdieu (1977, 1989b) and Foucault (1979) sought to disrupt the primacy of mentalist notions as the driver of social order. For these authors social order not only takes place through “trans-subjective mental codes guiding human actions” (Rasche & Chia, 2009, p. 716) but also through a materiality embedded in social practices. Bourdieu’s contribution focuses on the introduction of the concept of habitus, a system of socially constructed schemes and dispositions that guide individual action and a way of being that is at the same time dependent and actualised through individual action located in a time and space (Bourdieu, 1989b; Rasche & Chia, 2009). Thus, according to Bourdieu (1977), social order is not only maintained through mental codes, but comes about through the production and reproduction of socially and historically inherited schemas and dispositions beyond individuals’ minds (Rasche & Chia, 2009). In his later work, Foucault (1979) too resisted mentalist notions of social order by introducing the body and bodily behaviours, alongside “trans-subjective mental codes” (Rasche & Chia, 2009, p. 716) as encompassing social practices and social order. Although using different trajectories, it can be said that both Bourdieu and Foucault are key figures in drawing social order out of minds and into bodies and expressing such order through bodily enactments situated in time and space (Rasche & Chia, 2009).

In considering the work of theorists such as Goffman (1977) and Taylor (1985), whose work may be considered akin to the interpretivist tradition in social constructivism, one may begin to see the introduction of notions of “collective knowledge schemes [as] a precondition to the constitution of the actor and his or her environment within social practices” (Rasche & Chia, 2009, p. 720). Specifically, Goffman (1977) in his decentering of the individual subject, moved to understand individuals as participants in social practices rather than as ultimate creators of meanings. Taylor’s (1985) contribution to the genealogy of practice may be seen in

his understanding of the subject as an “engaged acting subject” (Rasche & Chia, 2009, p. 720) whose understanding and knowledge about an action are not only inner mental acts, but acts embodied in that action (Rasche & Chia, 2009).

An alternative genealogy is proposed by Reckwitz (2002). Reckwitz considers the family resemblances (and dissimilarities) of practice frame theories with cultural theories. A key resemblance identified between cultural theories and practice frame theories, identified by Reckwitz, relates to the opposition that both theoretical approaches have towards certain kinds of explanations about action, both opposing “purpose-oriented and norm-oriented models of explaining action” (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 246). A further similarity is that both practice frame theories and cultural theories understand social reality (action and social order) as constructed. Practice frame theories may be differentiated from cultural theories with respect to the level of analysis that these proclaim. One difference is reflected in practice frame theories’ conceptualisations of body, mind, objects, knowledge, discourse, structure and agency. Practice frame theories understand the smallest level of analysis to be the irreducible aggregates of interconnected bodily and mental activities encompassing objects, knowledge, understandings, know-hows, emotion and motivations which are encompassed in practices. Therefore, the smallest level of analysis, maintained by practice theorisations, is practice. This is in contrast to cultural theories (i.e. cultural mentalism, cultural textualism and intersubjectivism) which locate the smallest level of analysis in other realms, for example the human mind or discourse and interactions (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2001b).

In practice frame theories the body is not simply an instrument of the mind. Rather the body is an inseparable part of the mind-body whole that constitutes actors as necessary components in carrying-out social practices. Thus, in learning and enacting social practices, social actors learn and enact particular ways of using, moving and being of the body — ways of handling objects, ways of speaking or expressing that are part of a social practice (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2002). Social actors also learn and enact certain ways of thinking, feeling, viewing and interpreting the world as well as know-hows, knowledge and objectives that pertain to practices. Understanding the mind and body as described above contrasts practice theories with some cultural theories such as mentalism, textualism and intersubjectivism. Mentalism differs from practice frame theories because it understands the mind (physically identified as brain) as the inner-world (structures/processes) of agents. It

is the mind that causes the behaviour of the body – making the body an instrument of the mind. Practice theories differ from textualism in that in the latter the body and mind are understood as objects (of discourse) and as with other objects, can be interpreted and talked about in different ways. Here the mind does not cause the social, but rather is a product of social discursive practices. Finally, in terms of the relationship between body and mind, practice theories differ from intersubjectivism because for the latter the mind exists and becomes socialised to rules and structures through interactions. It is the socialised mind, along with the body as an object, that participates in interactions with others in the social world (Reckwitz, 2002).

In practice frame thinking, not only are minds and bodies understood as “necessary components of practice and thus the social” (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 252), objects too are understood in this way. Thus, objects are understood on a level playing field with agents (bodies and minds) to the extent that these are all part of social practice. For example, in the social practice of orchestral playing, objects such as instruments, chairs, sheet music and music stands are necessary and related elements of that practice as are the agents’ (bodies and minds) performances. This view of objects contrasts practice frame theories with cultural theories which position objects as symbols (i.e. mentalism, textualism and subjectivism). In mentalism, objects are understood as categories of symbols with a particular interpretation, while in textualism and intersubjectivism, objects have meanings only as ascribed through discourses and/or propositions of actors (Reckwitz, 2002).

Cultural theories and practice frame theories may also be contrasted in the ways in which knowledge is understood. Knowledge in practice frame theories is all encompassing. Knowledge implies understandings about the world, others and self, but also implies action, knowing what-to-do, how-to-do it, how to use objects (in practise) and ways of feeling – all understandings that are part of being in the world. Knowledge is reproduced as part of practice enactment and at the same time it is interpreted by agents through enactment (Gherardi, 2008; Nicolini, Gherardi, & Yanow, 2003; Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2002).²

In contrast to the above practice theorisations of knowledge, cultural theories propose different kinds of understandings about knowledge. For mentalism,

² These theorisations will be discussed further in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

knowledge is embedded in individual agents' minds (through cognitive processes), rather than in practices, and is understood to cause behaviour. Textualism maintains that knowledge is located only in texts or discourses, rather than in practice enactments (doings and sayings which may also include texts and discourses), while in intersubjectivism precedence is given to discourse and communication, and knowledge is understood to be the means through which these occur. This is in contrast to practice frame theories where communication and discursive practices are embedded in social practices in the same ways that knowledge is – none are given primacy. In practice frame theories discourse and communication are considered on a par with other kinds of action (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2002).

Structures, for mentalism of the objective kind, exist beyond the minds of individual agents and unfold through processes (i.e. the realisation of actions pertaining to those structures). For intersubjectivism, structures reflect agreements of meaning among agents engaged in communication. These understandings of structure impact on the ways in which changes or shifts in these structures are made possible. For objective mentalism, structures are understood as stable and difficult if not impossible to shift. For intersubjectivism, shifts in structures come about as a result of disagreement among agents. The renegotiations of meanings among agents lead to the establishment of new meanings which in turn reflect structural shifts. For textualism, structure is reflected in the self-maintaining and reproducing systems of codes and symbols inherent in discourses. Changes and shifts in these structures occur through instances and events beyond code conformity – these instances therefore produce new codes (and structures). In contrast to these views of structure, in practice frame theories, structure is reflected in the perpetuation of social practices and inherent routines – not as something to be found in the heads of individuals or as a result of communication among individuals. The perpetuation and at the same time the individual agent's interpretation of social practices (embedded in the individual actions) enable practices to be varied and shifted in some ways (Schatzki, 2002). This view contrasts with the objective mentalist view of structure, which suggests stability of structures over time and intersubjectivist views of structures as inherent in communication (Reckwitz, 2002).

Finally, in practice frame theories, an individual is understood as a mind-body who, as an agent, carries out social practices that “coexist in the performance” (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 256) of those practices. Practices thus embrace a connectedness between

individuals and the social where neither is privileged, but each is understood as interconnected and embedded forms of life (Wittgenstein, 1957). By taking part in social life an individual thus utilises practice knowledge, understandings and objects in particular ways to carry out particular practices. This view of the individual contrasts practice theories with objective and subjective mentalism, because in these cultural theories, individuals as agents are understood primarily as minds (Reckwitz, 2002). Similarly, the interconnectedness between the individual and the social contrasts practice frame theories with intersubjectivism, because in the latter, individuals are understood as “speakers” (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 256) capable of interaction through talk and communication, rather than inherently interconnected with the social. Finally, in contrasting practice theories with textualism, the individual is understood as a mind that becomes an agent through discursive acts (Reckwitz, 2002) rather than one inherently interconnected to the social.

What can be seen from the above discussion is that practice frame theories as a way of theorising social phenomena (in the same way as the term ‘practice’), constitute multiple theoretical traditions and family lineages. It draws upon a multiplicity of ideas about social phenomena that generally converge on the understanding that practices are “embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organised around shared practical understandings (Schatzki, 2001a, p. 11). It brings to the fore conceptions that all human activity including “knowledge, meaning, science, power, language and social institutions” are part of and constitute the “field of practices” (Schatzki, 2001a, p. 11). Practice is therefore inherently social and it is in this sociality that meanings are made, understood and enacted.

To summarise, as a theoretical frame, practice appears to have a mixed family lineage. For some, it appears to have been spawned from two traditions in social constructivism – structuralism and interpretivism. For others, practice frame theories may be understood as belonging to the cultural theory family. Whichever lineage one subscribes to, practice as a theoretical frame does particular kinds of work. First, it steers clear of theoretical dualities (i.e. individual/social; structure/agency) by grounding thinking and theorising in practices as the “primary building block of social life and meaning” (Boud & Lee, 2006, p. 47; Schatzki, 2001b). Second, it provides a meso level of analysis, that is, one that interconnects the individual and the social, recognising and embracing a connectedness embedded in the relationality of shared

forms of life (Wittgenstein, 1957) that maintains a sense of history and tradition. Third, it recognises the importance of context and the impact that this has on meanings, understandings and actions (Schatzki, 2002). In the following section I extend the discussion of practice as a theoretical frame by analysing the work of three prominent writers – Bourdieu (1977), Giddens (1984) and Schatzki (1996, 2001b, 2002, 2003).

2.4 Three theoretical perspectives on practice

In this section I move from discussing genealogical and family lineage of practice frame theories towards exploring more specific perspectives within this frame. I bring to the fore the work of Bourdieu (1977) and Giddens (1984). I have chosen to focus on the work of Bourdieu and Giddens (rather than others, for example Dreyfus, 1991; Taylor, 1985; Turner, 1994), as these authors have been recognised as key figures in the development of practice as a theoretical frame by a number of other authors (see for example Nayak & Chia, 2011; Orlikowski, 2010; Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Schatzki, 2012). In the sections that follow, I highlight the theories of practice developed by Bourdieu and Giddens and work towards a critique of the work of these authors. I conclude this section with an in-depth analysis of Schatzki's perspective on practice and site ontology. Specifically, I consider Schatzki's work in three ways: First as a social ontology, second as a theoretical approach for explaining social phenomena, and finally as a theoretical approach that may be applied empirically to the study of organisations.

2.5 Bourdieu's theory of practice

Influenced by the work of Heidegger and his rejection of representational views of action, Bourdieu's theory of practice embeds social order within notions of shared knowledge and meaning (Reckwitz, 2002). For Bourdieu (1977), practice may be understood as the "dialectical relations between objective structures [of society]. . .and the subjective dispositions [of individual agents]" (p. 3). According to Bourdieu's (1977) account, practice may be understood as a concept that encompasses and interrelates both objective structures of society that are implicated in shaping individual action, and individual subjective mentalities and understandings. Objective structures and individual subjective mentalities and understandings exist in an integrative relationship that Bourdieu (1977) describes as "mutual constitution"

where there is “internalisation of externality and the externalisation of internality” (p. 3). According to Bourdieu’s theorisations, objective structures and individual subjective mentalities and understandings shape one another.

In his theoretical approach Bourdieu strives to move beyond objectivism (objective structures) and subjectivism (subjective dispositions), and he navigates a path that encompasses objectivity and generalisability and at the same time, individual subjectivities (Grenfell & James, 1998; King, 2000b). Referring to his approach as “structural constructivism” (Bourdieu, 1989b, p. 14), Bourdieu understands structure as relational linkages between objective and subjective elements of the human condition. He understands these relational linkages as mediated by the ongoing production, reproduction and variation of contextualised human actions. Thus, for Bourdieu practices are dynamic, cognitive human operations that are produced by and produce structures. At the same time these structures, which are also said to be dynamic and evolving, frame human action (Grenfell & James, 1998).

To understand Bourdieu’s theory of practice is to understand three key concepts. These are habitus, field and capital. Habitus foregrounds the subjective and is described as “an acquired system of generative schemes objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 95; Grenfell & James, 1998). It refers to the individual schemas that guide human thought and activity. Habitus captures our social inheritances, our habits, our thoughts and our dispositions. These enable our actions to be produced and reproduced in different situations as we conduct our daily lives as social actors (Bourdieu, 1989b; Grenfell & James, 1998). Through socialisation, habitus plays a role in both regulating actors (i.e. as in frameworks that advocate rules) as well as enabling actors to be defined in terms of their own identities (i.e. who and what they are), their actions (conscious and unconscious) and relations to others (i.e. who and what actors are alongside and in relation to others) (Bohman, 1999). Habitus thus enables actors to produce practice through schemas as well as affording actors certain ways of being, understanding, perceiving and performing. Although habitus enables actors to create a practical sense of self and others, it does so without being a deterministic force. This is because habitus is enacted or actualised through individual initiated instances of action that are located in time and space rather than actions necessarily imposed by some other external force (Grenfell & James, 1998).

Related to the concept of habitus is that of field. The concept of field may be equated to a social space where a particular kind of life unfolds. A field foregrounds structure, a sense of history, and presupposes a structured system of relations and identities encompassing individual agents, groups and institutions where “objective relations...[and] positions...[are] each... objectively defined by [their] objective relation to other positions” (Bourdieu, 1989b; 1996, p. 231). Thus, life unfolds in and as part of enmeshing networks of relations and identities that are mutually constitutive both in terms of relations and identities. Bourdieu proposes a social world comprising a plurality of fields or social spaces (e.g. the art world, medical world, education world, scientific world and so on) that encompasses social activities, and where social actors compete to achieve a dominant position within these spaces’ inherent hierarchies (Bourdieu, 1989b; Grenfell & James, 1998). The unfolding of activities, relations and identities characterises the concept of field as dynamic. Just as the concept of habitus unfolds through a history, a present and a future, so does the concept of field (Danto, 1999).

Capital is the third theoretical concept put forward by Bourdieu. Capital is the product of a field and may be economic (i.e. money), social (i.e. relationship networks) or cultural (i.e. educational, institutional and technological) (Bourdieu, 1989b; Grenfell & James, 1998). However, not all capital is created equal. Capital has different values, and it is not equally distributed or available in a field. Inequality in the distribution and access to capital result in differences in power among actors, in a field. Thus, actors in a field compete to gain or retain capital, to maintain or achieve a more powerful position in a field. As with habitus and field, capital is dynamic. Capital may be exchanged and transacted by actors for the acquisition of prestige, power and hierarchical position in a field (Bourdieu, 1989b; Pinto, 1999).

In bringing these concepts together, Bourdieu (1989a) proposes a “mutually constitutive” (Grenfell & James, 1998, p. 16) relationship between habitus and field, where “the field structures the habitus, which [in turn] is the product of the embodiment of immanent necessity of a field” and at the same time “habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world...with sense and with value” (Bourdieu, 1989a, p. 44). The social world may be understood as encompassing social spaces (fields and sub-fields) where activities take place and produce capital. Social actors come to and are part of these social spaces. In these social spaces or fields, social actors perform activities that are framed by their

understandings, dispositions and habits. Through these performances social actors have the potential to produce capital that may be utilised to access new opportunities, new hierarchical positions and different kinds of performances in a field.

Bourdieu's work is acknowledged for providing a bridge between the traditions of structuralism and interpretivism. His theoretical moves bring together both subject-centred notions characteristic of interpretivism and trans-subjective knowledge notions characteristic of structuralism, in ways that enable a more localised, contextualised and historically grounded understanding of social life (Nayak & Chia, 2011). Bourdieu's theory of practice is credited by Nash (1990) and Reed-Danahay (2004) for doing significant work towards providing a theoretical alternative to the objective-subjective debate and the mind-body duality thesis. Others, such as Willis (1981), in exploring the school culture of working class students, support Bourdieu's (1977) conceptualisations of practice and Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) thesis of the social class nature of knowledge (i.e. cultural capital) and its effect on the social mobility of individuals. In particular, Bourdieu's work is criticised for the way in which his theory suggests habitus is formed, which for some gives in to determinism (Reed-Danahay, 2004). According to Jenkins (1982), Bourdieu provides a circular argument that ultimately does not free his work from determinism. By implicating objective structures in the production of culture, which in turn is implicated in the determination of practice, which in turn is implicated in the production of objective structures, Bourdieu essentially sustains the deterministic nature of objective structures. Other researchers, such as Farnell (2000), maintain that a difficulty with Bourdieu's concept of habitus rests in its treatment of human agency. Specifically, Farnell (2000) suggests that the concept of habitus not only fails in adequately locating and explaining human agency, but it also fails in providing an explanation of embodiment.

Bourdieu appears to maintain two theoretical perspectives. First, against the structure-agency debate Bourdieu provides a theoretical alternative, suggesting that society reflects only networks of interacting individuals that judge and determine individual actions. Thus, it is through interaction and relational negotiation that individual action is learned, enabled and at the same time constrained. This view differs from structural theories that consider human action as resulting from adherence to predetermined rules and structures outside the social milieu. However,

in describing “opus operatum” (*apriori* determined structural aspects of society beyond humans) (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 52) and “modus operandi” (individual practical strategies) (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 52) on an equal footing, there appears to be a slippage towards objective structures, and an understanding of society as constituted no longer only by networks of intersubjective interactions and relations, but as a dialectic between structures and practices (King, 2000b).

A similar view is echoed by Schatzki (1997) who maintains that Bourdieu does not manage to free his thesis from the objectivist genre. In rejecting that the properties of practical understanding can be analysed and described, Bourdieu avoids slippage into objectivist and representationalist thinking. However, by positioning practical understanding as the determinant of action, Bourdieu risks the very content of his thesis. For, if an analysis of practical understanding is to be resisted (or unattained), so must an analysis of its reciprocal, the determination of action and organisation of practices. By resisting such analysis, the explanatory value of Bourdieu’s theory must come into question (i.e. what is it that his theory explains?). Bourdieu’s only way out of such a dilemma, according to Schatzki, is making concessions for the existence of structure as a second concept implicated in the governing of action (Schatzki, 1997).

2.6 Giddens’ theory of practice

Giddens (1984) proposes the theory of structuration. In this work Giddens attempts to address the division in sociological thinking between structure and action (Craib, 2011; Giddens, 1979, 1984), and the theoretical perspectives of hermeneutics and humanism on the one hand and structuralism and functionalism on the other. Aiming to better understand human existence, Giddens (1984) draws attention to “social practices ordered across space and time” (p. 2). In focusing on social practices Giddens avoids ascribing ontological priority to either the “individual actor” (p. 2) or society. It is by taking practice as his level of analysis, rather than the individual or the social, that Giddens resists the fundamental premises of theoretical perspectives of hermeneutics, humanism, structuralism and functionalism.

Agent, knowledgeability, agency, reflexivity, structure, systems and duality of structure are key notions in structuration theory. According to Giddens (1984, p. 3), human life unfolds in a “continuous flow” and to be human “is to be a purposive

agent, who both has reasons for his or her activities and is able, if asked, to elaborate discursively upon those reasons” (p. 3) — agents draw on “knowledgeability” (p. 21) to act in the world. At the core of the notion of knowledgeability is practical consciousness — a tacit knowledge of which individuals are at the same time both conscious and unconscious. Practical consciousness reflects practical knowledge and awareness of social rules that enable “production and reproduction of day-to-day social encounters” (p. 22). Thus in carrying out actions, human beings not only are able to demonstrate an understanding of social rules and norms through explanation, but are also able to enact those rules and norms in their day-to-day actions — human beings act with knowledgeable agency. Accordingly, in the theory of structuration, human beings are understood as purposive agents. It is the notion of a purposive agent that differentiates the theory of structuration and hermeneutics, in particular “hermeneutical voluntarism” (p. 3). This is because in the former being a purposive agent is not only understood in terms of intent or reason, but also in terms of agency or doing things.

Agency is described by Giddens (1984) as people’s “capability of...doing things” (p. 9). An agent can be said to have agency when engaged in “events of which [he or she] is the perpetrator and [he or she] could, at any phase in a given sequence of conduct, have acted differently” (Giddens, 1984, p. 9) and the result of the agent’s actions “would not have happened if [that agent] had not intervened” (p. 9). Conversely, agents may be involved in events and not be ascribed agency. Such situations or events occur when an agent’s actions and the resulting outcomes were not intended by them. For example, one may meet a friend at a coffee shop near the train station and engage that friend in conversation. The friend may miss his train. It is true to say that taking part in the conversation resulted in the friend missing the train; however, the agent engaging the friend in the conversation is not ascribed agency with respect to the friend missing the train if the agent’s intent was to catch up with his friend and not to make the friend miss his train.

Embedded in the notion of agency is the notion of power. According to Giddens (1984), power is not only embedded in social or political systems in society, power is also something that unfolds through agents’ interactions. In carrying out actions, agents are ascribed power, because to carry out actions, agents must compel something or someone (including self and others) to do something. Social systems encompass resources — legitimised and signified properties that may be drawn

upon by “knowledgeable agents” (Giddens, 1984, p. 15) in their day to day interactions. Agents may use resources in different ways (thus exercising power) in interactions with other agents, to bring about certain courses of actions and outcomes. At the same time, those other agents may accept or resist those courses of actions or outcomes (and may therefore be exercising power themselves). It is an agent’s facility to resist that sustains Giddens’s notion of agency, an agent’s capability of doing “otherwise” (Giddens, 1979, p. 11).

Connected to agency is the concept of reflexivity. In the process of carrying out actions and participating in social life, agents undertake reflexive monitoring of those actions and the contexts of those actions. In the context of social life, reflexive monitoring enables one to make judgments about one’s own and other’s actions and the associated results of those actions against expected and intended outcomes. Reflexive monitoring enables one to make sense of one’s own (and to some degree others’) participation in social interactions and such knowledge may be used by oneself or others to alter such actions (in the future) or understandings of motives for such actions in the present and in the future (Giddens, 1984).

Human agents carry on their day-to-day lives in, and as part of, social systems. Thus social systems may be said to be “grounded in the knowledgeable activities of situated actors who draw upon rules and resources...[and], are produced and reproduced in [such] interaction[s]” (Giddens, 1984, p. 25). Social systems encompass (and may be described in terms of) structure, modality and interaction. Structure refers to both the rules and the resources that are recursive and involved in the production and reproduction of a social system. A social system’s modality reflects the ways in which the structure is enacted and performed. Finally, interaction refers to the patterns and relations in a social system. These are grounded in a history that is known and understood, but at the same time one which may change and evolve over time.

Understanding the notion of structure draws attention to its duality. In describing this characteristic of structure Giddens (1979, 1984) maintains that “the structural properties of social systems are both the medium and the outcome of the practices that constitute those systems” (Giddens, 1979, p. 69). This means that in a social system, agents and structures are not independent entities, rather they exist in tension. Structures may be both “constraining and enabling” (Giddens, 1984, p. 25)

upon actors and their activities and at the same time the activities of actors “constitute and reconstitute” (p. 25) the social system and structures. Within this duality, structure does not exist beyond the knowledge that social actors have of its rules and resources. Social actors are involved in the recreation of those conditions that sustain human social activities. This recreation, however, is not blind repetition, and is dependent on human agents’ capacity for reflexivity and the exercise of power to deploy action (their own and that of others). Reflexivity in a social practice perspective not only enables self-awareness of one’s own needs and wants and monitoring of others needs and wants, but it also enables awareness and monitoring of the context of social activities enacted in the flow of time and space. Thus Giddens proposes that beyond structures, individual knowledgeable agency sustains, reproduces and transforms social practice (Giddens, 1984; King, 2000a). Social practices become transformed as unintended consequences emerge in the enactment of practices by agents. These transformed social practices remain connected with the practices from which they were spawned by continuing to be informed by existing practice structures, that is, rules and resources and institutions.

To summarise, Giddens (1979, 1984) attempts to navigate a path that focuses on surfacing the ways in which “concepts of action, meaning and subjectivity...might be related to notions of structure and constraint” (Giddens, 1984, p. 2). Social life exists in social systems as a continuous flow. Agents in performing actions do so in the context or social structure that pre-exists them and their actions and at the same time, agents themselves produce and reproduce structures. Giddens describes this as the duality of structure. In a social structure, rules, norms and resources play a governing role, both constraining and enabling human action. This governing role of structure gives rise to the notion that human action is, at least in part, determined by the structure of the social system in which it takes place. This determination is limited though, because human agents in acting knowledgeably and in undertaking reflexive monitoring, at the same time both sustain and modify the structures of the social systems in which they live their daily lives.

Both Schatzki (1997) and King (2000a) recognise a number of contributions made by Giddens in the development of the theory of structuration. Both authors recognise the value of Giddens’ work in attempting to address the alienation of individual agency that is often a characteristic ascribed to structuralism and functionalism. In bringing forth the notion of structure, the rules and resources that sustain and

enable social practices, Giddens attempts to address some of the limitations of individualist theories of action. Furthermore, Giddens avoids the shortcomings of representational approaches of human action not by denying representations, but by acknowledging these as only partial to the understanding of human activity. At the same time, both Schatzki (1997) and King (2000a) highlight a number of limitations in Giddens' work.

Schatzki (1997) criticises Giddens' theory of practice on a number of levels. First, Schatzki grounds his criticisms in Giddens' structural elements of rules and resources as they relate to the exercise of power. Contrary to Giddens' account, Schatzki maintains that it is rules rather than resources that have ontological priority. This is because any one actor's exercise of power over another is dependent on the other actor's propensity to follow the rules that are embedded in the structure of the social system that both actors participate in. It is those rules that legitimise the use of a particular resource as a medium in the exercise of power. In other words, it is the rules in a social system that determine what resources and in what way such resources may be engaged in the exercise of power.

The second ground on which Schatzki (1997) criticises Giddens' work relates to Giddens' treatment of practical consciousness and rules. In likening rules to "generalizable procedures [for] know[ing] how to go on" (Giddens, 1984, p. 21) on which actors draw and of which they are practically aware in carrying out actions, Giddens creates a tension with his notion of practical consciousness. This is because practical consciousness is at the same time conscious (knowing a formulation or a generalisable procedure) and unconscious (beyond formulation and representational description of words and symbols). If knowing how to go on is likened to the following of rules or generalisable procedures, Giddens denies his own description of an unconscious element of practical consciousness, namely, how can one follow rules that are not in one's consciousness (Schatzki, 1997).

King's (2000a) critique of Giddens' theory rests on the notion of structure. For King, Giddens' notion of structure positions the theory of structuration as somewhat within objectivist ground. King (2000a) supports this claim by considering both Giddens' treatment of social relations among actors and rule-following. According to King (2000a), Giddens fails to consider social relations among actors as a vehicle for knowing how to go on (as in Wittgenstein's notion of human existence), and for

knowing the kinds of actions and practices that may be appropriate in different contexts. Giddens' reliance on a practical consciousness and rule-following that draws on "transcendental rules" (King, 2000b, p. 368), in a structure that is virtual and sometimes unknown, slips into objectivist territory. If individual actors are to follow rules unknowingly, then it is structure and not the actor that governs action.

Furthermore, the construction of structure, that is sometimes virtual and unknowingly followed by actors, also creates tension with Giddens' notions of social change – change that occurs through individual reflexivity. For social change to occur, it is necessary for social practices and any overarching structures to also change. Since in Giddens' theory, structure (i.e. rules and resources) is in part unknown by actors, the question emerges of how can actors be given agency in initiating and facilitating change in something that is at least in part unknown to them. How can actors change structure (i.e. rules and resources) sufficiently to achieve social change if such elements of structure are unknown to them (King, 2000a)?

2.7 Schatzki's perspective of practice

Practice as ontology

For Schatzki (Schatzki, 2001a) the social world is "a field of embodied materially interwoven practices, centrally organised around shared practical understandings" (p. 12). Within this notion of the social world, Schatzki (1996) positions social practices as the key to understanding social life and human coexistence. Human coexistence is "the hanging-together of entities that forms a context for each" (p. 14) other. This coexistence occurs through the medium of practices. As a medium, practices encompass human lives and the interrelationships among them, and at the same time, practices are also distinct from those human lives and those interrelationships. Schatzki (2002, 2003) etches a space for his account of practice theory as an alternative in the historical and continuing "waves of debate cautioning against theorising the structure of social life" (Schatzki, 1996, p. 9) from either societal totalities (holism) or individualism. Schatzki (2002, 2003) introduces what he describes as a new social ontology – site ontology. As an ontological alternative, site ontology takes human coexistence (how lives hang together) as its focus and attempts to navigate a path accounting for both elements of individualism and holism/socialism (Schatzki, 2002, p. 127).

Site ontology supports elements of individualist ontologies because it accounts for individuals and their lives. It goes beyond individualist ontologies because it understands human coexistence as more than “constellations of inter-related individuals” (Schatzki, 2002, p. 147). For Schatzki (2002, 2003, 2010), individuals are accounted for through their sense of practical intelligibility, mental conditions and actions (constituted through bodily doings and sayings). Against individualism (including for example game theory, symbolic interactionism and some ethnomethodological approaches), Schatzki maintains doubt about individuals’ (and their psyches) ontological separation from the institutions and practices that constitute the social context in which they participate. Individualism is described as encompassing the kinds of theoretical positions that view the social as resulting from the interrelationships among individuals whereas Schatzki casts doubt on the view that “individual psyches and hence individuals, systematically presuppose” the social (Schatzki, 1996, p. 6).

Drawing on the work of post-structuralists (for example Foucault, 1979; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Mouffe, 1992), Schatzki’s criticisms of individualist theories are two-fold. First, in line with discourse theorists, who maintain that becoming a self-conscious subject necessitates that one is engaged in language and communication (both of which are understood to be social rather than individual acts), Schatzki challenges the primacy of the individual over the social (Schatzki, 1996). Secondly, in line with Mouffe’s (1992) notion of a contingent identity, Schatzki (1997) supports the idea that one’s identity — who one is — is socially determined. Through socially constituted “subject positions” (Schatzki, 1996, p. 7) (e.g. mother, teacher, Buddhist) that are embedded in the practices one participates in, one finds one’s identity or identities. Yet identities are not stable, this is not only because individuals participate in a myriad of practices over time or at the same time, but also because practices change over time, and with them the embedded subject positions. Using the notion of the fragmented (unstable) individual (and identity/identities), Schatzki not only finds space for practice as an ontology, but also finds support against the individualistic stance — of the individual as independent and completely self-determining.

Schatzki (2002, 2003) accounts for social ontologies by introducing the notion of human coexistence — human life unfolds relationally in social settings. At the same time Schatzki is critical of holism/societism’s superordinate properties over

individuals and their interrelationships. Schatzki (1996) favours an understanding of the social as localised, particular, contextual, relational and evolving. In line with the work of Giddens (1984), Schatzki rejects the notion that social life, with its complexities and intricacies, can be “neatly tied up in a system and...governed by systemic principles” (Schatzki, 1996, p. 2).

Practice as a theoretical approach

As a proponent of practice, Schatzki recognises that accounts of practice are not a unified theory but rather they are a collection of accounts that maintain “practices as the fundamental social phenomenon...by reference to which other social entities such as actions, institutions, and structures are to be understood” (Schatzki, 1996, p. 12). He puts forward his account of practice as an account that draws on Wittgensteinian ideas about social life. Schatzki (1996) maintains that practices presuppose all descriptions of persons, actions, and thoughts and these:

(1) help institute which mental states and actions humans are and can be in and (2) are the context in which humans acquire the wherewithal to be in these states and to perform action that compose practices. By virtue of the understandings and intelligibilities they carry, practices are where the realms of sociality and individual mentality/activity... are organised and linked...both social order and individuality...result. (Schatzki, 1996, pp. 12 - 13)

Practice is positioned as key to understanding human existence and social life. It is in and through practice that people develop and establish understandings about action (meanings and how to's) and how to participate in social life. At the same time, it is through action that people influence those very practices that are constitutive of their actions. In acknowledging the human capacity for thought, meaning, understanding and action, Schatzki (1996) acknowledges the existence of both the human mind and mental phenomena. In line with the work of Wittgenstein (1957), Schatzki does not subscribe to a position that denies the existence of the human mind (e.g. behaviourism) nor does he subscribe to a position that maintains the mind as a theoretical entity (e.g. psychoanalysis) that exists separate from other physical objects such as the body. Rather, for Schatzki (1996) “bodily doings and sayings and bodily sensations and feelings, are the medium in which life and mind/action are present in the world” (p. 41). Mind is “the expressed of the body” (p. 53) – as biological and cognitive processes that are bodily phenomena that become

socially shaped. Some natural biological bodily reactions that are prelinguistic become, through learning and socialisation, more elaborately bodily expressions. These bodily expressions also include language. For example, the natural reaction of crying when experiencing bodily pain often becomes associated with a more elaborate and socially shaped bodily expression of sayings, such as 'I am in pain'. Similarly, one's experiences of joy may be expressed by different bodily actions such as jumping up and down, smiling or chanting or all of these, depending on the social shaping and training one has experienced and the practical context one finds oneself in.

In considering Schatzkian notions of the constitution of a practice one can see evolving understandings. For Schatzki (1996, p. 89) a practice is a:

temporally unfolding and spatially dispersed nexus of doings and sayings...that are linked through understandings, explicit rules, principles...[and] teleoaffective structures embracing ends, projects, task purposes, beliefs.

The above understandings are further developed in Schatzki (2002, p. 77) where he maintains:

practices are *organized* [emphasis in original] nexuses of actions. This means that the doings and sayings composing them hang together. More specifically, the doings and sayings that compose a given practice are linked through (1) practical understandings (2) rules (3) teleological structure (4) general understandings.

In more recent work, Schatzki (2011, p. 8) describes a practice as:

an organized, open-ended manifold of activities spread out over objective time and space. The performances that compose a practice are organized by items of four types; (1) practical understandings (2) rules (3) teleological structures (4) general understandings.

Finally, Schatzki (2012) describes a practice as

an open-ended, spatially-temporally dispersed nexus of doings and sayings...the activities that compose a practice are spatially-temporally dispersed. (Schatzki, 2012, p. 2)

What we can see from the above is that Schatzki, in his more recent work (Schatzki, 2011, 2012), has expanded the notion of practice to include the concepts of activity, open-endedness and temporality-spatiality. What can be seen in these more recent understandings of practice is that a practice is composed of activities — doings and sayings that come together to form an interconnected group or a “nexus” (Schatzki, 2012, p. 2). Activities (doings and sayings) also form hierarchies which are teleological. These hierarchies reach a finite point that reflects an end or purpose for which the activities are carried out. The activities which compose a practice are not set to any specific number of activities nor is it determined which activities belonging to a practice, or which actions a person may undertake prior to their executing those activities or actions that pertain to a practice — it is this feature of indeterminacy that enables practices to be open-ended (Schatzki, 2010, 2012).

Activities are further understood as events that happen as a result of intentionality and volition. Activity events are also temporalspatial. The notion of temporality encompasses Heideggerian (see for example Heidegger, 1978) understandings of temporality, of past-present-future occurring together. The notion that activity events are temporalspatial positions our understanding of activities (and practices) both within and beyond their occurrences in objective time and space. When we act, we are “teleologically acting motivatedly” (Schatzki, 2011, p. 5) — we act purposefully. In carrying out an activity, we start from a place or way of being (past) move towards an end or desired end or purpose (future) and act out that activity (present). For example, I may decide to go to the ATM at the petrol station to withdraw money to buy shoes because I previously found that ATM convenient (past), I go to the ATM and withdraw the money (present), and I withdraw the money for the purpose of buying a new pair of shoes (future). So the fact that I go to the ATM at the petrol station is influenced by my past experience of the ATM being conveniently located near my house, I physically go to the ATM and withdraw my money at this present time for the purpose of going to buy a new pair of shoes in the near future (e.g. on Saturday). So my present action of withdrawing money from the ATM at the petrol station is impacted on by my past experience of doing so and my future desire and motivation of buying a new pair of shoes.

The notion of spatiality takes into account the physical world where human activities take place or the setting for an activity – where both setting and activity are affected by, and affect one another. To continue with the above example, the physical location of the ATM at the petrol station which is conveniently located near my house impacts on the way in which I undertake my banking activities. I withdraw money from that particular ATM, rather than at the ATM located at the local branch of my bank. At the same time human demands for convenience have resulted in petrol stations offering activities additional to the purchase of petrol (e.g. sales of convenience items such as bread, milk, phone recharge cards). The offering of additional activities at spatial locations such as petrol stations has resulted in some banking activities (such as ATM withdrawals) being spatially relocated from bank branches to petrol stations.

Finally, the notion of activity event highlights Schatzki's position on understandings about the unfolding of social life as a happening. In considering activities as events with beginnings and endings, Schatzki maintains that social life is not a continuous event though we as humans appear to be always doing something (this is in contrast to process philosophy theorisations, see for example Deleuze, 1988; James, 1909/1996; Serres, 1982). For Schatzki (2011), life may be understood as a "gapless series of overlapping events" (p. 3) that come together in the multiplicity of human coexistence.

What is meant by the doings and sayings of activities? Doings encompass actions and behaviours other than linguistic acts, while sayings include linguistic acts such as speaking, but also tones of voice, facial expressions and other non-verbal bodily acts that signify communication. The doings and sayings (activities) that constitute practices are linked through structural elements that are embedded in practices. Doings and sayings (activities) compose further actions that are contextually based. For example,³ the doing of a basic action such as putting one's hand up in the context of a classroom may signify asking permission to speak, which may be responded to by the teacher saying the student's name, which may be followed by the student asking a question. These actions form a series that reflect appropriate classroom behaviour practice. However, in the context of a race, putting one's hand up may signify a claim that one has completed the race task first, which in turn may

³ This example has been adapted from (Schatzki, 2005).

be followed by a race judge coming over to check that all aspects of the race task have been completed. Again, taken together as a set, these actions may reflect appropriate racing practices. Thus, not only do some actions travel across contexts but these may also compose “multiple higher-order” (Schatzki, 2002, p. 73) actions which when taken together with doings and sayings (activities) compose tasks and projects that constitute practices. Teaching practices, combined with determining curriculum, assessments, evaluations and so on, together constitute education practices.

Practices combine and may be defined as “hierarchically organized doings/sayings, tasks and projects” (activities) (Schatzki, 2002, p. 73). In participating in the activities that constitute one or more practices, one may at the same time be carrying out (activities) doings/sayings, actions, tasks and projects. To continue from the example above, holding one’s hand up, waiting to speak until called upon along with sitting still, may combine to make up classroom behaviour practices. Classroom behaviour practices along with other doings and sayings such as writing notes on the board, reading tasks, demonstrating how to complete multiplication tasks, etc. may combine to constitute teaching practices.

Practices exhibit both regularities and irregularities. Regularities reflect the ongoing and repetitive characteristics of doings and sayings (activities), teaching practices involve the regular performance of reading tasks and writing tasks, as well as responding to a student putting a hand up before speaking. At the same time, teaching practices may also encompass unusual doings and sayings (activities) that result from unusual circumstances or breakdowns, for example, asking students to continue reading while the teacher attends to a question from a colleague standing at the door, or moving to the library for the math lesson as a result of lighting problems in the classroom. Similarly, practice irregularities may constitute new doings and sayings that compose existing activities, such as new ways of doing math tasks as a result of the introduction of electronic whiteboards in classrooms, or new doings and sayings (activities) relating to newly introduced tasks such as the teaching of a second language as a result of additional government funding in schools.

As mentioned above, the doings and sayings (activities) that constitute a practice are organised. This organisation reflects four kinds of linkages: practical

understandings, rules, teleoaffective structure and general understandings (Schatzki, 2001b, 2002, 2011). Practical understandings refer to one's ability of knowing how to recognise, how to do and how to respond to doings and sayings (of a practice). Rules refer to "explicit formulations, principles, precepts and instructions" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 79) that determine the actions one should undertake in the performance of a practice and that others performing the same practice adhere to. The teleoaffective structure of a practice refers to the purpose, tasks, projects, goals/ends and possibilities of that practice. These may be multiple ones. At any time, a participant in a practice may or may not be aware of, or consciously be pursuing, a practice's goals or ends. For example, in considering the teleoaffective structure of teaching practice, its goals or ends may be to enable students to gain an education, to have an educated society, to achieve educational requirements sufficient for individuals to meet vocational or academic education quotas imposed by governments. To achieve these goals and ends, teachers must carry out certain tasks such as teaching students how to read (or students completing reading and assignments) certain projects such as the completion of the year's curriculum (or students completing all examinations). But in carrying out these activities and tasks, teachers may or may not be aware of or subscribe to one or all of these goals or ends of teaching practice.

Another aspect of the teleoaffective structure embedded in a practice is that of emotive states (including beliefs). The emotive states embedded in a practice may or may not be experienced by the participants when carrying out that practice. For example, it may be expected that teachers experience enjoyment from teaching a high achieving class, and students may enjoy positive feelings from gaining a good grade and negative feelings when failing an examination. These embedded emotive states, however, do not preclude task participants from experiencing different emotive states or entertaining different beliefs. A teacher may not experience enjoyment from teaching a high achieving class if this requires her to dedicate free time to preparing lessons sufficiently engaging to high achieving students, or if the class is difficult for the teacher to manage with respect to student behaviour. Although there may be a degree of normative emotive states within practices, these do not preclude other states from being experienced (Schatzki, 2002).

A practice's teleoaffective structures may also be understood as elements of a practice rather than of practice participants. For example, tasks, projects and

goals/ends of teaching practice (i.e. its teleoaffective structures) continue to exist even though different participants join or leave the practice over time (e.g. teachers, students, principals, parents). Furthermore, different participants in teaching practice may carry out only elements of that practice (i.e. tasks and projects associated with teaching Maths) while being unaware of other elements of that practice (i.e. tasks and projects associated with teaching English), yet still be understood to be participants in teaching practice. Participants in a teaching practice may or may not experience normative emotive states associated with that practice, and teachers may or may not be experiencing disappointment from teaching a low achieving class or enjoyment from teaching a high achieving class (Schatzki, 2002).

Finally, teleoaffective structures of practices have both elements of regularity (i.e. agreements about tasks, projects and ends) and an extent of open-endedness. Regularity stems from general understandings that people participating in a practice have about acceptable activities and tasks associated with that practice. Open-endedness stems from the complexity inherent in teleoaffective structures of practices. This complexity not only emerges from the multiplicity of circumstances in which practices are carried out, but also from the many and varied tasks, projects and ends that participants in a practice can undertake (i.e. innovations, modifications). Furthermore, this open-endedness also stems from participants' contestations of what may be acceptable tasks, projects and ends of the practices in which they participate (Schatzki, 2002, 2011, 2012). The open-endedness of a practice may also be linked to a practice's capacity for change. Through practice "reorganisation" and "recomposition" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 240) — changes in the organisation of practices (practical understandings, rules, teleoaffective structure and general understandings) — practices may be understood as having the capacity for both stability and change (Schatzki, 2002, 2011, 2012).

Practice recomposition reflects ongoing changes/adjustments that take place as a means of perpetuating (maintaining) a practice in terms of its ends. For example, an organisation in the business of providing free information to customers could recompose its information provision practices by introducing a website together with a shop front and a call centre as means of providing information to customers, while maintaining its organisational goal of being a provider of free information to customers. On the other hand, practice reorganisation reflects the kind of change that shifts the nature of the practice — its goals, ends and projects. Using the

example above, by providing 24-7 information through their website for a fee, the organisation would be reorganising its practices, it would shift from being in the business of providing free information to its customers to being in the business of fee for service information provision. As a result of such practice reorganisation, new practices of online payments may also be introduced by the organisation (Schatzki, 2002, 2011).

Schatzki (1996) proposes two categories of practices that constitute social life, "integrative" and "dispersed" (p. 91) practices. Integrative practices are those practices that pertain to particular areas of social life such as farming, business, health, cooking and recreation. Thus integrative practices include farming practices, business practices, medical practices, cooking practices and recreational practices (Schatzki, 1996, 2002). These practices encompass multiple complex assemblages of doings and sayings (activities) that are organised (Schatzki, 1996). Embedded in these complex assemblages are multiple actions, ends, purposes as well as emotional states and expressions (Schatzki, 2002).

In contrast to integrative practices, dispersed practices are considered to be simpler, encompassing single rather than multiple actions (Schatzki, 2002). Although carrying some of the features of integrative practices, dispersed practices differ on a number of levels (Schatzki, 2002). Dispersed practices are described as those practices that, unlike integrative practices, are found across many elements of social life and social situations. Examples of dispersed practices include the practices of "describing, ordering, following rules, explaining, questioning, reporting, examining and imagining" (Schatzki, 1996, p. 91). Embedded in notions of dispersed practices are understandings of knowing how to perform describing, questioning and ordering as well as how to respond to describing, questioning and ordering by understanding other related practices such as visualising from descriptions, responding to questioning or following orders. An interesting feature of dispersed practices is that the doings and sayings (activities) that constitute these practices are linked through structural elements of understandings rather than through rules, principles or teleoaffective elements. It is this characteristic that makes dispersed practices dispersed (or disseminated) because their existence is not linked to any specific projects, purposes or beliefs. It is these characteristics of dispersed practices that also differentiate them from integrative practices (Schatzki, 2002).

Finally, it is also important to understand that dispersed practices are not necessarily found independent from integrative practices. For example, the dispersed practice of questioning may be found embedded in teaching practices — questioning is a practice that teachers (and students) undertake as part of teaching practices. Similarly, questioning is also a practice that may be found in a medical practice, as what a doctor may do as part of making a diagnosis. What is interesting to note about dispersed practices is that these are shaped to some degree by the integrative practices within which they are found — what is an appropriate questioning practice in medical practices differs to some degree from what may be considered appropriate questioning practices in teaching practices (Schatzki, 2002). Social life thus reflects a nexus of integrative practices marbled by dispersed practices. In this nexus, integrative and dispersed practices entwine, share commonalities and come into conflict.

What does it mean to be a participant in a practice? As discussed above, it is in and through the execution of activity events that people participate in practices, and it is through such participation that people develop and establish understandings about the actions (meanings and how to's) pertaining to the practices that constitute social life. At the same time, it is through action that people influence those very practices that help constitute their actions. Putting these thoughts in another way, practices constitute social life in which individuals take part, and it is through participation in social life that individuals help constitute practices. The activities that humans undertake are controlled by “practical intelligibility” (Schatzki, 2002, p. 74) or what a person’s understanding about what one may/should do, or what “makes sense to do” (p. 74) next in the stream of activities one is engaged in. Practical intelligibility is a phenomenon that pertains to an individual and is shaped by the goals or desires that the individual is pursuing as well as other features pertaining to that individual. Further, what makes sense for a person to do next may or may not converge with what may be the rational thing to do next, or with the thing that (normatively) may be the correct thing to do within the bounds of a practice.

The linkage between practices and individual practical intelligibility is indirect and stems from the role practices play in shaping individual features, goals and desires. This shaping, however, is complex and multifaceted and does not pertain to any one particular practice. This is because individuals in participating in social life take part in multitudes of practices (Schatzki, 1996, 2010). To participate in a practice is to

draw on one's practical intelligibility, to have some understanding of a practice's organisation and for one to be able to carry out at least some of the doings and sayings (activities) associated with a practice, as well as to some degree accepting these as what one ought to do. But participation does not necessitate being determined by a practice, rather, to be a participant in social life entails an "immersion in an extensive tissue of coexistence that embraces varying sets of people" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 87) as well as "webs of interweaving practices" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 88).

Understanding social life as "webs of interweaving practices" suggests that practices are interlinked on a number of levels. Practices overlap firstly through organisational elements, through observation of similar rules and pursuit of similar goals (e.g. primary and high school teaching practices may be linked by similar behavioural rules and the pursuit of educated students). Secondly, practices are linked through the sharing of doings and sayings across different practices (e.g. putting one's hand up to ask a question is part of both primary and high school discipline practices). Thirdly, practices are linked through causal connections among practices (e.g. primary school learning practices prepare students to participate in high school learning practices). Fourthly, practices are linked through "intentional relations" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 155), the beliefs and understandings people have about practices (e.g. teacher's beliefs and understandings of primary and high school discipline practices).

Practices also establish social orders. According to Schatzki (2002), social orders reflect "arrangements of people" (p. 22) to whom actions, mental conditions and identity are ascribed, "artefacts" (p. 22) which are products of human action (e.g. a chair a whiteboard), "organisms (p. 22)", i.e. non-human living things (e.g. a dog) and "non-living entities" (p. 22), which are not the product of human action (e.g. a rock). Practices establish social orders through doings and sayings (activities) and the organisation of practices (practical understandings, rules, teleoaffective structure and general understandings). The people, actions, ways in which people carry out actions, the artefacts employed, (and any organisms and non-living entities) as well as the meanings and relations among these, reflect an ordering that is understood and given meaning in relation to a practice. Like practices, social orders are interlinked. This interlinking may occur through physically established connections (e.g. a covered walkway between classrooms), or through special interrelations (e.g.

the physical location of a high school campus adjacent to a primary school), or causal connections (e.g. an electrical fault at the high school campus may disrupt operations at a substation which in turn may cause a power failure at the adjacent primary school campus). Social life can therefore be understood as an enmeshment of linkages among practices, among practices and the social orders that they help establish, as well as among established social orders. For Schatzki (2002), it is this enmeshment of practices and orders that comes together and constitutes the “site of the social” (Schatzki, 2002, p. 123).

The notion of ‘site’ is core to understanding Schatzkian site ontology. A site can be seen as “the context or wider expanse phenomena, in and as part of which humans coexist” (Schatzki, 2002, p. 147). This type of context is mutually constitutive, specifically the “context and the contextualised entity or event constitute one another — what the entity or event is, is tied to the context, just as the nature and identity of the context is tied to the entity or event” (Schatzki, 2005, p. 468). Human coexistence is accounted for through mental conditions — commonality of understandings about actions (rules, ends, projects, emotions) between people (e.g. appropriate actions for student discipline). It is also accounted for through intentional relatedness — where one person’s actions are the object of another’s actions (e.g. a parent discussing her son’s school’s approach to discipline with a friend). Human coexistence occurs in settings (single setting or multiple) when people find themselves in the same settings (e.g. teachers and students in a classroom) or when events in a settings marshal new situations (e.g. teachers and students experiencing a power failure in a classroom) that require new ways of coexisting or when people share the same setting at different times (e.g. workers sharing an office or a desk but not necessarily at the same time). Human coexistence transpires across settings — via physical connections between settings (e.g. the hallways that connect classrooms or the walkways and paths that connect school buildings and playgrounds). It also transpires through arrangements of artefacts (e.g. the computer network linking teaching and learning across classrooms via email; between classrooms and the library by enabling remote access to the library catalogue; or between classrooms and the National Art Gallery via virtual tours accessed through the web). Finally human coexistence transpires across settings through events extending across settings (e.g. a fire marshal attending a classroom to inform the occupants of an imminent evacuation as a result of a fire in bushland in the school’s vicinity).

To summarise, site ontology understands human coexistence to unfold through practices. It understands human coexistence to be interconnected to practices through mental conditions and intentional relatedness encompassed in the teleoaffective structures of practices. It understands human coexistence to unfold in settings that are interconnected through the material arrangements of practices (Schatzki, 2002).

2.8 Contrasting Schatzki with Bourdieu and Giddens

How does Schatzki's account of practice (and site ontology) differ from the accounts put forward by other proponents of practice? According to Schatzki (2002), his notion of the social site accounts for "movement and change" (p. 151) in a way that differentiates his work from that of others. Rather than dichotomising human activity into arrangements of stability that move and change as a result of a driving force, Schatzki accounts for movement and change as an inherent feature of practices and orders — in the open-endedness that is characteristic of practices (Schatzki, 2002).

Second, unlike the other accounts of the social discussed, Schatzki encompasses material objects as elements in the constitution of social phenomena and social practices. Third, Schatzki recognises a key point of departure between his own notion of the social and that of Giddens (1984) in the way in which social life is fundamentally described and understood. According to Giddens (1984, p. 3), social life unfolds in a "continuous flow" of human action and cognition. This view contrasts with that of Schatzki (2001) who understands social life as a "continuum of activity" of "a gapless series of overlapping events" (Schatzki, 2011, p. 3) that are distinct and have beginnings and ends, rather than as a continuous flow.

Schatzki (2002) understands Bourdieu's (1977) account of the social site most akin to his own. He highlights, however, that in contrast to his own, Bourdieu's account of orders and action negates the existence of diverse practices such as dispersed practices that interweave and cut across other practices. Second, in the bounding of social practices into "large scale integrated units" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 152), Bourdieu's account echoes notions of societal wholes or "sets of worlds" (Schatzki, 2003, p. 197) at the expense of understanding the fine interweaving (or coexistences) inherent in these worlds (e.g. coexistence of school and home

discipline practices). Third, Bourdieu's "overunification" (Schatzki, 2003, p. 196) of social practices into worlds also makes opaque the contingencies and instabilities inherent in practices and orders that constitute the social. Furthermore, Bourdieu's conception of sets of social worlds appears to have some features of social wholes whereby subsets of worlds are somewhat determined by the ordering of encompassing larger ones (Schatzki, 2002).

To conclude, what work do Schatzki's notions of practice and site ontology do for the understanding of social life and human existence? Put simply, they bring together both the individualist notion of human coexistence being about human interrelations with holism/socialism notions of the social context as a force in determining such coexistence. He does so while avoiding some of the shortcomings (as discussed throughout this and previous sections of this chapter) of alternate theorisations of practice. Second, they bring to the fore the notion of practice as the building block for social life — understandings, meanings and actions. Yet, Schatzki's account of practice does not go unchallenged.

In an exploration of Schatzkian theorisations of practice, Caldwell (2012) suggests that Schatzki's concept of general understandings appears to be the more "opaque" (p. 290) element of his explication of the constitution of a practice. Caldwell supports his thesis by highlighting Schatzki's shaping and reshaping of this concept in subsequent publications. For example Caldwell suggests that in Schatzki's earlier work (i.e. Schatzki 2002) Schatzki suggests that general understandings are aspects of practices that are shared among members of a community and as such help organise practices. Yet, in later work (i.e. Schatzki 2010) Schatzki shifts from his earlier position, suggesting that general understandings are not necessarily shared among all members of a community, and furthermore, general understandings together with teleological structures play a role in determining people's activities. It seems that in this later explication, general understandings are ascribed an ontological position which was previously absent (Caldwell, 2012). I concur with Caldwell that the concept of general understanding as explicated by Schatzki represents one element of the construction of practice that is less clear. However, I also suggest that Schatzki, given the reconceptualisation of general understandings in his later work, is working towards making this concept less "opaque" (Caldwell, 2012, p. 290).

Caldwell also suggests that in Schatzki's (2005) explication of social sites (see Schatzki 2005) as comprising of both practices (i.e. doings and sayings, teleoaffective structure, material arrangements and general understandings) and orders (i.e. people, things), there may be a shift towards the re-establishment of "ontological dualism" (Caldwell, 2012, p. 292). The explication of social sites as comprising of two distinct entities (i.e. practice and orders) Caldwell suggests, may invoke the existence of traditional dualities "of individual and society, agency and structure" (Caldwell, 2012, p. 292), even though Schatzki has gone to considerable lengths to move his work beyond these. In contrast to Caldwell, I suggest that in foregrounding both practices and orders in his explication of social site, Schatzki is not subscribing to ontological dualism. Rather, I maintain that Schatzki is attempting to highlight the mutual constitutive relationship that emerges in practice and in the constitution of practice.

Finally, in my own analysis of Schatzki's work, I find an area that remains underdeveloped in Schatzki's theorisation of practice is the relationship between one's enactment of practices and how one may come to learn and know what to do – how to enact practices. Schatzki maintains that people become participants in social practices through an "immersion in an extensive tissue of coexistence that embraces varying sets of people" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 87) in "webs of interweaving practices" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 88). Does this immersion constitute learning? This is not made explicit and Schatzki limits his discussion to concepts such as understandings, ability and practical intelligibility, as things that are connected with one's capacity for the enactment of practices. It is this area of Schatzki's work that I will work to further clarify in Chapter 6.

Having discussed practice and site ontology as the ontological and theoretical stance taken up in this thesis, I now work to establish the connection between this and the site of this study. This thesis takes as its focus a special kind of social site where human coexistences occurs – organisations. In the following section I outline the emergence of practice thinking in organisational research. I then feature Schatzkian understandings of organisations, and in the following chapters apply these in discussing the findings of this study at the College, Council and Utility.

2.9 Application of practice thinking to the study of organisations in this research

Practice theorisations have been prominent in sociological and educational fields of research for decades (see for example Boud & Lee, 2008b; Bourdieu, 1977, 1989a; Giddens, 1984; Green, 2008; Green, Maxwell, & Shanahan, 2001; Kemmis, 2005; Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008). More recently the notion of 'practice' has also been taken up by some researchers in the field of organisational studies (Antonacopoulou, 2008; Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011). Practice-based studies have begun to gain considerable momentum in organisational studies not as a univocal approach, but rather as multiple and diverse approaches focusing on the exploration of numerous organisational phenomena including communities of practice, strategy, technology, learning, knowing and knowledge (see for example Brown & Duguid, 1991; Gherardi, 2006, 2009a; Jarzabkowski, 2004; Orlikowski, 2008). According to Gherardi (2006, 2009a), there are multiple discourses and perspectives (e.g. cultural approach, situated learning theory, activity theory, actor-network theory, workplace studies) that subscribe to notions of practice and that represent practice-based theorising of learning and knowing in organisations. More recently, Geiger (2009), Corradi, Gherardi and Verzelloni (2010) and Feldman and Orlikowski (2011), in exploring the application of practice approaches to the study of organisations, have considered some opportunities and challenges faced by researchers in this field of study.

According to Geiger (2009), practice-based research of organisations may be clustered around two streams – studies focusing on what people do in organisations and studies focusing on repositioning how organisations and organisational phenomena may be understood. Studies that have focused on “what actors do” (Geiger, 2009, p. 131) in organisations understand practices as the things (or activities) that actors do. Taking processes and organisational activities as their focus, these kinds of studies have addressed questions pertaining to the ways in which concepts such as activity/process/routine/practice take place in organisations. Much of the work in this stream of research has utilised the notion of practice as routine/process (Feldman, 2000), and focuses on challenging existing ideas about organisational activities, for example, strategic planning (Jarzabkowski, 2004; Whittington, 2006), the application and implementation of technology (Orlikowski, 2008), development of professional practice (Green, 2009a; Kemmis, 2009, 2010,

2011), doctoral education (Boud & Lee, 2008b; Green, 2008; Green, et al., 2001) accounting practices (Ahrens & Chapman, 2007), social responsibility (Fenwick, 2010a), social inclusion (Keevers & Abuodha, 2012) reflection (Keevers & Treleaven, 2011) and results-based accountability (Keevers, Treleaven, Sykes, & Darcy, 2012). The second stream of work has encompassed studies that focus on expanding understandings about organisations beyond quasi-reductionist perspectives (Geiger, 2009). In this second stream, the notion of practice has been utilised as a means of challenging “cognitivist and positivist” (Geiger, 2009, p. 133) notions of organisations as well as a means of repositioning existing understandings of organisations.

A similar segmentation of practice-based literature to the one put forward by Geiger (2009) above can be seen in the work of Corradi et al. (2010). Using the practice “bandwagon” (p. 266) analogy, these authors discuss the emergence of multiple labels (e.g. practice-based standpoint, practice-based learning, practice lens, knowing in practice) to describe the application of the practice concept to the study of organisations and organisational phenomena. Corradi et al. (2010) segment the “plurality of similarities and differences” (p. 278) of the practice literature into two major clusters, i.e. those applications that consider practice as an “empirical object” (p. 268) and those that consider practice as a “way of seeing” (p. 268). In this first cluster, understandings of practice are akin to the concept of activity – practice as an activity informed by contextual factors; practice as an aggregation of activities that practitioners undertake in organisational contexts and in which learning and knowing is embedded; and practice understood as what people do in organisations. The second cluster identified by Corradi et al. (2010) takes an epistemological perspective and encompasses work relating to practice as a way of seeing and understanding work and organisational contexts; and knowing (as social accomplishment) and knowledge (situated and provisional) in the context (social, historical and structural) of work and organisations. Research in this cluster may be understood as attempts to counter rationalist, functionalist and cognitive views of organisations (Corradi, et al., 2010).

Recently, in considering the use and value of practice theorisations in the study of organisations, Feldman and Orlikowski (2011) propose three emergent approaches – the empirical approach, the theoretical approach and the philosophical approach. Researchers engaged in the application of the empirical approach draw attention to

the day-to-day activities or actions of people and organisations as well as to the consequences of those activities and actions for the organisation. Feldman and Orlikowski (2011) suggest that researchers applying the empirical approach have a strong interest in understanding the unfolding of “human agency in organisational life” (p. 2). Researchers engaged in the application of the theoretical approach, in addition to drawing attention to the day-to-day activities of organisational life, also focus on developing understandings about the dynamics and relationships in the production and reproduction of the activities being studied. These researchers may adopt a specific perspective on practice, drawing on the work of theorists such as Bourdieu (1977), Giddens (1984), Engeström, Miettinen and Punamäki (1999) and Schatzki (2001b, 2002, 2005), who have made significant contributions to understandings of practice theorisations (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011).

Finally, the philosophical approach is sustained by the notion that practices are the “primary building blocks of social reality” (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011, p. 3) and essential in its production. Thus, practice as an ontology maintains that the “social world is brought into being through everyday activity” (p. 3) rather than something that exists apart from human agents or as something that exists as a result of human agents’ constructions. In taking up the philosophical approach, researchers may reposition understandings about the phenomenon they are investigating. This approach can be seen for example in Gherardi’s (2000, 2006) learning and knowledge investigations where the worker, the social context of work and the organisation are positioned as mutually produced, where knowing and doing are intertwined. Similarly, Schatzki (2005, 2006), in his consideration of organisations as a special kind of social site, redefined what constitutes an organisation.

It is in notions of both practice as a theoretical approach and practice as a philosophical approach that I locate the work of Schatzki (1996, 2001b, 2002, 2005, 2006). This is because Schatzkian theorisations of practice are useful in enabling a researcher to draw attention to the dynamics and relationships among organisational phenomena. At the same time, when considering his notions of the social site, it can be seen that Schatzki (1996) understands practices as the fundamental building blocks of social reality where “the realms of sociality and individual mentality/activity...are organised and linked” (p. 13) and where the social is “a field of embodied materially interwoven practices centrally organised around shared practical understandings” (Schatzki, 2001a, p. 12). Schatzki’s social ontology

emerges as a means of repositioning not only understandings about organisational phenomena, but also about the very nature of organisations. To recall material presented in the previous section of this chapter, the application of Schatzki's (2002) site ontology and practice enables researchers to break away from individualist ontological positions that have underpinned cognitivist and positivist notions of organisations, work and workers. More distinctively, site ontology offers researchers of organisations new insights into the mutually constitutive coexistence of human beings and organisations.

In the chapters that follow, I contrast Schatzkian notions of organisations, change, jobs and knowing (which are underpinned by Schatzkian practice and site ontology) with prevalent management views of the same. My approach is to first present a theoretical discussion and second to demonstrate empirically, through a discussion of the findings of this study, the strength of a Schatzkian perspective in explaining the phenomena observed in this study. In the next chapter, my discussion focuses on the methodology adopted in this study.

Chapter 3

Methodology of this Study

3.1 About this chapter

In this chapter I discuss the methodology, methods and analysis employed in this study. In the first section of this chapter I introduce the qualitative research approach and locate the current study in this approach. I discuss the ontological and epistemological thinking that has framed the methods chosen, the kinds of data collected and the ways in which it was collected. In the second section I discuss the approach employed for the analysis of the data. I outline the data analysis procedures and the outputs from each procedural step. I conclude this chapter by discussing the practical activities employed in building and managing the relationship with the research site organisations.

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 Introducing qualitative research

Many researchers who have come before me have recognised that any attempt to distil a single definition for qualitative research that would capture what qualitative research is, may not be appropriate, if not impossible. In this section I begin by saying that qualitative research represents a family of philosophical standpoints and associated techniques “as ways of knowing” (Mason, 1997, p. 3). Members of the qualitative research family include phenomenology, ethnography, anthropology, grounded theory, ethnomethodology, discourse analysis, narrative and case study research. The application of qualitative ways of knowing can be seen across a number of fields of research including sociology, education, management and organisational research, some branches of psychology and anthropology. These philosophical standpoints, approaches and fields of research may be drawn together on the basis of three commonalities. These generally support interpretative notions about the social world, context sensitive ways of obtaining data and analysis that encompasses context, complexity and detail (Creswell, 2007; Denzin, 1998; Mason, 1997).

What do interpretative notions about the social world mean? No single definition is apparent in the literature, rather there are some common agreements. Interpretative researchers generally agree that the social world is complex and multi-layered, and individual or group experiences are best understood when considered in the context of that individual's or that group's social world. This agreement also extends to interactions among people. These interactions are understood as symbolic in the sense that people validate them and ascribe meanings to them. Finally, there is agreement among interpretative researchers that interactions among people and organisations are produced through these interactions and meanings (Garrick, 1999; Mason, 1997).

Another commonality among qualitative research approaches is that no single set of methods is privileged over another, rather the tendency is towards a flexible application of methods (Denzin, 1998; Mason, 1997). Qualitative approaches are context sensitive and feature the importance of data collection in the "natural setting" of participants, through "face to face interaction" (Creswell, 2007, p. 37). The use of multiple methods (and data) may include interviews, document analysis and observations is a commonality that draws together qualitative research approaches (Mason, 1997; Silverman, 1997). This flexibility also extends to research design. There is an implied acceptance that the research design in qualitative research will emerge as the research process unfolds. Specifically, there is scope in qualitative research for modification of the research tools used, questions asked and participants accessed. Rather than these elements of design being fixed a priori, the design evolves once the researcher enters and develops a better feel for the research site (Creswell, 2007; Mason, 1997). It is this bringing together of techniques and practices to solve the practical problem of understanding the social world that has earned the qualitative researcher labels such as "bricoleur" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 4), or a "[Jill or] Jack of all trades" (Lévi-Strauss, 1966, p. 17) utilising the tools and techniques that work in a particular context.

Finally, there is a commonality among qualitative methods with respect to analysis and explanation of phenomena. The interpretative notions underpinning qualitative research phenomena steer away from grand generalisations. Rather than focusing on cause and effect interpretations of phenomena, qualitative researchers focus on the development of "rich descriptions" (Denzin, 1998, p. 10) of the context, the people and the phenomena being studied. By using rich descriptions, qualitative

researchers attempt to bring to the fore the complexities and interrelationships of people's experiences of the phenomena being studied (Creswell, 2007).

The qualitative researcher's job is one of interpreting and translating what has been observed and understood about phenomena into "textual work that communicates these understandings to the reader" (Denzin, 1998, p. 314). This textual work comes from a space where, through self-reflection and sharing of understandings in one or more interpretative communities, sense is made by the researcher of the research experience. The purpose of such textual work, once public and accessed by readers, is not to provide definitive answers or solutions, rather "it is to establish a context for the understandings that the reader brings to the experiences being described by the writer" of text (Denzin, 1998, p. 316). Furthermore, it is accepted by qualitative researchers that these textual representations of phenomena are not value free but are sustained by the interpretative perspective of the writers. Writers make some claims of authority over the text and the interpretations within such texts, yet such interpretations are not final nor are they permanent, because as readers engage with the text, new understandings emerge as readers themselves make interpretations based on their own interpretative perspectives and self-reflections (Denzin, 1998).

3.2.2 Epistemological congruence of methods

Building on the above introduction to qualitative research and the positioning of this study within the qualitative approach, in this section I outline the epistemological congruence of the methods I employed. Being an emerging theoretical framework, the methods specific to a 'practice ontology' are developing still. Both Nicolini (2009) and Schatzki (2012) maintain that the multifaceted nature of 'practice' necessitates the use of multiple methods. For example, Nicolini (2009, p. 195) proposes the "*interview to the double* [emphasis in original] as a method to articulate and represent practice". Following this method, the person being interviewed describes a practice as if he or she is instructing (in detail) another person to take over their job the next day. According to Nicolini, this approach enables a researcher to achieve insights not only in what is done as part of a practice, but also into the "discursive and moral environment [in which] a practice unfolds" (Nicolini, 2009, p. 196). This approach seems a robust method for uncovering a single practice or a specific aspect of a job and how it unfolds in the context of practice. However, what methods

are suitable if the purpose of research is to ascertain how particular practices have been reshaped over time or how multiple organisational practice have been enacted in one's job?

To this end, Schatzki (2012) suggests that multiple methods may be appropriate. He suggests direct experience, aspects of language and ethnographical methods such as focus groups, hanging out and joining in, talking with and observing people as they go about practices, as well as interviews, oral histories and organisational documents, may be useful methods in researching practice. Schatzki is not, however, explicit in his discussion of which methods or which combinations of methods are most useful and in which situations. It is against this open-ended backdrop of methodological possibilities that as a researcher adopting practice as a theoretical frame I find myself very much in the role of "bricoleur" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 3).

My intent as a "bricoleur" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 3) is to use research tools to enable me to bring to the fore the multifaceted nature of the phenomena of change (practice reorganisation and recomposition), workers remaking their jobs and workers knowing in practice, and the manifestations and meanings of these phenomena as experienced by workers. Embedded in my overall ethnographic approach are the case study approach, narrative inspired semi-structured interviews, memoing, theoretical sampling, document reviews and observations. These approaches are ontologically and epistemologically congruent to 'practice' ontology on a number of levels. Firstly, ethnography, the case study approach, narrative and grounded theory embrace the notion of "multiple realities" (Creswell, 2007, p. 16) as does 'practice' ontology. These multiple realities are grounded in the lived and experienced social contexts of research participants (Geiger, 2009). Secondly, in line with the notion of multiple realities and understandings of practice ontology, my overall approach is ethnographic, encompassing elements of the case study approach and narrative, thus sustaining the notion of research as interpretative, as considering poly-vocality and social construction of meaning. To surface multiple realities and sustain poly-vocality, the data collection methods outlined above are understood as necessary in the production of a rich bricolage of the phenomenon being researched. Thirdly, these research approaches share common understandings about the nature of knowledge. Knowledge is not an abstract object that resides in people's minds, rather it emerges from social

processes of enactment, interaction and participation embedded in practices (and practising). Finally, thinking reflexively about the research underpins each of the methods adopted in the current research project. The practice of reflexive thinking enables the surfacing of the interrelationship between myself as researcher (and my world view) and the subject of research in this project (Creswell, 2007). These understandings further inform this research.

3.2.3 Methods

In this section I outline in detail the research methods and the ways in which these were employed. Embedded in the overarching ethnographical approach, I used the case study approach to frame the scope of this research. Data was collected using narrative inspired interviews, document analysis and observations. Research memoing was employed to surface the interrelationship between myself and the phenomena being researched.

Multiple case studies

When using a case study approach to frame the scope of research, a phenomenon is studied through the use of one or more “bounded system(s) or cases” (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). Cases may vary in size and may be identified as an individual, a group, an organisation or an activity. When using case study methodology a researcher may choose to study the phenomenon of interest intrinsically (intrinsic case study), by using a single case (an instrumental case study) or multiple cases (a collective case study). In the multiple case study method the phenomenon of interest is studied across a number of cases. This latter approach enables the researcher to understand the phenomenon of interest from multiple perspectives (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2001; Stake, 1998). It is the multiple case study approach that has been used to frame the scope of this study.

This study began by exploring the learning practices of workers in a single organisation. In this initial phase, my study was still evolving and was embedded within a larger Australian Research Council Discovery project, entitled *Beyond training and learning: Integrated development practices in organisations*. The research interest of the *Beyond Training* project was to explore workers' learning practices embedded in organisational work practices. As the Doctoral Candidate on the *Beyond Training* project I took part in all aspects of the *Beyond Training* project.

During this early stage of the *Beyond Training* project I noted that apart from talking about their learning practices, workers in this organisation also talked about the ways in which they practised their jobs. I became particularly interested in the practices of one worker who had described in some detail how she had been actively reshaping her job. It is from this early interest that my study germinated. I became focused on exploring the ways in which this worker was actively reshaping her job – I named this practice remaking one’s job.

This initial bounding of the study of the practice of remaking one’s job to one individual in one organisational context (single case) enabled me to develop some initial understandings of this practice. Next, I explored whether this practice extended beyond this initial individual and considered whether the remaking of one’s job was also something that other workers in this organisation were practising (within the case study). Further exploration of interview transcripts suggested that remaking one’s job was undertaken by a number of workers in this initial organisational context. The practising of remaking one’s job by a number of workers in this organisation suggested that this phenomenon could be understood as a practice sustained by the contextual characteristics of the organisation rather than as a peculiarity of one individual worker. Both the characteristics of the practice of remaking one’s job and elements of the contextual characteristics of the organisation hosting this practice were explored in a conference paper entitled ‘That’s (not) my job: Inventing and developing work practices’ (Price, et al., 2007). This paper served two purposes. First, it formed the basis of my thesis proposal. Second, it provided a mechanism for discussing the practice of remaking one’s job in a scholarly community.

The paper was presented at the *Annual Standing Conference for University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults* (SCUTREA) Conference in the summer of 2007. Feedback received from the SCUTREA research community was two-fold. Firstly, it provided support for my thesis that the remaking of one’s job was a practice embedded and sustained by the contextual characteristics of the initial research site. Secondly, the feedback received encouraged the exploration of the practice of remaking of one’s job, beyond the bounds of the initial research site – to investigate whether this practice would manifest in other organisational contexts. On the basis of this feedback I decided to extend this exploratory research of the practice of remaking one’s job. The initial single case study framework was

reshaped into a multiple case study research design. To this end two additional research site organisations were included in this research and in each organisation the experiences of multiple workers remaking their jobs were explored.⁴

Narrative inspired semi-structured interviews

Interviews are described as “special conversations” that are “interactional” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003, p. 3) and enable researchers to tap into social phenomena. In the research community, the “contemporary commitment to the interview” (Atkinson & Silverman, 1997, p. 248; Kvale, 1996; Silverman, 2006) has seen interviews become a persistent and widely used data collection tool. Some have quoted interviews being used in about 90 per cent of qualitative research situations (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003). It is therefore not unreasonable to assume that research participants, in general, may expect interviews to be part of a researcher’s tool kit and that participants may be capable of managing participation in this kind of research activity. Interviews take various forms and may be structured or unstructured. Structured interviews have been described as guided by a stringent set of questions that the researcher asks research participants to respond to. At the other end of the interview spectrum are unstructured interviews, where the researcher may simply ask research participants to freely talk about a topic or issue. Somewhere in between these two ends of the interview spectrum is the semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews allow free flow discussion and guiding questions (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003; Silverman, 2006).

Czarniawska-Jorges (2004) characterises the interview as a site of both power asymmetry and symmetry. The asymmetry is described in terms of power differentials between the researcher doing the interview and the research participant being interviewed. In this asymmetry the researcher is understood as having a power advantage because he or she coordinates the flow and topic of discussion during an interview (Czarniawska-Jorges, 2004; Holstein & Gubrium, 2003). As a counterbalance to this asymmetry, Czarniawska-Jorges (2004) talks of a power symmetry. This symmetry stems from understanding the research participants as

⁴ The inclusion of the additional research site organisations was by invitation. A group of four organisations from across different sectors (insurance, local government, banking and utilities) were invited to participate in *Beyond Training* project. Of the four organisations that were invited, three agreed to participate in my study. There was no attempt on my part to match research sites in terms of size or contextual characteristics – any similarities that emerged across the research sites were coincidental. Rather the focus was on accessing research sites that were sufficiently different in terms of size, purpose and industry.

experts in the phenomena being researched and, as such, this symmetry is particularly important when researching practice. As researchers we are not necessarily experts in the practices, jobs or professions of those who participate in the research interviews, rather we use our expertise in research methods to feature phenomena and practices of interest.

So what is interview data? When it is assumed that interview participants are “passive vessels of answers” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003, p. 12) that can be tapped into by the interviewer through various techniques, it is also often assumed that interview data is factual information passed on “relatively uncontaminated” (p. 12). This perspective on interviews maintains that the rigorous application of unbiased interview techniques and research methods ensures the “objective truths” (p. 13) from participants. In this view, participants are not co-producers of knowledge, but rather providers of “accurate, authentic reports” (p. 13). An alternative perspective about data generated from interviews is that it provides one take on social reality that is partial and that is often expressed in terms of stories or narratives (Czarniawska-Jorges, 2004). Considering interview data from this second perspective moves away from understandings of interview data as “relatively uncontaminated” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003, p. 12) to a view where the very essence of data is in the partial perspective that it represents.

Participants engaging in telling of stories is not an uncommon occurrence in interviews (Mishler, 1986). Where this occurs the interview may be understood as a space that becomes a “micro-site of [narrative production] or distribution [of narratives] where the researcher is allowed to [participate]” (Czarniawska-Jorges, p. 51) in these productions. Stories and narrative provide a means of engaging in people’s lived experiences and produce data pliable to different kinds of research questions and investigations. The pliability of stories and narratives has been emphasised in a recent review of narrative enquiry methods by Rhodes and Brown (2005) who demonstrate how narratives and stories have been used in researching sense-making, communication, change and learning in organisations.

In line with the above methodological discussion and with interviews being epistemologically congruent with the case study approach and with the investigation of practice and practising, I adopted the use of semi-structured interviews. I developed an interview schedule aimed at engaging participants in a sharing of

stories about their work life and jobs. The stories that workers shared during the interviews enabled an insight into these workers' lived experiences of their jobs, organisational change and job and organisational practices. This approach to interviewing opened up a research space where multiple voices could be heard and one where the different meanings that workers ascribed to the changes in practice that occurred in their organisations and their jobs could be brought to the fore (Creswell, 2007; Czarniawska-Jorges, 2004; Rhodes & Brown, 2005).

As anticipated, in their recounts of their jobs and organisations, the workers talked about these in ways that were beyond the bounds of organisational representations (e.g. job descriptions, organisational histories and official documentation). Furthermore, in allowing participants to articulate a story about their work, I afforded participants the space to recount what their understandings of their jobs and organisations were, how their jobs and organisations became what they were, and what role they played in these changes. Workers were able to recount the ways in which changes in organisational practices emerged, how they enacted and extended their jobs and organisational practices and how they came to know how to do this (Czarniawska-Jorges, 2004). What is interesting to note is that interview participants, for the most part, shared stories about their jobs and organisations freely. This may be attributed not only to the rapport established with them during the interviews, but also to workers having become accustomed to discussing their work with others, including co-workers, customers, suppliers, consultants and other interested professionals (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003).

The number of semi-structured interviews undertaken in each organisation was based on the size of the organisation/division being investigated. The interviews were conducted with workers across hierarchical levels and functions of the three organisations under discussion. A total of 30 workers were interviewed as part of this study and data from 22 of these interviews was analysed. The interviews took approximately one hour to complete and were held at the organisation's premises during normal working hours. A private space was sought (usually a soundproof conference room, office or vacant lunch room) for the conduct of the interviews. This approach ensured that the participants' comfort, privacy and confidentiality were maintained during the interview process. Interviews were guided by the interview schedule. The interview schedule was designed to encourage participants to share stories about their previous work histories, experiences of their organisation, jobs

and learning. Interviews were recorded utilising a digital recorder and transcribed prior to analysis. (The *Interview Schedules* are included in Appendix A).

Organisational document reviews

Organisational document reviews were conducted prior, during and upon completion of onsite data collection phases of this study. The first phase of organisational document review commenced with a review of each participant organisation's website and of publicly accessible information. The public information that was accessed included organisational histories, customer charters, service offerings, management team profiles, annual reports, media releases, organisational vision, mission and corporate intent statements and industry reports. These documents provided an insight into the ways in which each organisation presented itself in the public domain, their public image and the espoused values and culture.

The second organisational document review phase involved the review of internal organisational documents. These were obtained from each organisation prior to the 'on site' phase of this study. The documents reviewed included organisational charts, individual business unit plans, policy and procedure documents, internal reports, performance plans, enterprise agreement plans, job descriptions and employee newsletters. These internal documents provided different understandings about each organisation. The internal documents were useful in building an insight into the ways in which these organisations communicated with employees, the formal management practices in place, the formalised ways of doing things and the kinds of behaviours that were formally sanctioned and expected.

The internal document review phase was useful in enabling me to glean extant stories (Czarniawska-Jorges, 2004) about each organisation and in developing a better understanding and feel for each organisation prior to commencing interviewing and observations. The document reviews also enabled me to develop an 'ear' for the distinctive language and namings of each organisation (e.g. customer, client, ratepayer, students are examples of the different labels used by the organisations to refer to those people who used and paid for organisational services). Finally, understandings developed from the document reviews were used in formulating the questions included in the Interview Schedules. Documents collected and analysed were also useful artefacts during the interview sessions. For example, business unit and organisational charts were used as guides to locate

interview participants in the context of the formal hierarchy; job descriptions were used as prompts for stories about how someone’s job may have changed. The kinds of organisational documents that were collected and reviewed are listed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Public and Internal Organisational Documents

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Value statements • Annual reports • Job evaluation systems & awards • Job descriptions • Media releases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational charts • Business plans • Financial statements • Induction documents • Minutes from meetings • Other policy and procedure documents. • Delegations documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment & selection documents (including job advertisements and related policy procedures) • Industry and government documents • Performance management appraisal
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Observations

Observations are often used as a supplementary research tool to interview-based research. Observations may be used in different ways. Observations may be used to understand what people actually do, by observing a specific work practice. Observations may be used to understand interactions among participants, by observing formal and informal situations such as meetings or morning teas and celebrations. Finally, observations may be used to develop a feel for the general organisational context by spending time in the setting where research is being conducted (Creswell, 2007; Holstein & Gubrium, 2003).

The observations undertaken in this study were used as a means of getting a feel for each organisational context. Observations were conducted before, during and after the research interviews, during formal meetings and training sessions and by being present in lunch rooms during morning tea and lunch periods. The observations conducted before and after interviews, and during meetings, training sessions and meal breaks were used as a means of obtaining a ‘feel’ for each of the site organisations. These were particularly useful in developing understandings about the daily goings on, the work of each organisation and the ways in which the organisation and the work context was played out in formal and informal settings. These general observations were also useful prompts for the formulation of questions explored during interviews.

The observations during interviews were undertaken to support the interview interaction. By observing participants' non-verbal cues, I was able to gauge the level of comfort with the interview situation and the degree of rapport being established. In addition, these observations facilitated the flow of the interview interaction in a number of ways. A laugh, a pause or a sigh were used as indicators for further questions, asking for clarification about a topic (e.g. *can you tell me about that; sounds like there is a story to be told*), encouraging the participant to freely discuss a topic (e.g. actively listening without interruption), or terminating the interview (e.g. where participants appeared disinterested or fatigued). In instances where interviews were conducted in a participant's office or in conference rooms, observations were taken of these spaces. I explored these spaces for artefacts (i.e. posters, performance information, business plans, texts and reports) that could be useful prompts during the interviews.

Approximately 30 hours of observation were undertaken across the three organisations. Field notes were taken during these observations. The field notes included an outline of the practices that were observed as well as impressions about the work context during these practices (see Appendix B). The field notes were useful in a number of ways. First, they were used to build a descriptive picture of the organisational context and practices being undertaken (e.g. interrelationships among research participants congruence between recounts of practices and the ways in which practices were enacted). Second, they were useful in capturing impressions and questions that were explored during subsequent participant interviews. Finally, in addition to being useful sources of data in themselves, field notes also played an important role as memory triggers (e.g. to bring me back to the research site) when conducting the more in-depth analysis of the interview data and documentation during the analysis phases of this study.

Memoing and theoretical sampling

Throughout the data collection phase, I used the technique of memoing to note my initial reactions to the data as it was being generated. Memoing is a grounded theory practice of systematic note taking that focuses the researcher on capturing ideas, impressions and reactions to the data as well as any possible connections among the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). Memos differ from field notes in that the latter can be considered data while the former are notations about the data. As this study formed part of the larger *Beyond Training* project, during the data collection phases,

memoing facilitated the process of theoretical sampling (Glaser, 2002). In conducting initial interviews, in the role of Doctoral Candidate part of the *Beyond Training* project, I was able to ascertain initial impressions of each organisational context and the kinds of data being generated from participant interviews. Through the general impressions captured in these memos I implemented the practice of theoretical sampling.

Theoretical sampling is a technique where data plays a role in informing decisions about further sampling and data collection (Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1997). Using this method I focused my attention on those participants who talked about their jobs and organisations in ways that related to the questions posed in this study. Those workers who talked about remaking their jobs I invited to participate in a further (but shorter) interview. In this second round of interviews, questions focused on exploring the experiences of these workers in greater detail (Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1997; Suddaby, 2006). In addition to aiding theoretical sampling, I used memoing as means of recognising and capturing the ways in which my values, biases and assumptions informed this research and that made the practice of remaking one's job a practice that I was passionate about researching (Piantanida, Tananis, & Grubs, 2004)

3.3 Analysis

The analysis of data commenced early in the data collection process and progressed through a number of phases. The data collected through the interviews, document reviews and observations was used as follows:

- **Interviews:** Interview data formed the majority of the data used in the analysis. This is reflected in the emphasis that is placed on interview data in Chapters, 4, 5 and 6.
- **Documents:** Internal and external documents were analysed to support the social embeddedness of practices (e.g. customer service, commercialisation and project management) within the industry contexts of each organisation. Organisational and industry documents were used for this purpose in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 and to provide a detailed description of each organisation in Chapter 1.

- **Observations and Field Notes:** Observational data and field note data were collected and analysed in order to develop a feel for each organisational context and as memory triggers during the analysis of the interview data. Field Notes also served as prompts during interviews. There is limited emphasis on observational data and field note data in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

In the sections that follow I discuss the approach taken in the analysis of the above data and demonstrate the steps and procedures undertaken.

3.3.1 Introducing thematic analysis

In line with the interpretative nature of this study the data analysis approach adopted was thematic analysis. Thematic analysis has been described by Braun and Clarke (2006) as a “flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data” (p. 78). Essentially, thematic analysis enables the researcher to identify, analyse and report on themes (or patterns) in a body of data. A theme describes a “patterned response” (p. 82) in data which is considered important on the basis of the researcher’s judgement and the research questions under consideration (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2007).

Thematic analysis can take two forms, theoretical thematic analysis or inductive thematic analysis. These two approaches differ in the ways in which themes are identified. In theoretical thematic analysis, themes are identified on the basis of specific theoretical interests and bear a close relationship to the questions asked during the data collection (e.g. interview questions). In inductive thematic analysis, the themes that are identified may not necessarily be related to questions asked during research interviews. In this latter approach the researcher is not attempting to fit data into a predetermined analysis frame – rather themes are noted and brought to the fore during initial data reviews (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). In this study both approaches were undertaken.

In the analysis of the data generated from the first research site organisation an inductive thematic analysis approach was adopted. During interviews undertaken in the first research site, participants were asked to talk about their organisations and jobs in general ways and about the kinds of organisational practices that facilitated learning for them. The data from the first research site was analysed using inductive

thematic analysis, generating a number of themes. The themes identified through this approach were further explored in the second and third research site organisations using theoretical thematic analysis.

In thematic analysis, identified themes may be analysed on a number of levels. When analysing themes at an explicit level, the analysis of the theme focuses on the description and discussion of what participants say about a topic or phenomenon. At this level of analysis there is little or no interpretation by the researcher beyond what is explicitly said. When themes are analysed at a latent level, what is explicitly said by research participants about a topic or phenomenon is further interpreted by the researcher. This interpretation may be conducted with reference to existing theorisations. In this study latent theme analysis was conducted with data from all research sites. Specifically, themes were analysed with respect to Schatzkian notions of practice and social site and the ways in which these notions were enacted in organisations (Schatzki, 1996, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2011).

3.3.2 Applying thematic analysis to the data

Phase 1 – Inductive thematic analysis

The analysis of data for this study was conducted over a number of phases. Phase 1 focused on the analysis of data generated from the College, the first research site (see Chapter 1 for an overview of this research site). This initial phase of analysis occurred prior to the commencement of data collection at the Council and the Utility, the second and third organisations. Data analysis of Phase 1 informed the data collection, sampling and subsequent phases of analysis. In this phase, nine themes were identified through inductive thematic analysis. The analysis of interview texts was supported by impressions captured in research memos generated from the analysis of public and internal documents as well as field notes. Next, these initial nine themes were aggregated into four broader themes that were used to further explore the data. The themes were labelled as:

- Remaking of one's job
- Organisational changes emerging from remaking one's job
- Macro organisational changes
- Knowing

These thematic groups were used to recategorise the data. The interview texts, data generated from organisational documents and field notes were linked to one or more of the four thematic groups. The relationships among data in and across thematic groups were identified and described as were relationships to existing theoretical frameworks (e.g. job design literature, practice literature).

The final documented outputs of Phase 1 of the data analysis were used for two purposes, to further refine the research process and to communicate initial findings to the wider research community. The outputs of the Phase 1 data analysis were used to fine-tune the research tools and techniques used in the second and third organisations. Specifically, the interview schedules used in the second and third organisations, the Council and the Utility, were reworked, and additional questions were included to prompt interview participants to talk specifically about macro organisational change, changes in their jobs and how job specific changes impacted organisational practices. Similarly, organisational documents were reviewed in light of the thematic categories that were identified and finally the thematic categories were included as prompts on the Field Observation Protocol.

The publication of the findings from Phase 1 of the data analysis process as a refereed conference paper, entitled 'That's (not) my job: Inventing and developing work practices' (Price, et al., 2007), was a means to gain valuable feedback on the phenomenon of workers remaking their jobs from the wider research community. The feedback received concerning the research paper was used in two ways. First, it supported my initial intuitions of the 'practice' theoretical framework as one useful in framing this study. Second, it urged me to expand the exploration of the practice of remaking of one's job beyond the bounds of the College – to investigate whether this practice would manifest in other organisational contexts.

The detailed research procedures and research outputs for Phase 1 of Data Analysis are presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Phase 1 – Detailed Data Analysis Procedures

Procedure ⁵	Description	Output
<i>Data management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> De-identification of participants Transcriptions of interview recordings Collation of critical documents Collation of field notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> De-identified participant list Interview transcript texts Critical document list Field Notes list
<i>Reading</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading of publicly accessible organisational information prior to entering research sites Reading of interview texts and relistening of interviews Reading of critical documents Reading of field notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research memos about organisational representations in the public domain (e.g. image espoused values and culture) Research site profile Annotated interview texts Annotated critical documents Research memos based on interview texts, critical documents and field notes Research memos related to initial impressions about the organisation
<i>Describing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of initial thematic groups Descriptions of initial thematic groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of initial thematic groups and descriptions
<i>Classifying</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aggregation of initial thematic groups into thematic categories Construction of descriptions for thematic categories Identification and allocation of data to thematic categories Description of interrelationships among categories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of named thematic categories and descriptions Thematic categories populated with interview texts, document excerpts and field note summaries
<i>Interpreting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpretation of themes and relationships among themes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thematic relationship diagrams Thematic categories and literature relationship diagrams
<i>Representing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research publication - Price et al. (2007)

⁵ This framework has been adapted from Creswell (2007, pp. 156-157).

Phase 2 – Further thematic analysis

The second stage of data analysis, Phase 2, focused on the analysis of data generated from the second and third organisations, the Council and the Utility. Due to the close time proximity between the data collection at the Council and the Utility, the analysis of data from these organisations occurred concurrently. The detailed research procedures and research outputs for Phase Two of data analysis are presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Phase 2 – Detailed Data Analysis Procedures

Procedure	Description	Output
<i>Data management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Phase 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Phase 1
<i>Reading</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Phase 1, but with a specific focus on identified themes of: remaking of one's job; organisational changes emerging from job changes; macro organisational change; knowing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Phase 1
<i>Describing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checking of Phase 1 thematic categories and description 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed list of named thematic categories and descriptions.
<i>Classifying</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification and allocation of data to thematic categories Description of interrelationships among categories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thematic categories populated with interview texts, document excerpts and field note summaries
<i>Interpreting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpretation of themes and relationships among themes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thematic relationship diagrams Thematic categories and literature relationship diagrams
<i>Representing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research publications: Price et al. (2008) Price et al. (2009)

The detailed research procedures pertaining to Phase 1 and Phase 2 were similar for the most part, with the exceptions being the Reading and Describing procedures.

During Phase 2, the Reading procedures focused on the thematic categories generated from the analysis of Phase 1 data. Similarly, the Describing procedures focused on confirming and validating the thematic categories generated in Phase 1 with the data from the Council and the Utility analysed in Phase 2.

Findings from Phase 2 of the data analysis process culminated into two publications. The first publication, entitled 'Remaking jobs: Enacting and Learning work practices' (Price, Scheeres, & Boud, 2008), combined data from College and Council and utilised Schatzkian notions of practice and social site. Referee feedback received for this publication was strongly supportive of the application of Schatzkian theorisations and of my contribution of extending these to workers and their jobs. The second publication, entitled 'On practices that persist and perpetuate: Learning work in an Australian utility company' (Price, Scheeres, & Johnsson, 2009), draws upon data generated from the Utility. This paper explored the thematic grouping of 'macro change' with Tsoukas and Chia (2002) theorisations of continuous organisational change and Schatzkian theorisations of practice and social site. Feedback received for this publication was used in three ways. First, it assisted in further developing my understandings of the relationship between theorisations of practice and organisational change. Second, it inspired Phase 3 data analysis – the cross-case analysis of findings. Finally, it facilitated the shaping of the final structure of this thesis.

Phase 3 – Further thematic analysis

Phase 3 of data analysis focused on cross-organisational analysis. This final analysis phase was conducted upon completion of Phases 1 and 2, which reflected analysis at a single research site. The purpose of this third phase was to identify emergent patterns and themes across each organisational research site with a particular focus on the thematic groups of macro organisational changes and knowing. The purpose of this analysis phase was not to make any direct comparisons across participant organisations (as it understood that the nature of this study does not permit such comparisons), rather it was to comment on emergent patterns of similarity among the participant organisations about ways in which industry wide changes create the impetus for internal organisational change and the ways in which learning played a role in these organisational changes. These are presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Phase 3 – Detailed Data Analysis Procedures

Procedure	Description	Output
<i>Data management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Phase 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Phase 1
<i>Reading</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Phase 1, but with a specific focus on identified themes of Macro organisational change and Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Phase 1
<i>Describing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checking of Phase 1 thematic categories and description 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed list of named thematic categories and descriptions
<i>Classifying</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification and allocation of data to thematic categories Description of interrelationships among categories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thematic categories populated with interview texts, document excerpts and field note summaries
<i>Interpreting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpretation of themes and relationships among themes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thematic relationship diagrams Thematic categories and literature relationship diagrams
<i>Representing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of thesis

3.3.3 Constraints of study

One of the constraints of this study was the nature of the data obtained. First, the historical data about the changes that have occurred at College, Council and Utility was drawn from secondary sources. These sources have included industry/government publications and academic research rather than direct accounts by workers present during the implementation of such changes. One of the constraints of using such sources is that these present particular interpretations of these events, driven by the imperatives of the governing bodies that initiated and were most likely to benefit from those changes. I suggest that embedded in these data sources were meta-narratives sustaining neo-liberal ideology and its legitimisation (Czarniawska-Jorges, 2004).

A second constraint of this study is reflected in the nature of the data pertaining to the organisational practices discussed. As semi-structured interviews were a major source of data for this study, descriptions of practices were ascertained from workers' accounts of those practices rather than direct observations of workers doing those practices. For example, the practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management were not directly observed by me during the fieldwork. Rather, accounts of these practices were obtained during the interviews. Thus, when discussing and describing particular practices in this study, the data represents sayings about the "doings and sayings" of a practice rather than actual "doings and sayings" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 77) that occur in the enactment of a practice. The data presented represents workers' accounts of what they say and do in the enactment of job and organisational practices, rather than their doings and sayings *in situ*.

Finally, the data represents the accounts of workers who were invited by each company's liaison officer to participate in the research. These workers were willing to volunteer their time to participate in this research; however, as a researcher, I had limited control over which workers were invited. This is a constraint of this research in the sense that accounts of other workers who may not have been afforded the opportunity to participate, or who may have been less confident in coming forward and participating in this research, have not been included. Such accounts may have provided alternative perspectives and understandings of the phenomena discussed in this study.

3.4 Practical research activities

3.4.1 Ethics

This study was conducted ethically and in line with the requirements of the UTS Human Research Ethics Committee and University's Ethics Policies and Guidelines. Although this study occurred in coordination with the larger *Beyond Training* project, I submitted a separate ethics application and obtained independent ethics approval from the University of Technology, Sydney, Human Research Ethics Committee.

Throughout this study I was committed to ensuring each participant's contribution was respected and valued. Before every interview and observation I sought informed consent from each individual participant and maintained each participant's right to privacy and protection from embarrassment, intrusion and harm. I sought permission from each organisation's appointed research liaison officer in order to access, use and publish the organisational information used in this study.

In line with the Ethics approval of this study, all participants' interview recordings and transcripts were de-identified. Participants' whose data was used in this research were given pseudonyms to protect their privacy. Organisational documents, observation notes and memos were also de-identified. All the above data was stored in a secured filing cabinet and in locked digital files.

3.4.2 Research site negotiations and agreements

As this study was carried out within the scope of the larger *Beyond Training* project, there was significant coordination between the two projects. The selection of participant organisations, access, communication and participant management occurred in tandem. Four organisations representing multiple industries were accessed for the *Beyond Training* project. The organisations sought included a mix of community, government and private sectors, with varying size and scope. This study draws on data from three of the four organisations that participated in the *Beyond Training* project. These organisations are the College, Council and Utility. All three organisations are located in the state of New South Wales and two are located in the Sydney metropolitan area.

Initially the Principal of the College, the Human Resource Manager of the Council and the Regional Project Manager of the Sunnydale Region of the Utility were contacted and invited to participate in the *Beyond Training* project. The initial telephone discussions with these contacts were followed by a formal letter outlining the key elements of the research (see Appendix C). Following these initial conversations and written communications, meetings were arranged with the Principal or the Senior Managers of these organisations. During these meetings the Chief Investigators of the *Beyond Training* project discussed the project and project outcomes in detail, and potential organisational benefits to be gained from participation in the research. I attended these initial meetings and discussed how my

study was interconnected with the *Beyond Training* project. This initial meeting was also an opportunity for organisational representatives to ask questions about the research and the research process. All organisations accepted their invitations to participate in the research within six weeks from the initial contact.

Once in principle agreement was secured for the research, formal agreements were undertaken. The structure of these formal agreements ranged from a letter providing permission to undertake the research to a more detailed memorandum of understanding. Encompassed in these formal agreements (in varying degrees of detail and complexity) were:

- Access timeline and research milestones;
- Permission to gain access to the workplace, workers and organisational documents;
- Outline of the research outputs to be presented to the organisation upon completion;
- Communications protocols; and
- Confidentiality agreement.

Each organisation appointed a liaison person for the duration of the research. For two of the three organisations the contact person who had initially facilitated access to the organisation was appointed as the liaison person. For the Utility, the Regional Project Manager, Springvale Region, continued as the organisational liaison person and at the Council the Human Resource Manager also continued as the liaison person but also appointed the Human Resources Team Leader as a second organisational liaison person. At the College the Principal, who had been the initial contact, appointed one of the Faculty Managers as the organisational liaison person. The rationale behind the appointment of the Human Resource Team Leader and the Faculty Manager as organisational liaisons was development — the research project was understood by these workers' superiors as an opportunity for development and learning.

The role of the organisational liaison people was to facilitate access to the organisation. This included access to organisational materials such as public and internal organisational documents and industry documents. Furthermore, the organisational liaison people also facilitated communication with potential research

participants. They managed the invitations to participate in interviews and coordinated times and locations for interviews and observations. Finally, and most importantly, the organisational liaison people were also guides during site visits — not simply in the sense of showing the research team around the work site, but also in terms of answering questions about the organisation as they emerged throughout the research process.

3.4.3 Permissions and informed consent

Informed consent was sought from each participant. Prior to the interviews, participants were provided with a Research Participation Information Kit (these materials were prepared in coordination with the *Beyond Training Project*). Included in the Research Participant Information Kit were the Research Project Information Sheet and the Informed Consent Forms and participation brochure (see Appendix D).

Prior to commencement of the interviews, participants were given an opportunity to ask questions and voice any concerns they may have had about their participation in this study. Once questions and concerns were addressed and the participants wished to proceed with the interviews, signing of two copies of the Informed Consent Form took place. Each participant was asked to retain one signed consent form for his or her records. The second signed consent form was retained as part of the study file. For those participants taking part in subsequent interviews further informed consent was sought.

3.4.4 Research site exit strategy

The research site exit strategy included three core elements: the preparation of an Executive Summary of research findings, a presentation highlighting these findings and a research conclusion meeting. I participated in the development of the research exit strategy and contributed to each element. As an incentive to participation in the research, an Executive Summary of research findings was prepared for each organisation. The Executive Summary included key research findings and observations of interest during the research process. The purpose of the Executive Summary was not to make recommendations (as a consultant report may be) but rather it was to provide each organisation with an external perspective

of practices that related to learning. Associated with the Executive Summary was a presentation. With the assistance of the organisation liaison person a presentation session was coordinated at each organisation. The presentation included an overview of the material included in the Executive Summary and an opportunity for research participants and managers to ask questions relating to the key research findings.

The final element of the research exit strategy was the research conclusion meeting. At this meeting the organisation was formally thanked for participating in the research. During this meeting there was a further opportunity to discuss the findings of the research and for the organisation to provide the research team with feedback on their experience of the research process. Prior to concluding the meeting each organisation's CEO was asked to be a referee for the research team.

In summary, the methods employed in this study reflect an overarching ethnographic approach, using multiple case studies, narrative inspired semi-structured interviews, document analysis and observations. These methods are ontologically and epistemologically congruent with practice ontology. In Chapters 4, 5 and 6 the findings of this study are presented and discussed.

Chapter 4

Changing Organisations: Reorganising, Recomposing and Enacting New Practices

4.1 About this chapter

In this chapter my purpose is to challenge existing managerial and processual views of organisations and change. I argue that Schatzkian notions of organisations and change, which are underpinned by his perspective on practice and site ontology, provide a more comprehensive frame through which to understand these concepts (Schatzki, 1996, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006). I maintain that concepts such as organisation/organising, stability/change, changing/organising that have emerged in the management and processual literature may not necessarily be understood as irreconcilable dualities. Rather, when adopting a Schatzkian perspective of organisations and change, these concepts may be understood as emerging patterns of work activities and interpretations that unfold in and through practices as part of the social site.

I begin this chapter with a theoretical discussion. I argue that in line with Schatzki (2002, 2005) organisations exist in nexuses, in a mutually constitutive relationship as part of the social site, and as a result of such interrelationship, changes or shifts in the practices of one part of such nexuses has a rippling effect across other interconnected parts. I propose that Schatzkian notions of practice reorganisation and recomposition provide a conceptual framework for explaining both stability and ongoing change as co-occurring phenomena. I contrast these ideas with prevailing managerial views of change (e.g. life-cycle, teleological, evolutionary, dialectical, social-cognition and cultural) which, for the most part, position organisations as entities responding to their environments in a range of ways. I also contrast Schatzkian notions of organisations and change with the processual perspective (see for example Chia, 1999; Tsoukas, 2001; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Weick & Quinn, 1999) of the same. I maintain that although there is agreement between some of the ideas of the processual perspective and those of Schatzki, ultimately the processual perspective continues to maintain an ontological separation between individuals and the institutions of which individuals are part. I find Schatzki's notions of practice and site ontology to be more robust because they avoid this ontological separation.

Second, I present and discuss findings of the study I conducted at College, Council and Utility. Through this empirical discussion I aim to demonstrate that College, Council and Utility may be understood to exist in nexuses in and as part of the social site and how changes in any part of these nexuses have resulted in shifts in the practices of these organisations. I discuss the application of neo-liberal reforms at College, Council and Utility and how these emerged from shifts in the government/industry contexts (i.e. sites) of these organisations. Third, I draw on the Schatzkian notions of practice reorganisation and recomposition to account for ongoing change and stability in the practices of College, Council and Utility. I conclude my empirical discussion by focusing on the implementation and enactment of newly introduced practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management. I argue that these newly introduced practices were being enacted among tensions and possibilities that emerged from the reorganisation and recomposition of the existing practices of College, Council and Utility.

4.2 Organisation as entity, process or practice bundle: Implications for change

In this section I consider three perspectives on the notion of organisation — organisation as entity, organisation as processes and organisation as practice bundles. Alongside these views, I consider how the notion of change may be understood and how this is explored in the management and organisational studies literature. I discuss this literature by drawing on a number of writers (see for example Beer & Walton, 1987; Porras & Silvers, 1991; Sashkin & Burke, 1987; Woodman, 1989) and in particular the multiple perspectives put forward by Van de Ven and Poole (1995) and Kezar (2001), who have segmented the change literature according to the ontological foundations of theories that have emerged over the last three decades.⁶

⁶ My rationale for drawing on literature reviews of organisational change rather than primary sources is threefold. First, using literature reviews that have developed frameworks or lenses for talking about organisational change enable the multiplicity within this literature to be emphasised. Second, literature reviews provide an efficient way to present the key findings from a vast body of literature. Finally, on the basis that the purpose of the present research project is to highlight how Schatzkian (2002, 2005, 2006) notions of practice unfold in the context of organisations, rather than one specifically focused on organisational change literature, the efficiency of literature reviews allows more space for the development of a practice based argument for understanding practice in organisations that have undergone change.

4.2.1 Organisation as entity

The notion of organisation is central in the study of management. In the bulk of the management literature, organisations have been understood and equated to things, entities or objects. For example, in *Management* by Robbins, Bergman and Stagg (1997) (a commonly used text for undergraduate and post-graduate Management courses in Australia in the late 1990s) the authors defined an organisation as “a systemic arrangement of people to accomplish a specific purpose” (p. 5). Central to the understanding of organisations are the structural characteristics of complexity (i.e. number of hierarchical levels in the structure), formalisation (i.e. extent of reliance on rules, procedures and standardisation) and centralisation (i.e. extent of reliance of upper management for decision making), characteristics whose lineage can be traced back to Weber’s notions of bureaucracy (Weber, 1947, 1991). The notion of organisation as a thing continues today (be it with some degree of modernisation to reflect the social elements of organisations) and is reflected in more recent definitions of an organisation as “a consciously coordinated social unit, composed of two or more people that functions on a relatively continuous basis to achieve a common goal or set of goals” (Robbins, et al., 2010, p. 13). Here too, complexity, formalisation and centralisation continue to be defining characteristics that establish organisations as entities or things. Organisations as entities imply that there is “always something there” (Van de Ven & Poole, 2005, p. 1380) that may change from one state to another, but there is a retention of its identity and purpose.

Much of the literature about organisational change maintains a view of organisations as entities or things. Organisational change, understood as organisational development, planned change and transformation, and discussed in terms of contextual characteristics and outcomes or in terms of a process of an organisation (i.e. a process of the thing known as organisation), implies that an organisation is a thing or entity that undergoes transformation in one or more of its parts. This view was strongly maintained in the organisational change literature of the 1980s. The concept of organisational development (OD) defined as deliberate, planned and internally driven interventions (Beer & Walton, 1987) and which included initiatives such as strategic planning, reward systems and management structures as well as culture, leadership, employee involvement and conflict management (Sashkin & Burke, 1987), was the centrepiece of this literature.

As the research in the field evolved, planned change became the central concept in theoretical model development. In the later literature, spanning the years 1990 to 1998, the role of the external environment as well as organisational responses to it, gathered interest. Organisational change was beginning to be understood as something that happened to organisations over time and something that could be impacted upon (both positively and negatively) by organisational members as well as factors external to the organisation (Dumphy & Stace, 1991; Porras & Silvers, 1991). In reviewing the literature from 1990 to 1998 three clusters of research are identified by Armenakis and Bedeian (1999). The first cluster is populated with research studies that developed understandings of the contextual models of change – the identification of internal (e.g. resistance, work structures) and external (e.g. technology, competition) environmental conditions. This first cluster of research studies builds upon earlier models of change (see for example Dumphy & Stace, 1991; Porras & Silvers, 1991) that emphasised the importance of an organisation's environment as a driver for change. The second cluster of research studies highlighted a further shift in understanding. This second cluster shows organisational change beginning to be understood as a process of the organisations. As a process, change is described as having a number of phases and as unfolding over time. This perspective marks a break with previous views (e.g. OD, planned change views) that understood change in terms of specific programmed organisational implementations. The third cluster of research studies focuses on understanding the impacts of organisational change in terms of individual and organisational outcomes, in particular how individual experiences of change (e.g. resistance, commitment, stress) could be managed in order to avoid negative impacts on organisational outcomes (e.g. profitability, service levels). This third cluster of research studies highlights a further shift from previous work. In this third cluster workers are no longer understood as passive recipients of change implementations (as within the OD literature), but as having some role that can, both negatively and positively, impact on an organisation's outcomes.

In keeping with approaches to better understand the theoretical underpinning of existing organisational change literature, Van de Ven and Poole (1995) introduce what they describe as four basic "viewpoints" (p. 511) or perspectives for explaining the phenomenon of organisational change. These viewpoints, named the life-cycle, teleological, evolutionary and dialectical viewpoints, stem from different ontological starting points. More recently, these four viewpoints were expanded by Kezar (2001)

who proposes the addition of the social-cognition and cultural viewpoints.⁷ The work of Van de Ven and Poole (1995) and Kezar (2001) marks, I believe, a maturing in understanding in this field of research. First, in putting forward a system of viewpoints for understanding the vast body of change literature, these authors have not only facilitated a mechanism for ordering the literature, but have also provided a means for questioning the ontological foundations of the theorisations in it. Second, through the introduction of the social cognition and cultural perspectives as mechanisms for understanding organisational change, Kezar (2001) has brought to the fore the emergence of new ways of understanding the world (including organisations) that are in keeping with shifts in thinking about the social world (e.g. post-structuralism, post-modernism).

By bringing together the work of Van de Ven and Poole (1995) and Kezar (2001) a more comprehensive ordering framework emerges. The perspectives in this framework may be characterised in the following ways. Theories of organisational change reflecting the life-cycle perspective take up understandings of organisations as organisms (things or entities) that are “born, grow, go through stages of revival and eventually decline” (Kezar, 2001, p. 37). From this viewpoint, change is something that cannot be avoided and is an essential part of what constitutes the organisational entity. Organisational change follows a prefigured logic and a trajectory, where previous stages of development are understood as the foundations for latter ones (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). Models of organisational change that understand organisations as organisms going through a lifecycle reflect a deterministic ontology. In these models, the focus is on internal organisational factors (i.e. factors relating to the organism) as the mechanisms of change, leaving the potential impact of the external environment almost unacknowledged (Kezar, 2001). Examples of organisational change models taking up the lifecycle viewpoint include the work of Kimberly and Miles (1980) on the analysis of life-cycle theory of organisations, Cameron and Whetten’s (1983) aggregate life-cycle models of organisations and Drazin and Kazanjian’s (1990) longitudinal analysis of organisational change.

Theories of organisational change that can be characterised as teleological represent the majority of work in the organisational change literature (Kezar, 2001).

⁷ Models of change subscribing to the cultural perspective that understand organisations as processes will be discussed in the following section.

From this viewpoint organisations are understood as purposeful entities, where change is inherently logical and follows a linear path. The underlying assumption of organisational change models that take up the teleological perspective is one that reflects change as a means for an organisation to achieve a desired end state or goal. Models of change that are underpinned by teleological assumptions depict change as directed from the top and, depending on the particular model being adopted, employees having varying degrees of involvement and empowerment in the implementation of the change. The degree of change required is assessed based on an organisation's state in relation to a desired end state or goal. Unlike life-cycle theories, teleological theories account for the impact of environmental forces on an organisation's change trajectory toward desired end state or goals. Environmental forces are a consideration rather than a driver of change. In teleological thinking, change is always purposively driven from within the organisation (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). Examples of change models that are underpinned by teleological assumptions include strategic planning models (see for example Kaplan & Norton, 1996; Mintzberg, 1994), organisational development models including Total Quality Management and re-engineering (see for example Deming, 1981; Wilkinson & Willmott, 1994) as well as Lewin's (1951) model of change and Dumphy and Stace's (1991) planned change model.

Theories of organisational change that can be ascribed characteristics of the evolutionary perspective take as their starting point ecological evolution. Theoretical models in this cluster suggest that organisations evolve through cycles and those organisations that survive are those that best fit environmental conditions. Again organisations are understood as things or entities (with an identity) that change in response to their environmental conditions. Unlike the life-cycle cluster, models in this cluster are focused on the interaction between the organisation and its external environment, for it is external environmental conditions that necessitate organisational adaptation (Kezar, 2001; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). The organisational-environment relationship is also a feature that differentiates evolutionary theories of organisational change from those that are underpinned by teleological assumptions, because the environment and survival in a changing environment are seen as the drivers for change.

Adaptation models of change such as Lewin, Weigelt and Emery's (2004) model and resource dependence models (see for example Feldman, 2004; Sporn, 1999)

encompass the underlying assumptions of evolutionary theories. Practical applications of change underpinned by evolutionary assumptions often reflect structural change. Restructuring responses and the many permutations (e.g. downsizing, re-engineering and outsourcing) have often been described as attempts to achieve an optimum fit between an organisation's structural configuration and its external environment (Dawson, 1996; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Webb, 2004).

Other examples of models of change that fit within the evolutionary cluster include the early work by Nelson and Winter (1982) who applied economic evolutionary theory to organisations, Donaldson's (1987) structural model of change, Bruderer and Singh's (1996) algorithmic model of organisational evolution and Carroll's (1997) organisational ecology model. Included in this research cluster are theories of organisations as self-organising systems such as that of White, Marin, Brazeal and Friedman (1997) and complex system theory models such as that of Morel and Ramanujam (1999). Although popular in the literature, evolutionary models have been criticised for their focus on internal-external fit at the expense of understanding the complexity of organisational life (Kezar, 2001).

Interest in understanding the complexity of organisational life gave rise to theories of organisational change that reflect what can be referred to as the dialectical perspective (Ford & Ford, 1994; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). Theories belonging to this perspective highlight the importance of plurality, conflicting forces and opposing values both within and outside the "organizational entity" (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995, p. 517). Plurality, opposing forces and values exist within and outside organisations. Within organisations these are reflected in the existence of one or more dominant coalitions which hold power, and a number of less powerful conflicting groups. Organisational change occurs as power dominance shifts between groups that differ in their value systems (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). A well-known model that addresses conflicting forces and the importance of the political machinations is Kotter's (1995) eight-step transformational change model. Kotter (1996) recognises the importance of a "guiding coalition" (p. 57) in achieving change outcomes. Models examining barriers to change and conflict resulting from organisational change also tend to exhibit dialectical assumptions. Examples of theoretical contributions that focus on the barriers (including political) to organisational change include Argyris' (1993) defensive routines model and O'Toole's (1995) model which recognises the

important role of followers in questioning of assumptions and reassessing of goals in facilitating change.

According to Kezar (2001), models of organisational change that take up the assumptions of the social-cognition perspective bring to the fore the importance of concepts such as sensemaking, cognitive schema, identities and interpretations. Learning, from the social-cognition perspective, is the key thing that brings about organisational change. A dominant assumption underlying theories subscribing to this view is organisational change as learning. Theories of organisational change that subscribe to the social-cognition perspective accommodate multiple understandings of what constitutes an organisation (i.e. entity or social process).⁸ In social-cognition models of organisational change that assume organisations as entities, learning (as change) is something that the organisational entity does. The seminal work of Senge (1990), which brings to the fore the notion of the 'learning organisation', assumes learning is synonymous with change, and something that an organisation does. Other models (see for example King, Felin, & Whetten, 2010; Whetten, 2006) which subscribe to organisations as learning entities assume that learning leads to change and that change is observable in terms of a shift in the identity of an organisation.

In summary, in the literature discussed above, organisations are understood as stable entities that from time to time may undergo change. In the early research pertaining to the phenomenon of change, change was often understood as internally driven organisational development. In later research notions about the phenomenon of change are extended beyond the confines of internal drivers. In this later literature, change is described as an inherent part of the organisation organism (life-cycle models); as a result of shifting goals and priorities (teleological models); as a result of environmental conditions (evolutionary models); as a result of shifting internal sources of power (dialectical models); or as a result of shifting cognitive frames and learning (socio-cognition models).

⁸ Models of change subscribing to the socio-cognition perspective that understand organisations as processes will be discussed in the following section.

4.2.2 Organisation as a process

A departure from the notion of organisations as entities may be seen in the work of Weick and Quinn (1999), Chia (1999), Tsoukas (2001) and Tsoukas and Chia (2002). These authors replace notions of organisations as entities with notions of organisations as processes. Furthermore, these authors embed notions of processes that are in a state of flux or change in the conceptualisations of organisational processes. Change is understood as an evolving and indeterminate aspect of life, including organisational life. These notions of organisations and change introduced a vocabulary of dynamism to organisational research that was previously absent.

By moving away from the notion of organisational change and introducing conceptions of organisations as changing, Weick and Quinn (1999) explicate organisational change as a process unfolding both episodically and continuously. According to these authors, episodic and continuous change may be understood as two tempos of change that are two different but at the same time related ways of thinking about this phenomenon. In considering the episodic change tempo, Weick and Quinn (1999) describe organisations as shared belief systems, clusters of interdependencies and aggregates of bounded relationships that for the most part exist in alignment or congruence. Weick and Quinn's (1999) work on organisations represents an early shift in thinking from previous conceptualisations of organisations as entities and towards conceptualisations of organisations as social processes (i.e. relationships, interdependencies, beliefs).

Episodic change is consequently understood as a shift in the alignment or congruence of the relationships, interdependencies and beliefs that constitute organisations. Inherent in episodic change are the elements of inertia (i.e. misalignment between the organisation and environment), change triggers (i.e. environment, performance, senior management, structure and strategy) and actions that constitute an organisation's responses (i.e. changes in leadership, shifts in strategy and performance goals and/or structural changes) (Weick & Quinn, 1999). Theoretical models that sustain notions of change as episodic include Lewin's (1951) unfreeze, change and refreeze model of organisational change, Quinn's (1978) logical incrementalism model of strategic change, O'Toole's (1995) change resistance model, Romanelli and Tushman's (1994) punctuated equilibrium model and Kotter's (Kotter, 1995, 1996) change leadership model.

Continuous change reflects continuous patterns of emergent adjustments and adaptations. Organisations are understood as interdependent aggregates of work processes, relationships and meanings that are always in a state of flux. In this context, it is changing (as a verb) rather than change (as a noun) that is the focus (Weick & Quinn, 1999). Examples of theoretical models that assume a continuous change perspective include the empirical work of Orlikowski (1996) on the investigation of the emergent elements of organisations and change, the work of Crossan, Lane, White and Kluss (1996) on organisational improvisation and Feldman's (2000) research on organisational routines.

In recognising episodic and continuous change not as an irreconcilable duality, but as kinds of change that may actually occur in organisations concurrently, the work of Weick and Quinn (1999) adds a level of dynamism to the notion of organisation which was not apparent in previous organisational research. This vocabulary of dynamism shifts talk of "change" from a noun to talk of "changing" as a verb (Weick & Quinn, 1999, p. 382). This shift in understandings has opened up the opportunity for researchers to explore change as phenomenon inherent in the very nature of organisations and organising.

In advocating a "metaphysical reversal" (Chia, 1999, p. 210) and subscribing to the fundamental notions of process philosophy (see for example Deleuze, 1988; Heidegger, 1962; James, 1909/1996; Serres, 1982), which accord primacy to movement, change, transformation and becoming, Chia (1999) proposes that change (or changing) rather than stability and organisation should be considered the normative way of understanding organisations (Nayak & Chia, 2011). Maintaining an ontologically realist and constructivist/social constructionist epistemological point of view, Chia (1999) proposes that the notion of organisation may be understood as a human construction or representation that enables a "slowing down and fixing of reality" (Chia, 1999, p. 210). Change is therefore no longer understood as state pertaining to the organisational entity, but an opposing force to the human tendency to organise the ongoing processes of social life. Chia (1999), using the metaphor of the rhizome, suggests that social life may be better understood as an ongoing and indeterminate becoming that is non-linear and open to fields of possibilities. It is through organisation not as an entity, but as organising processes that we "abstract

pattern and coherence out of an essentially undifferentiated and indifferent whole” (Chia, 1999, p. 224) which constitutes social life.

By “relaxing of the artificially-imposed (i.e. culturally-inspired) structures of relations [and] loosening up of organization” (Chia, 1999, p. 211), Chia maintains theorists, researchers and practitioners may gain important insights into the ongoing and indeterminate becoming of social life. These thoughts are echoed by Tsoukas (2001) who suggests that the processes of organisation or organising have been often confused with the outcomes of such processes — organisations. Understanding organisations as “sites of human action” (Tsoukas, 2001, p. 10) and focusing on the processes occurring in these sites, one may better understand how the unfolding patterns of organisation emerge, are configured and reconfigured as a result of human actions and interactions (Tsoukas, 2001).

These notions of organising processes and organisations as outcomes of such processes are further developed in the later work by Tsoukas and Chia (2002). In this work, organisations are understood as processes rather than entities. The processes reflect our “attempt to order the intrinsic flux of human action, to channel it toward certain ends...through generalizing and institutionalizing particular meanings and rules” (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002, p. 570). In this view, organisation is both social processes (beliefs, habits, rules) and outcome of the application of such processes in particular contexts, where the interacting of context and process shape and reshape what is perceived as organisation and (its outcome) organisations. Tsoukas and Chia (2002) describe this phenomenon as “organisational becoming” (p. 570). Organisational becoming is the ongoing process that describes the dynamic, emergent and sometime unintended goings on of organisational life. Understanding organisational becoming as a natural process of the world takes up a multi-perspective view, one that at the same time recognises the micro adjustments and accommodations that are ongoing, and a macro view that reflects a constructed notion of stability, inherent in our attempts at organising.

Tsoukas and Chia (2002) extend Weick and Quinn’s (1999) earlier discussion of episodic and continuous change. In contrast to the work of Weick and Quinn (1999), however, Chia (1999) and Tsoukas and Chia (2002) do not simply understand organisational change as a process of organisations. Rather, these authors propose that the processes of change are all that there is and that organisation is an attempt

to simplify and make sense of what appears to be a natural process of life, that is ongoing, emergent and always in flux. From this perspective there is a coexistence of both stability and ongoing change. Stability is understood as a necessary feature of organising (meanings for example) and a way that we as humans attempt to make sense of our world. Organising then takes place through the establishment of some categorisations, meanings and purposes that help us get on with life. These categorisations, meanings and purposes must be stable enough for action to occur, but because organisations (and their members) are involved in interactions these interactions may occur outside the organisation,⁹ within the organisation¹⁰ or through organisational members' reflexive thinking. Through these kinds of interactions, possibilities for new interpretations emerge, thus meanings and understandings are at best only temporary. Within these new possibilities there is the potential for new experiences and new meanings. Social life, as ongoing change, may therefore be understood as the ongoing adjustments and accommodations of meanings, categories and purposes experienced every day by organisational members that may or may not become institutionalised (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002).

Returning to Van de Ven and Poole's (1995) and Kezar's (2001) perspectives on organisational change introduced in the previous section of this chapter, the social-cognition and cultural perspectives also encompass change models which stem from phenomenological and social constructivist traditions. These traditions do not presuppose a single organisational reality, but rather multiple realities that come about through the interplay of the cognitive, interpersonal and social elements of human existence (Gergen, 1999; Kezar, 2001). These latter traditions bring understandings of organisations and organisational change closer to post-structural and post-modern views of the world. Some models of change pertaining to the social-cognition and cultural perspectives reflect, at least in part, notions of organisations and change as processes. Models of organisational change that take up the assumptions of the social-cognition perspectives bring to the fore the importance of concepts such as sensemaking, cognitive schema, identities and interpretations. A dominant assumption underlying theories subscribing to this viewpoint is organisational change as learning or as sensemaking — where employees and leaders must make sense of organisational events, perceive and

⁹ The term organisation here is used in the same way as Tsoukas (2002) uses it.

¹⁰ The notion of organisation as an outcome of organising processes and not the alternative view of organisation as entity.

understand the need for change, shift cognitive schemas and learn (Kezar, 2001). The notions of sensemaking and learning may be understood to imply fluidity and, at least in part, the concept of becoming. These models of organisational change are somewhat congruent with notions of becoming discussed in Chia (1999) and Tsoukas and Chia (2002). Contributors to the social-cognition cluster include Weick's (1995) model of sensemaking in organisations and Orlikowski's (1996) situated change model, while models that focus on the learning dimension of organisational change include Argyris' (1982) double loop learning model.

Similarly, models of change that pertain to the cultural perspective, bring to the fore change as continuous, processual, dynamic, non-linear and punctuated by power struggles, shifting organisational identities and cultures. Thus change may be understood as political process, identity process or cultural process (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Dawson, 1996; Kezar, 2001). These models take up, at least in part, Chia's (1999) notion of non-linear and indeterminate change. The work of Schein (1985, 1995) and Gagliardi (1986) which highlight the interrelationship between organisational change, organisational culture and leadership, Dawson's (1996) processual change model which accounts for political and cultural aspects of change, and Feldman's (1990) exploration of the impact of cultural stories on organisational change, are further examples of change models that take up understandings of the cultural perspective of organisational change.

In summary, understanding organisations as processes rather than entities has implications for how organisational change is understood. In contrast to the bulk of the organisational change literature discussed in the previous section of this chapter, stability is the favoured state. Organisational change is described as a discrete phenomenon and treated as an exception to that stability (Chia, 1999). Organisational change is treated as a phenomenon from which one can ascertain causes and outcomes and on the basis of understandings about particular features of change one can build predictive models of change (Chia, 1999). This "synoptic" (p. 570) approach to the study of change is limiting in that it fails to capture the "distinguishing features of change – its fluidity, pervasiveness, open endedness and indivisibility" (p. 570). Using notions from the work of process philosophers (e.g. James, 1909/1996) as an alternative view to the Platonic and Aristotelian focus on "fixity" (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002, p. 569), Tsoukas and Chia (2002) maintain that approaching the study of organisational change from a perspective that breaks

change into a set of discrete stages takes away its very essence — its dynamic, emergent and unintended elements.

4.2.3 Organisations as bundles of practices

For Schatzki (2006), organisations are a social phenomenon and as such belong to and are part of the social site. As discussed in Chapter 2, Schatzki (2002, 2005, 2006) uses the term “site” (Schatzki, 2002, p. XI) to describe certain kinds of “context or wider expanse phenomena, in and as part of which humans coexist” (Schatzki, 2002, p. 147). The composition of the social site may be described as “nexuses of practices and material arrangements” (Schatzki, 2005, p. 471). As part of such nexuses, organisations are described more specifically by Schatzki (2006) as “bundles of practices and material arrangements” (p. 1863) that persist and frame past, present and future possibilities for organisations.

Organisations comprise both integrative practices and dispersed practices.¹¹ Integrative practices are those practices that pertain to specific aspects of the work (e.g. accounting practices, customer service practices, engineering practices). Dispersed practices (e.g. rule following, asking questions) may be found across different aspects of organisational life and as part of different organisational integrative practices. In organisations, practices persist and frame past, present and future possibilities. The already existing practice structures that encompass organisations frame action possibilities by impacting on the material arrangements of a practice as it exists in the context of an organisation (Schatzki, 2002, 2005, 2006). Material arrangements include people, artefacts, objects and organisms and in an organisational context these translate into workers, customers, suppliers, policies and procedures, invoices, pens, desks, office plants, telephone and computer systems and so on.

In organisations, practices are understood as carried forward both in the organisational practice memory and the practice memories of workers enacting those practices (Schatzki, 2001b, 2005, 2006). Encompassed in organisational practice memory are practice elements such as understandings, rules, ends and projects that persist even when practices are not being carried out. These practice elements, constitutive of organisations, are often captured in organisational

¹¹ See Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of integrative and dispersed practice.

documents (i.e. policies and procedures), history (i.e. written and oral) and infrastructure (i.e. IT systems, tools, machinery, desks and work spaces). In this way, organisational practice memory is described as existing beyond the aggregate memories, interpretations and understandings of workers. In enacting organisational practices workers perpetuate those practices but also vary those practices in some way. This simultaneous perpetuation and variation of practices occurs because workers carry with them understandings of similar practices from other contexts (e.g. previous jobs, previous organisations, prior experiences and/or knowledge). In the enactment of organisational practices, there is an enmeshing of workers' understandings of those practices (structure-action elements) with previous understandings of similar practices from other contexts;¹² in this way practices are perpetuated and at the same time varied (Schatzki, 2006).

The idea that practices persist and frame organisational possibilities while at the same time becoming transformed brings to the fore the notions of practices as simultaneously stable and changing. For Schatzki (2002) practices undergo "reorganisation" and "recomposition" (p. 240) through the "constant flow of human and non-human doings" (p. 240). Through the machinations of practice reorganisation and recomposition, practice perpetuations are both maintained and changed. In carrying out practices, people make accommodations to the doings and sayings of those practices and shift practical understandings in response to changing circumstances (which may include changes in other related practices, innovations and contextual events surrounding practices and organisational practice bundles). These accommodations, which are ongoing (and may even go unnoticed), reflect practice recomposition. This is because these ongoing adjustments occur while practice goals and ends (i.e. objectives and purposes) remain unchanged. In practice recomposition, only some elements of a practice are changed while others remain the same. Practice recomposition may also be implicated in the maintenance of practices. This is because the daily accommodations of practice recomposition maintain practices that are relevant and functioning within the practice and order bundles to which they belong.

Practice recomposition is reflected in Schatzki's account of the New Lebanon herb business, where numerous practices (e.g. growing, collecting, processing, selling, shipping) were undertaken to achieve ends such as making a profit, meeting

¹² Aspects of this have been published in Price, Scheeres and Boud (2009).

customer demands, producing a quality product, that are encompassed in the operation of a herb business. From time to time the practices of herb production underwent various accommodations. As a result of customer requests for the supply of herbs in blocks, for example, accommodations to the herb processing practices were made to include the pressing of herbs into block form using the herb press machine. The pressing of herbs into block form reflects a recomposition in the herb processing practice because some new doings and sayings were added to this practice, while the overall herb production business ends of making a profit and meeting customer demand were maintained. Thus practice recompositions may reflect notions of changing or ongoing change, but this changing is such that it occurs as a means of perpetuating (maintaining) a practice in terms of its ends (Schatzki, 2002).

Practice reorganisation reflects a different order of change, one that shifts a practice's ends. Practice reorganisation is understood as explicit and intentional and reflects more wholesale and extensive change. Using the example of day trading on the financial markets, Schatzki (2002) demonstrates an example of practice reorganisation. Shifts in regulations in the National Association of Securities Dealers (NASD) and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), two of the key regulatory bodies of the NASDAQ, gave rise to the practice of day trading. As day trading emerged as a new practice, major reorganisations occurred in the nets of practices that reflected U.S. Stock Market financial practices. In this shift, some existing practices were reorganised, some were recomposed, some ceased to exist or were replaced and others emerged (Schatzki, 2002). Thus, practice reorganisation may reflect a kind of change perceived as discontinuous, changing the nature of an organisation, by changing the goals and ends of the practices that constitute an organisation.

Finally, as outlined above, organisations as part of the social site, are interconnected with other organisations in "nets of practice-arrangement bundles" (Schatzki, 2005, p. 479). These nets may include markets, governments, competitors or any other nets of practice and material arrangements that are constitutive of an organisation's context. In these interrelated associations, practices and orders become interdependent, changing and evolving (i.e. changes in a practice-arrangement bundle in one organisation may trigger recomposition, reorganisation or both in the interrelated practice-arrangement bundles of other

organisations). Thus, changing practices in any one element of these nets can have a rippling and often unpredictable effect across other interconnected parts.

This idea that practices persist and frame organisational possibilities while at the same time becoming transformed is also discussed by other writers. For example, Kemmis (2007) describes practitioners' understandings of their practices as "already shaped by a historical consciousness...ways of living that have already preceded them" (p. 5). Change in practice not only requires changes in the actions of the practitioners but also changes in the "extra-individual features of a practice" (Kemmis, 2007, p. 8) – the social and cultural elements. For Gherardi (2000) practice is "always a product of specific historical conditions resulting from previous practice and transformed into present practice" (p. 215). This transformation results from both the way our world is and has been constructed and experienced by ourselves and others, and our own present doings. In taking up the idea of practices having social and historical dimensions that go beyond the immediate context, practices can be considered as transcending any one worker or any one organisation (Price, Scheeres, & Boud, 2009). The transcendence of practices beyond any one worker or organisation suggests that practices may be the social 'thing' that connects organisations and helps us understand what organisations are.

4.2.4 Contrasting perspectives: Entities, processes or bundles of practices

In Schatzkian terms, organisations as "bundles of practices and material arrangements" (Schatzki, 2006, p. 1863) reflect simultaneous stability and change. The ongoing adjustments and accommodations that occur in the enactment of practices (practice recomposition) when viewed from a micro perspective, may reflect what is understood in the management literature and in the processual literature as ongoing change. At the same time, because these ongoing adjustments maintain practices relevant to practice goals and ends, from a macro perspective, these changes may go unnoticed, thus maintaining a perception of stability and organisation. Changes in practices that shift practice goals and ends (practice reorganisation) reflect change that is more wholesale and dramatic. This kind of practice change may be perceived as a break with the previous state of organisation (if accepting organisation as a way of making sense in terms of Tsoukas & Chia, 2002), or may be understood as episodic change where the organisation moves

from one stable organisation state to the next (if accepting organisations as entities and change as a transient state of the organisational entity). However, in taking a practice perspective, and adopting the notions of practice recomposition and reorganisation, stability and change may be understood as co-present features of the practices that constitute organisation nexuses.

In drawing together the ideas of Tsoukas & Chia (2002), Chia (1999) and Schatzki (2002, 2005, 2006) I suggest that the arguments presented by these authors are closely related in three ways.¹³ First, these authors agree that the notion of organisation as entity is limiting in that it fails to account for the flow or open-endedness that is characteristic of social life. A second point of agreement may be seen in these authors' rejection of notions of change as episodic, linear and predictable, and undertaken in response to shifts in internal or external organisational conditions. Third, agreement among these authors may be seen in their acceptance that the nature of social life may accommodate both notions of stability and ongoing change as key features. Translating this to the context of organisations, these authors agree that stability may be necessary for the establishment of patterns or activities and meanings in order to achieve the goals and ends of work. At the same time, this stability must be understood as provisional and open-ended in order to accommodate the unfolding of social life (Price, Johnsson, Scheeres, Boud, & Solomon, 2012).

Although the ideas of Tsoukas & Chia (2002), Chia (1999), Chia and Nayak (2011) and Schatzki (2002, 2005, 2006) are closely related in the negation of notions of organisations as entities and change as episodic, linear and predictable, there are some differences that need to be explicated. Tsoukas and Chia (2002) and Chia (1999) subscribe to the notions of process philosophy and understand social life (including organisational life) as an ongoing flow, or unfolding continuously. This notion of continuous flow differs from the Schatzkian notion of the happening. For Schatzki (2011), although life may be characterised "by continuity and a sense of continuousness...these are reflections of the fact that a person is always doing something" (p. 3) rather than a reflection of life as a continuous unfolding. As an alternative to the notion of life as a continuous unfolding or continuous flow, Schatzki (2011) proposes that life may be better understood as a continuum of events, activities and performances that may occur independently, overlappingly or

¹³ Elements of this work have been published in Price et al. (2012).

simultaneously, but not continuously. The happening of activities or events, according to Schatzki (2011), is not necessarily understood as implicating change because “an activity [or event] can just as easily maintain the world as alter it” (p. 4). This perspective on change may be seen for example in Schatzki’s notion of practice recomposition, where elements of a practice are adjusted or shifted in some way in order to maintain a practice congruent with its goals, ends and purposes. For Schatzki (2002, 2011, 2012) this is what happens in the machinations of practice recomposition and reorganisation.

Secondly, there is a tendency by Tsoukas and Chia (2002) toward ontological separation of the individual and the institution. In their discussion of the ongoing shifts that occur in categorisations, meanings and purposes, for example, they ascribe agency for changing these aspects of organisation to individuals through their “tinkering, experimenting and adapting” (p. 577) processes that results from their interactions with others. At the same time, something other than the individuals, presumably the institution, may be given agency over whether such shifts in categorisations, meanings and purposes become “institutionalized” (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002, p. 580). What appears to be unclear is whether both individual and the institution are ascribed agency for changing or becoming changed and under which circumstances this may happen. Further, it is unclear what the relationship between the individual and the institution is (or whether the institution may be simply be a collection of individuals) and therefore whether the work of Tsoukas and Chia (2002) ultimately upholds an individualist ontology. In contrast, when understanding organisations through Schatzkian notions of practice and site ontology, the individual and the organisation are positioned in a mutually constitutive relationship where neither is given priority over the other. It is not the individual or the organisation that are changing or remaining the same, rather it is the practice. Unlike Tsoukas and Chia (2002), where I believe there is some slippage, Schatzki (2002) makes it clear that he rejects the ontological separation of the individual, the practices and the organisation these may comprise as part of the social context in which these exist (Schatzki, 2002, 2003).

Following Schatzki, in this research, organisations are understood as “bundles of practices and material arrangements” (Schatzki, 2006, p. 1863). I propose that understanding organisations through a Schatzkian practice and site ontology perspective provides a related yet different third perspective on organisation and

change. Such perspective, I maintain, expands existing understandings of these concepts and accounts for change both as a transient state and an ongoing and unfolding phenomenon that transcends both individual and organisation. In the sections that follow I present my findings from College, Council and Utility and discuss the ways in which the changing practices in these organisations may be understood.

4.3 The context of change: Practice reorganisation and recomposition at the College, Council and Utility

In this section I present and discuss some of the findings of this study. I discuss the ways in which change was talked about at College, Council and Utility. In these organisations change was talked about in a number of ways. It was talked about as a shift from old ways of doing things to new ways of doing things, as something that was part of the everyday – a way to keep up with the times. Experiences of change were described in different ways. Sometimes these experiences were described as beneficial, useful and necessary. Positive stories about change, however, were not the only stories, there were also other stories, where change was described as not making sense and as causing tensions.

During this study, workers in the organisations I studied talked about specific changes that in more recent times had shifted the ways in which they understood their organisations. These workers talked about wholesale changes that reframed their understandings of their organisations and what it meant to be a worker in them. For College, Council and Utility change in the “nets of practice-arrangement bundles” (Schatzki, 2005, p. 479) or sites to which the practices of these organisations are interconnected required a reframing of understandings of what it is to be a contemporary public sector organisation in Australia. This reframing occurred in industry contexts that had often been understood as secure and somewhat shielded from the volatilities found in the commercial sector. The requirements of this reframing were reflected in shifts in meanings, goals and ends of practices. I understand these changes as reflecting what Schatzki (2002) describes as practice reorganisation – a changing and reframing of organisational purposes, goals and ends. In this chapter I focus on the more wholesale practice of reorganisations and the introduction of new practices. The ways in which workers in

these organisations have understood and enacted their jobs in relation to the wider organisational changes will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

In this section I draw on two kinds of data. First, I draw on industry/government publications (see for example NSW Department of Local Government, 1999; Roarty, 1998; Traynor, 2004), academic research about change in the industries to which College, Council and Utility belong (see for example Jones, 1999, 2002; McIntyre, Foley, Morris, & Tennant, 2009; Peace, 1995; Tennant & Morris, 2001) and organisational documents such as annual reports, business planning documents and procedure manuals, and company websites. This data is used to illustrate the social embeddedness of the practices of these organisations and how reorganisations of practices have shaped and reshaped the industry contexts of College, Council and Utility and in which these organisations have established histories (Schatzki, 2005, 2006; Whittington, 2007). Second, I draw on workers' accounts of change. This data is from interviews with workers and is used to discuss more recent practice reorganisations that have taken place in their organisations. Specifically, I discuss the introduction of the new practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management and the ways in which these were understood and made sense of by the workers in these organisations.

4.3.1 Practice reorganisation in the adult education context and at the College

For almost two decades the College has participated in the wider Australian educational context in one form or another. Changes in the Australian education context have included shifts in demographics (i.e. increased demand from adults), increased interest from the workplace (i.e. more demand for ongoing workforce development and lifelong learning), the emergence and development of a knowledge economy (i.e. questioning of what is legitimate knowledge and valued knowledge), the shifting role of the State (i.e. from provider to regulator), increased private funding of vocational education (i.e. more competition from private fee for service providers) and the introduction of public funding formulas based on demonstrable outcomes (i.e. societal and economic benefits). These changes are reflected in numerous practice reorganisations (i.e. shifts in the objectives, goals and ends) at the College.

The *Education Act (NSW) 1990* had a number of implications for the operation (and survival) of many community colleges. For many educational institutions, including the College, this period saw a reframing of what it meant to be a community/evening college – a shifting in practice, goals and ends. In terms of cost and funding impacts, the introduction of the Educational Act meant that evening and community colleges had to begin to pay rent to schools to access their premises for the conduct of courses.¹⁴ This change had a significant impact on colleges as it led to an increase in operational costs. Second, the incorporation and the establishment of community-based management of colleges meant that government was no longer obliged to continue financial support of colleges, thus reducing potential funding sources for these organisations. To survive in this new context, colleges had to develop the kinds of practices that would enable them to take up responsibility for their own operational and financial management. Third, a shift in government preferences towards funding courses in line with government policy priorities meant that colleges had to shift course offerings towards such priorities, in order to access government funding (Peace, 1995). Given these funding pressures at a State level, some colleges understood Commonwealth vocational program funding as an opportunity. During the mid to late 1990s colleges began to access funding from the then Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) and the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). In line with these new funding opportunities, evening and community colleges began providing labour market programs for the unemployed (DEET funded) as well as vocational training programs (ANTA funded). Accessing these funding opportunities was seen by some as a move away from their fundamental projects of providing informal broad-based adult education programs. For others, accessing these new funding opportunities meant developing new practices, new goals and ends, including those related to writing successful funding applications and those related to successfully gaining accreditation for courses through the NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VTAB) (*Education Act (NSW), 1990* ; Peace, 1995).

At the same time as colleges were reshaping and responding to the shifts imposed upon them by governments at the State and Commonwealth levels, colleges were also beginning to be recognised as key players in the achievement of national educational outcomes. It is during this period of shifting priorities, goals and projects

¹⁴ School premises had traditionally been the venues where community and evening college courses were run.

that the Adult and Community Education (ACE) sector became recognised as a sector in the Australian educational context. The Commonwealth Government's introduction of a National Policy on ACE saw the sector move from the fringes of the Australian educational context to a position alongside traditional post-compulsory educational institutions such as Universities and TAFE Colleges (NSW) (Peace, 1995). Finally, development in thinking and understandings about adult education as emerging in a variety of non-traditional settings including communities, workplaces and facilities for leisure and recreation not only blurred boundaries of what were understood as legitimate spaces for learning, but also created further impetus for the recognition of an adult and community education sector as a valid and valuable context for adult learning (Tennant & Morris, 2001).

It is in this context of reshaping and transformation of socially embedded practices and understandings, and the emergence of a new industry sector, that the story of the College emerged. The College's continuing existence in this context is owed to the ongoing reorganisation and recomposition in its practices. For the College, not unlike other community colleges in NSW, the package of change has included a shift in funding, reporting and evaluation arrangements both at the State and Commonwealth levels of Government. This posed significant new challenges. These challenges were reflected in the comments made by George, the College Principal:

The issue now is...funding... what they've done is to delete the State Government's commitment... [they] only channel [Commonwealth] funding through and at the same time they also have downgraded their commitment to adult education, so what was very favourable under several ministers both Liberal and Labour — becomes out of favour...we look at this organisation and how it's going to survive in a declining funding environment....

At the College, part of the change was about a reorganisation of its practices, goals and ends. The College shifted from an organisation that was focused on goals pertaining to the provision of community and equity programs to one with more commercially focused goals. This shift in goals and ends was again highlighted by George:

How do we continue to do what we think we should be doing... run programs in line with the needs of the community [and at the same time] cross

subsidise into equity [programs]... so if we are to survive then how are we to do that? Clearly [one way] for us to survive is to cut back on the nonessential which is our equity area...from purely budgeting sense... you would say well you're not making any money...so why would you continue with it? [even though you believe that you should]...when you look at sort of training that's around...the best training to get involved in is the training that needs a licence attached to it... because people need to do the training [to maintain their licenses]... and you get a good turnover [of funds] from that....

The reorganisation of practice goals and ends was associated with the development of new ways of working, through the establishment of new practices, the recomposition of some existing practices and the elimination of yet other existing practices. These new ways of working, new practices and recomposed practices included the implementation of an operating model built around quality accreditation (Australian Training Quality Framework), seeking non-government sponsorships and offering marketable courses to attract profits (Traynor, 2004). At the same time practices focusing on the provision of equity programs were no longer being enacted. George reflected on these changes:

It's meant... there's been a concentration on the organisation as a professional organisation [more] than as a – the local community that runs a few courses...we put in place quality processes... evaluating teaching practice... [we have achieved] Registered Training Organisation [certification]... developed connections with other organisations...we spent a long time putting in place a set of standards to do with the ACE [Australian Community Education] sector then the AQTF [Australian Quality Training Framework] was developed....

The need to comply with external standards (ACE and AQTF) and achieving the new goal of becoming a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) meant that teaching practices were recomposed to include an evaluation component as well as the development of new organisational practices (e.g. quality assessment and reporting) to support and sustain being an RTO (RTO Accreditation Certificate was displayed in the College reception area – Field Note 1 College). The initiation of these new practices is reflected in the comments made by Angie, one of the Faculty Managers:

All the paperwork which is the AQTF... well that's been my responsibility... to make us compliant...I think that you can always improve upon what you do and knowing that makes you better at what you do...because you're always thinking about how you might do it better you start to realise that [the AQTF] is quite a good structure...as much as we all complain about it...and it is irritating...but those 12 standards, particularly 7, 8 and 9 which are to do with delivery and assessment and record keeping are useful in an organisational sense...it's not just about keeping you honest but keeping you organised and helping you to find things...and so there was all that learning that came out of that.

This shift in practices, goals and ends also necessitated a repositioning of the College with its customers and the wider community. George described this as:

Try [ing to] match what we do at the College with the expectations...needs...the wants of the community...[we are] visually trying to rebadge an old organisation...working on the delivery on the promise [that] has been the big challenge for us.

George also told of how part of the rebadging of the College as a community and customer focused contemporary organisation was the establishment of a website and the initiation of new organisational practices to sustain the online presence, including the provision of online course information and customer service. Alongside the establishment of these new online practices, existing practices of paper-based information provision were no longer part of the way in which the College was now operating:

[We are working on ways of] getting information to the College website and developing that...currently we're running a project to get all of our tutor profiles online...so if you go to the College website and click on a course and other things you can drill down into who is running that course.

In summary, the shift in practices, goals and ends in the Australian State and Commonwealth Governments and adult education context — “nets of practice-arrangement bundles” (Schatzki, 2005, p. 476) to which College belongs — led to reorganisation and recomposition of College practices. These changes have not

only impacted the context in which the College exists, but also what it means to be a community college in Australia. For the College these changes occurred through a reframing and reorganisation of practices. To talk of practice reorganisation did not preclude the ongoing daily practice changes or practice recompositions that occurred as part of workers' daily engagement in operations – as workers doing what it makes sense to do. Rather, it is to say that the practice reorganisations shifted the goals and ends of the practices and realigned the College practices with the practices of the nets to which the College is interconnected. The College emerged as a somewhat different kind of organisation – community and customer focused technology enabled contemporary organisation. Some practices remained the same (e.g. payroll and accounting practices, team meeting practices, class management practices) while older practices such as equity course funding practices and paper-based information provision practices were becoming extinguished (paperbased enrolments were replaced with enrolments through the call centre and online enrolments through the website – Field Note 3 College) . Thus, for this organisation change and stability unfolded at the same time.

4.3.2 Practice reorganisation in the local government context and at the Council

The Council has participated in the local government sector for over 100 years, being proclaimed a municipality in 1895, and becoming a city in the Sydney metropolitan area over 25 years ago. Over this period the goals, ends and practices of local government have shifted through various legislative changes. In 1945, local government acquired town planning and development control powers. These additional responsibilities not only redefined the goals or ends of local government institutions but also the kinds of practices undertaken (i.e. the introduction of town planning practices and development control for example). Through the 1970s and 1980s various State Government decisions culminated in the amalgamation of various local government areas and administrations in the state of NSW. One of the more recent and significant changes in the goals, ends and purposes of local government in NSW occurred as a result of the enactment of the Local Government Act (NSW). The new Act was written in the spirit of the NSW State Government's New Public Management (NPM) agenda which reflects a shift in the goals and ends for State Government and subordinate governments such as local councils. The NPM ethos, coupled with the implementation of the National Competition Policy

(NCP), required government and quasi-government organisations to take up principles and practices of the private sector (Boyne, Jenkins, & Poole, 1999; Jones, 1999; NSW Government, 2010; Van Gramberg & Teicher, 2000). At the local government level, the new Act, the NPM agenda and the NCP aimed to encourage councils to become more accountable to their local communities. The goals and ends at the centre of these neo-liberal reforms were efficiency in service delivery, resource management and the introduction of principles of competition.

A key change in the Local Government Act (NSW) was the establishment of the new role of General Manager (GM) to replace the Town Clerk as the head of operations at local government councils. This replacement reflected an overhaul of responsibilities and person requirements rather than a simple name change. The General Manager role was now responsible for the day-to-day management of operations with the role of the elected councillors being severed from day-to-day operational involvement and redefined to focus on strategic policy decision-making. Other changes reflected a new focus for councils in their relationship with their community. For example, in the Council's Charter outlined in the Local Government Act, the emphasis shifted from local government being an advocate for the community to one of "involvement of councillors, members of the public, users of facilities and services... in the development, improvement and co-ordination of local government" and community consultation to ensure "adequate, equitable and appropriate services and facilities for the community" (*Local Government Act (NSW), 1993 s8*). The focus on consultation and involvement in the latter document emphasises a new role for communities. In this new role, local communities were invited to participate more openly in making decisions about the services provided to them, in a way similar to that of customers of private sector organisation (i.e. through customer research and feedback processes).

The localised applications of these reforms were not prescribed by the NSW State Government. Each local council was given freedom in the implementation of these reforms and could choose a path that best suited their local conditions (Rhodes & Price, 2011). It is in this context of changing goals and ends that the story of the reorganisation of practices at Council unfolds. Council began its own process of practice reorganisation in the years following the enactment of the new Local Government Act (NSW). This process was described by some as frame-breaking and as more radical than the process followed by some other NSW Councils (Jones,

2002). The appointment of Young as the new GM marked the beginning of the reorganisation. Critical of the Council's approach to the community and to employees, Young implemented a radical program of practice reorganisation that shifted Council's goals, ends and model of operation. Utilising neo-liberal reform tactics of strategy development, customer focus, employee empowerment and competitive service delivery, Young's objectives were to simultaneously improve customer and community outcomes while achieving competitiveness in the delivery of services (Jones, 2002; Rhodes & Price, 2011).

The initial reforms implemented by Young were categorised by some writers as "revolutionary, decentralised, transformational, fast" (Jones, 2002, p. 45) and reflected in the way in which Gerald, the Governance Group Manager, talked about them:

I was part of that new group that came in with the general manager...you know he was a sort of youngish guy, a bit of a hot shot change merchant and he had a lot of exciting things to say...and he basically turned the place upside down and said we're gonna manage it in a completely different way.

At the core of this reform the practices of the Council were reorganised in such a way that the structure of the Council was split into two major groups, one with a local government governance focus and the other with a profitability focus. The emergence of the FPSD division as separate operational division from other Council divisions resulted in a totally new way of working (this was evidenced by the separate physical locations of the two division and the different logo used by the FPSD division – Field Note 1 Council). As a consequence the new ways of working in FPSD, adjustments were also implemented across the other existing divisions of Council. As a result of the split in operations new organisational practices, goals and ends were established. The emergence of these new practices is described by Gerald as a necessary part of:

Manag[ing] it in a completely different way... [and having a]...commercial focus... [we] split into two...the local government BCC and...[FPSD and its] business units which have a purely commercial focus and could exist outside of the corporation and could provide services to others in a contestable market.

The emergence of new meanings and understandings about what it was to be a local council is also echoed by Gina, one of the commercial managers, who like Gerald joined the Council with the new group of managers. She described the new commercial way of being as “*totally different*”. For Gina the split was a “*real split where you had a totally different culture*”.

To meet these newly established outcomes new practices were introduced in the Council, and Gwen, the Parks and Maintenance Manager, explained how these practice changes were implemented:

The new hotshot General Manager turfed [all the existing Managers] everybody out and [recruited] a new management team, [and told us] get focussed — and basically, split the organisation up and say, everybody who does, is a service deliverer, get on that side, we’re calling you the [FPSD] and everybody else get on that side and you’re, ...the strategic planners, the governance, or the asset owners — guess what...you over there called civic and you’ve got three years to get your act together because every one of your jobs is going out to tender and if you don’t make it, you can kiss your boys goodbye... [the other divisions of Council] sat over there looking like old local government, and we sat over here looking like a hybrid.

As a key part of the shift in practices, goals and ends towards competitiveness of services, existing billing practices were recomposed to reflect the split in the organisation (this was reflected in a separate accounting computer system and an Administration Officer responsible for internal invoicing being located in the FPSD administration office – Field Note 2 Council). At the same time new internal billing practices were established in FPSD. Gwen told of how she was instrumental in the development of these new practices:

As part of that, this side of the organisation... [FPSD]...was given no budget....so what we had to do was do the job and bill the other side of the organisation Council, [the asset owners and planners]....my unit [Parks and Maintenance] had... fifteen million dollars worth of billing with no system — what will I use to bill? And I used to bill on a Sunday night, on a bit of paper, and then we got a titch more sophisticated...basically we had 11 people

sitting out there to try and create systems, today I have one admin person. So, the challenge was about, how do you do this?

Young continued to implement the reorganisation in his role as the General Manager for a period of four years. At the time of this study Young had already left the organisation and the practice reorganisation agenda was continuing to unfold under the leadership of the new General Manager, Ron. Ron, who was previously a Group Manager at the Council and an integral part of Young's Executive Team, described the period under his own leadership as a period of consolidation.

In summary, for the Council the shift in practices, goals and ends in the Australian State and Federal Government and community contexts – the “nets of practice-arrangement bundles” (Schatzki, 2005, p. 476) to which the Council belonged – led to a practice reorganisation in the Council. These changes gave rise not only to a different context for the Council to exist in, but also to what it means to be a local government organisation in Australia. For the Council these changes triggered a process of reframing and of practice reorganisation, including the establishment of a new profit-focused division and associated practices. To talk of practice reorganisation did not preclude the ongoing daily practice changes or practice recompositions that occurred as part of the daily Council operations (collecting waste, maintaining roads, collecting rates) as workers through the enactment perpetuate and at the same time vary practices. Rather, the recompositional changes shifted the goals and ends of the practices of Council in such a way that it emerged as somewhat a different kind of organisation. At the same time, other organisational practices (e.g. accounting practices, payroll practices, land rate collection practices, venue booking practices) remained the same. Thus, for this organisation change and stability unfolded at the same time.

4.3.3 Reorganisation in the context of State Utilities and at the Utility

The utility industry in the State of NSW has undergone several practice reorganisations over the last 50 years. In the 1950s local utility councils were responsible for the distribution of utility services. During this period a series of regional amalgamations resulted in the establishment of a State-based Utility Commission that existed until the late 1980s. The State-based Utility Commission was responsible for the production of the utility product, which it sold to a number of

state-based distributors. The utility distributors owned and maintained the physical infrastructure that facilitated distribution (Roarty, 1998). Not unlike the reforms of the NSW local government sector, the implementation of the NCP had a transformational impact in the utilities sector. Specifically, the NSW State Government committed to the objectives of the National Grid Management Council for the establishment of a National Electricity Market in 1991 (Eagan, 1995).

In the early 1990s the State Government of NSW initiated the deregulation of its utility functions. These reforms saw the dissolution of the State-based utility commission into separate functional groups. These newly established corporatised entities of generation, transmission, distribution and retailing reflected new goals, objectives and purposes. The utility generation function was split into three separate corporate businesses, each competing in the National Electricity Market. The utility transmission function has remained as a single state-owned corporation *UTransmit*, which continues to play a key role in the operations of the National Electricity Market (Roarty, 1998). The distribution and retail functions did not escape reorganisation. These functions were amalgamated and established into six corporatised (and competing) businesses, each connected to *UTransmit*, with the objective of providing the interface between the transmission node and the end customer. In addition to the utility retail functions that existed as part of the three utility generator businesses and the six newly formed distribution businesses, new retailers were also established as part of the National Electricity Market. These included the retail businesses of other interstate generators and distributors (mainly from the Australian States of Victoria and South Australia) and other utility retailers not affiliated with any generator or distribution businesses (Roarty, 1998). In the context of the utilities industry, the incorporation of public organisations significantly altered the modes of operation for these organisations and the industry at large.

Not unlike the College and the Council, the story of the Utility plays out in the context of these State and Federal Government reforms. Today, the Utility, incorporated under the Energy Services Corporations Act (NSW), is the second largest state-owned utility corporation in the Australian state of NSW. However, in its recent history this organisation has undergone three periods of critical practice reorganisation. The Utility was formed through the amalgamation of two State-based distribution businesses in 1996 and draws on a history as a utility retailer and distributor (network infrastructure provider) that spans some 50 years. This

amalgamation was described by Brian, the Regional Manager of the Utility's Springvale Region as a tense period:

Prisdale Utility and Idale Utility merged and became the Utility, under a restructure of the industry. So yeah, there was a bit of demarcation and people down here always refer to it as a takeover.

In the first reorganisation two organisations with distinct practice goals and ends came together to form a new organisation with the goal of becoming an efficient and effective utility distributor. Workers who were originally part of Idale Utility perceived this as a takeover by Prisdale Utility because in the amalgamation it was the Prisdale practices and management structures that were adopted (artifacts the previous organisational identity could still be seen, for example the faded outline of the now removed Idale logo could be seen on the wall of the administration building at depot – Field Note 1 Utility).

Not long after the amalgamation in 1996, the Utility underwent a further practice recomposition and reorganisation. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the goals and ends of the practices of the Utility were reorganised to reflect the NSW State Government's NPM agenda and the Commonwealth Government's NCP. The second package of change is described by Brian as the "industrial and commercial days" during this period:

The Government came along and said, this industry is not efficient...five people to carry the toolbox and one to do the work...so they went down a path of making jobs contestable...it forced the organisation to split into a company that manages assets and another company that provided resources...in providing that resource, you had to quote, quote, quote, quote,...whenever someone wanted to do a job, even what we're doing now, go out and change a pole, you had to quote how much it's going to cost to do that, you'd figure out how many man hours, what material you'd use, give them a price, and then you'd invoice and they'd give you back the dollars sort of thing.

The Utility was reorganised into two operational divisions with different practices, goals and ends. Utility Corporate became responsible for the management of assets

and the second group, Utility Commercial, became responsible for the provision of capital works and maintenance services to the Utility Corporate asset managers as well as other commercial customers. Utility Commercial's goal was to provide profit dividends to the NSW State Government, while the goal of Utility Corporate was to manage electricity distribution assets, ensuring security of supply to NSW utility services customers. It is through this division that commercial practices emerged in both Utility Commercial and Utility Corporate. These new practices included contract management, tendering, supplier and customer relationship. The establishment of the *Commercial* division also necessitated the creation of a commercial organisational focus and context. This new organisational context differed from the original 'public utility' context. The split and the emergence of new organisational foci in the two organisational divisions replaced what was once internal organisational cooperation with internal competition. This period was described by Brian as a:

Funny stage...the competitive was actually dragging the business into two different areas altogether, making two companies of it and totally separate it and people were just trying to figure out, the best way to screw someone else, yep, and they were good at it, so, it was all fictitious dollars because it was all in the same company.

The competitive organisational context, created through the introduction of the contestability program, slowly began to show that short-term profits may not necessarily be beneficial to the long-term sustainability of the organisation, as Brian explained:

If [Utility Corporate wanted to undertake a major asset construction]...it had to go to [Utility Commercial for a quotation]...then the guys [Utility Commercial] would say, well we don't want to do that work, this other work we make more profit on, so we go and do a minor job rather than big job, then the price of the big jobs went up because no one really wanted to do them, and [Utility Commercial] didn't have to do them...so [commercialisation was] also negative in that aspect, so, that's another reason to pull back and say we've got all this resource, we need to do all this maintenance and capital work just to keep the company in flow, not just worrying about housing estates and all those sort of things, you know.

As a result of a shift in the NSW State Government policy, changes in executive leadership and the emergence of the negative aspects of the contestability program in the public sector as well as an aging and declining network infrastructure, the contestability program progressed until the mid-2000s. Brian described these as the drivers of the *“pull back from contestable works”*. In this latter practice reorganisation, the goals and objectives have been transformed from a focus on commercialisation and profit making to a focus on long-term asset restoration, network reliability and the re-emergence of the ethos of public ownership of utilities. This shift did not mean a re-establishment of the old public utility mentality, but rather the emergence of a new kind of public utility, one that appreciated the realities of competition and commercial efficiencies, but that at the same time also appreciated the importance of public ownership of assets as a means of maintaining community and public amenity.

For some, a return to a context where commercialisation was no longer a focus had a significant impact. This new shift has had an impact upon most workers. Those who belonged to the commercial division described this shift as something they had tried to resist. Jack, who was part of the commercial division, described the shift as *“...a sense of loss...we fought to try and stay in [the contestable market] and got frustrated and frustrated...we lost everything”*, while other workers perceived this change as a positive one, one that reunited the organisation towards a focus on reliable service delivery to customers (the coming together of the two groups was also evidenced by the relocation of workers to the main administration building and the demountable buildings which previously housed the commercial division workers being converted into training rooms – Field Note 1 Utility). This was explained by Lance, a Design Services Coordinator in the recently established Project Services Group:

Senior Executives made the decision a couple of years ago for us to get out of contestable work. So we're no longer chasing those dollars from outside, we're purely concentrating on trying to bring the network up to scratch.... we weren't doing it...it just wasn't happening right...the contestable days where we were trying to make money there was nobody really concentrating on an efficient system... we had a policy there where if it wasn't broke don't fix it. The load kept going up and our network was antiquated, not keeping pace.

Now it's completely different [our focus] is on our product delivering... it is on [delivering] a reliable service [to our customers].

In summary, the shift in practices, goals and ends in the Australian State and Federal Governments reflect a shift in the “nets of practice-arrangement bundles” (Schatzki, 2005, p. 476) to which the Utility belongs. These changes have given rise not only to different contexts for the Utility to exist in, but also to what it means to be a utility organisation in Australia. For the Utility these changes triggered a process of reframing and of practice reorganisation, including the establishment of a commercial division focused on contestable work. A further shift moved the Utility away from its commercialisation focus and towards re-establishing itself as a united organisation, focused on the goals and ends of delivering “*reliable service*” to customers. Through each shift in goals and ends the organisation differed in some ways from that it was before. To talk of practice reorganisation does not preclude the ongoing daily practice changes or practice recompositions that occur as part of the daily operations. Rather, the recompositional changes shifted the goals and ends of the practices of the Utility so that it re-emerged as a somewhat different kind of organisation. At the same time, other organisational practices (e.g. accounting practices, payroll practices, transmission pole maintenance, transformer upgrade, emergency repair practices) remained the same. Thus, for this organisation change and stability unfolded at the same time.

4.4 Introducing new practices at the College, Council and Utility

The newly established organisational meanings and understandings for College, Council and Utility mirrored changes in the contexts or sites that these organisations were interconnected with (Schatzki, 2002, 2005). For the College, Council and Utility, at the centre of these changes were the NSW State Government departments and related agencies, and to a lesser extent the Federal Government in its role to push for neo-liberal reforms in Australia.¹⁵ Beyond the role of governments, for the College the context of change was also reflected in the Australian post-secondary and adult educational context including universities, TAFE colleges and other public and private educational institutions as well as shifts in thinking about education in the national and international context. For Council and Utility, the context of change beyond the role of government was reflected in the

¹⁵ Elements of this have been published in Rhodes and Price (2011).

shifting parameters of the industries in which these newly reorganised organisations were attempting to compete. For example, the Council attempted to compete alongside private construction companies in the road construction and maintenance industry, and the Utility attempted to compete alongside private contractors for the construction of utility assets for private customers.

For College, Council and Utility, these changes required a reframing of meaning and understandings of what it is to be a contemporary public sector organisation. This reframing occurred in industry contexts that have often been understood as secure and somewhat shielded from the volatilities found in the commercial sector. The newly established organisational meanings and understandings at College, Council and Utility are reflected in the introduction of new goals and ends and enacted through practice reorganisation, recomposition, the establishment of new practices and the discontinuation of existing ones. The introduction of the new practices at College, Council and Utility impacted on all workers in some way. These new practices were at the heart of the new operating models for these organisations. For College, Council and Utility these new practices included the introduction of customer service, commercialisation and project management practices respectively.

The introduction of customer service, commercialisation and project management as new practices has not simply entailed the replication of the private sector models from which these practices were drawn. Rather, these new practices are being remade and varied as they are enacted by workers, within the possibilities of the already existing practices of College, Council and Utility. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5. At the same time, these newly introduced practices may also be implicated in the reorganisation and recomposition of existing organisational practices in some ways. Schatzki (2002) accounts for the interrelationship that emerges between existing and new practices with his notion of temporalspatial position. According to this notion, in carrying out an activity (pertaining to a practice), we start from a place or way of being (past practices/activities), move towards an end or desired end or purpose (future practice goals and ends), and we act out that activity (by recomposing or reorganising the present practice/activity in some way). In this way, new and existing practices become enmeshed into “webs of practices” (Schatzki, 2002, p. 88) which may be understood as new organisational forms (Schatzki, 2006).

4.4.1 The new practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management

In the initial interview with George, the College Principal, there was much talk about changes that had been occurring in the community education sector. George understood these changes to be driven by the State Government's agenda which sought to move community colleges towards a more self-funded operational structure. These changes in funding and reporting structures had an impact on the ways in which education was understood in the adult community education sector and in the College. George described these new understandings as a shift from the:

Old authoritative approach to education...to a customer approach...that was a big change...a constant challenge for us...to make sure that we focus on the quality of what we do...to meet the customer or student expectations.

In response to the need for a self-funded operational structure, the College introduced a greater proportion of marketable courses into the mix of courses offered. Alongside these changes, the College also initiated a number of operational practice changes. George described the initiation of new operational practices as the application of a customer approach, the introduction of customer service practices and the establishment of a "...complete customer service team".

In the Council, the NSW State Government's NPM agenda was reflected in the introduction of private sector commercial practices. The establishment of an FPSD division was described as the most significant step towards the introduction of new practices akin to private sector commercial practices at the Council. Ron, the Council's General Manager, described the FPSD division as a:

Stand-alone service delivery organisation...bidding for work outside...that basically puts about one and a quarter million dollars on the bottom line...so it is run very much as a commercial operation.

The follow-on effect of the creation of the FPSD division was a major restructuring across other divisions of Council. The restructure resulted in the establishment of three new divisions, the Corporate Governance, Ecologically Sustainable Community and Commissioning and Contracts (CCD) divisions. The role of the CCD

division was to manage all contractual service purchasing, including contracts for the purchase of services from the now separate FPSD division. This resulted in the establishment of new practices including contract management and asset management.

In the Utility the shift in Government policy from commercialisation and contestability to a focus on long-term asset restoration and continuing Government asset ownership was reflected in renewed capital investment in the State-owned infrastructure. The Regional Manager, Brian, described this investment as resulting in a “*massive capital [works] program*” for the Springvale Region. This renewed investment also required the creation of:

Fabio’s [Project Management Services Manager] role, which wasn’t in the business beforehand, we saw a need... to make sure all the [Capital Works] programs were delivered... created that team and put that team together.

The establishment of the Customer Service function at the College, the CCD division at Council, and the Project Management Services Group at the Utility occurred through the recomposition and reorganisation of existing practices and the establishment of new practices. These newly linked practices may be said to represent understandings of customer service, commercialisation and project management at a particular point in time in the College, Council and Utility’s respective histories.

In line with Schatzki (2005), the new practices and practice understandings have been developed within the possibilities of the already existing practices as captured in College, Council and Utility organisational practice memories. Clues to the coming together of old and newly introduced practices have emerged from the initial analysis of organisational documents. This embedding of practices can be seen, for example, in the College handbook. In this collection of documents, there are at least three ways in which course participants are referred to. In policy documents prepared prior to the introduction of customer service practices course participants are referred to as students. In later documents, including the customer service charter, course participants are referred to as customers or clients (Price, et al., 2007). Similarly, examples of a coming together and embedding of practices emerged from the analysis of Council’s planning documents. In successive Council

operational planning documents a shift is noted from local government to business language. In these organisational documents, Directors have become Group Managers, and departments have become business units. Finally, in the Utility, the shift towards the implementation of project management practices is noted in the creation of the Project Management Procedure. This procedure is an overarching organisational document that captures new and existing organisational activities and procedures related to project management. The Project Management Procedure is understood to broadly reflect aspects of what are understood as the doings and sayings of the newly introduced practice of project management in the Springvale Region of the Utility.

4.5 Understanding organisations and change through Schatzkian notions of practice and social site

In this chapter, I discussed and contrasted Schatzkian notions of organisations and change with management and processual perspectives of organisations and change. I maintain that perspectives such as organisation/organising, stability/change, changing/organising may not necessarily be considered as irreconcilable dualities when understood through a practice perspective. Rather, when understood through Schatzkian notions of organisations and change these emerge as patterns of work activities and interpretations unfolding in and through practices as part of the social site.

Through the discussion of the data generated by researching College, Council and Utility I demonstrated empirically Schatzkian notions of practice and social site, and how these notions help to explain the nature of organisations and change. First, I maintained, in line with Schatzki (2002, 2005, 2006) that organisations exist in nexuses, as mutually constitutive parts of the social site. As a result of these mutually constitutive relationships among organisational nexuses, changes or shifts in the practices of one part of such nexuses has a rippling effect across other interconnected parts. I featured this interconnection and its rippling effects in my discussion of the historical shifts in the industry and national contexts (i.e. social site) as part of which College, Council and Utility exist. Specifically, I demonstrated that neo-liberal reforms by Australian State and Commonwealth Governments aimed at the adoption of efficiency and effectiveness in public and community

service delivery were enacted in different ways by organisations such as College, Council and Utility.

Secondly, I demonstrated that the Schatzkian notions of practice reorganisation and recomposition provide a strong framework for explaining the ways in which changes in practices may be understood and enacted. The notions of practice reorganisation and practice recomposition help to explicate change and in particular the relationship between the notions of ongoing change and stability, as it unfolded at College, Council and Utility. Regarding practice reorganisation, I highlighted the kind of change that is explicit and extensive and that is often described in the management literature as episodic, transformational or institutional. Practice reorganisation, according to Schatzki (Schatzki, 2002), emerges from major shifts in the practices' purposes, goals and ends of interconnected nexuses (i.e. organisations) that are part of and constitute the social site. Some practices at College, Council and Utility were reorganised to reflect the new neo-liberal imperatives of efficiency and effectiveness in the practices of public and community service delivery. For example, at the College the existing purposes, goals and ends of providing government-funded community and equity education programs shifted towards the goals and ends of providing education programs that were more commercially viable and profit generating. At the Council, the goals and ends of providing public services to the local community with limited concern over costs, shifted towards the goals and ends of achieving cost competitiveness in service delivery. Finally, at the Utility, the goals and ends of profit generation shifted towards the goals and ends of utility asset restoration and sustainability.

Practice recomposition, I argued, imbues a sense of stability while at the same time allowing for ongoing change. At College, Council and Utility this was seen in the ways in which these organisations maintained the purposes, goals and ends of certain practices by readjusting some aspects of those practices as well as the ways in which those practices were being enacted. For example, at the College teaching practices were recomposed to include the activities of evaluation in line with the newly introduced AQTF principles; however, the existing goals and ends of these practices, of providing community-based adult education, remained intact. At the Council, practice recomposition was seen in the way in which this organisation adjusted park maintenance practices to include the activities of cost monitoring, in line with the new imperatives of commercialisation, while at the same time

maintaining the existing goals and ends of having well-maintained parks. Similarly, at the Utility, the practices of asset maintenance and construction were adjusted in ways that no longer necessitated the inclusion of competitive tendering, while at the same time continuing to maintain the existing goals and ends of these practices of delivering well-maintained assets.

Further, I demonstrated that at the same time as practices are being reorganised and recomposed, new practices may also emerge. The wholesale changes that emerge from practice reorganisation as well as the ongoing adjustments that emerge from practice recomposition create tensions and open up new possibilities for the emergence of new practices, meanings and purposes and for these to become embedded as part of the existing bundle of organisational practices. At the College, Council and Utility, the practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management emerged as new practices to support and sustain the newly established purposes, goals and ends of providing commercially viable and profitable education programs, cost competitive services and sustainable assets. Finally, I demonstrated that the introduction of new practices occurs in the context of already existing and persisting organisational practices. These existing practices frame possibilities for the embedding of new organisational practices by new and existing workers.

In the next chapter I discuss the introduction and enactment of the new practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management at College, Council and Utility by new and existing workers. In particular I draw attention to the ways in which individuals and organisations (sites) are mutually produced in the enactment of practices. I further discuss the ways in which practices are recomposed and reorganised through the ongoing interplay of worker and organisational understandings about practices — where practices become shared, enmeshed, carried forward and at the same time persist.

Chapter 5

Remaking Jobs

5.1 About this chapter

In this chapter my purpose is to challenge existing managerialist views of workers, work and job design that are based on individualist ontologies and that position workers as uncomplicated doers of work and as passive participants in the design of their jobs and organisations. I argue that Schatzkian notions of practice and site ontology (Schatzki, 1996, 2002, 2005, 2006) provide a more comprehensive perspective through which work, jobs, workers and organisations may be understood. By decentring both the individual worker and the organisation Schatzkian notions of practice and site ontology bring to the fore how individuals and organisations (sites) are mutually produced in the enactment of practices. This provides a means of understanding the complexity of organisational life, not through the development of multivariate models, but through practices unfolding as a part of the social site (Schatzki, 2002, 2003)

I challenge these managerialist views in a number of ways. First, I critique persisting views in the existing management literature (e.g. Job Characteristic Model, Interdisciplinary Work Design Framework) that position workers as passive participants in the design of their jobs. Next, I contrast these views with some emerging views (e.g. Organisational Citizenship Behaviour, Job Crafting) which recognise workers as more actively engaged not only in extending their activities beyond the boundaries of their jobs, but also in restyling or reshaping their jobs in some ways. I conclude my critique by highlighting more recent research by Morgeson and Humphrey (2008) and Grant and Parker (2009) that attempts to revitalise the existing job design literature by introducing contextual and social variables as critical elements in work and job design. I understand these recent approaches as reflecting a shift in thinking in the management literature and one that calls for a convergence of understandings – a framework to enable the notions of worker, context and jobs to be brought together in more meaningful and relational ways.

In line with this emerging trend, I propose Schatzkian notions of practice and site ontology as an alternative and I believe more robust theoretical frame for

understanding the worker, job, organisation and practice interrelationships that emerged at College, Council and Utility. I discuss these findings in the latter section of this chapter. I take as the starting point new workers' enactments of the newly introduced organisational practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management and discuss the ways in which these new workers remade their jobs and at the same time the practices of their organisations. Next, I discuss how existing workers also remade their jobs in ways that align these to the newly introduced practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management. In my discussion of the ways in which new and existing workers are remaking their jobs, I highlight further the Schatzkian concepts of practice perpetuation and variation, organisational practice memory and practical intelligibility.

5.2 Theories of work and job design that position workers as passive participants

For the past five decades, work design has been a management tool that has enabled the shaping and reshaping of organisations, work and jobs. As an outcome of work design, jobs represent predefined roles and differentiated sets of tasks nested in an organisation's hierarchical configuration and related to both organisational functions and goals. Jobs may differ in terms of many characteristics including complexity, autonomy, power, status and learning potential; however, these retain their shape or form regardless of who is appointed to do the job. A job's shape or form is often described in static organisational documents such as organisational (divisional and workgroup) structure charts, job descriptions, workflows, policies and procedures. Workers are hired, managed and rewarded according to the degree to which they meet performance expectations embedded in their jobs by their managers and supervisors (Clegg, 1990; Rhodes & Price, 2011; Robbins, et al., 2010).

The history of work and job design finds its beginning with the theories of mass production, scientific management (see for example Ford, 1926; Taylor, 1911; Wren & Bedeian, 1994) and motivational research (Maslow, 1954; McClelland, 1961). In these early schools of thought the focus is on improving production efficiencies through job simplification and machine enabled production lines. In later years, interest emerged on how to design jobs in ways that could better motivate workers,

how technology impacted on workers and the kinds of job characteristics that were beneficial for workers while at the same time maintaining organisational productivity imperatives.

A prominent model of job design that emerged from early motivational research of Maslow (1954) and McClelland (1961) was developed by Herzberg and Mausner (1967). In this model, known as the two-factor model, hygiene needs (e.g. safety, pay and interactions with colleagues) and motivator needs (e.g. autonomy, challenging tasks, responsibility and recognition) are understood as key drivers of workers' motivations. In this model, managers are understood as motivators, helping workers to become more motivated. By shifting workers' motivations from being focused on seeking fulfilment of hygiene needs and towards seeking fulfilment of motivator needs, the model maintains workers become more productive. Investigations of various workplace applications of this model failed to find substantial support for its robustness (King, 1970; Landy, 1989; Parker, Wall, & Cordery, 2001; Phillipchuk & Whittaker, 1996; Waters & Roach, 1971).

The ever increasing implementations of production technologies in the last decades of the last century gave rise to research that focused on the relationship between people and technologies of work. This saw the emergence of Socio-Technical Systems (STS) theory. Drawing on a long history of the application of technology in various industries (see for example Denison, 1982; Emery, 1980; Fortado, 1991; Macy, 1980; Trist, 1981; Trist & Bamforth, 1951), STS theory positions workers and technologies of work in a balanced relationship. In contrast to earlier theories of work design, STS theory draws attention to the social aspects of work (working in teams), the aggregation of work tasks into meaningful chunks to which workers can meaningfully contribute. A feature of STS theory is reflected in the inclusion of values of quality, continuous improvement and quality of work life, as key considerations in work design and the development of systems of work (technology, human resources and performance management systems) in ways that enable individual and work team outcomes (see for example Grant & Parker, 2009; Kulisch & Banner, 1993; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2008; Pasmore, 1995; Power & Waddell, 2004; Spreitzer, Cohen, & Ledford, 1999; Trist, 1981; Yang, 2006). Critics of STS suggest that this approach is overly concerned with factors internal to the organisation at the expense of the external organisational environment (see for example Adler & Docherty, 1998); social factors at the expense of economics (see

for example Spender, 1996); and the lack of research validating the robustness of the proposed models; and that these have all contributed to the perceived limited value of these approaches. Despite these criticisms, the STS approach is commended for highlighting the importance of analysing work beyond individuals and taking into account the group level of analysis (Morgeson & Campion, 2003) and challenging the trend towards technological determinism (Griffith & Dougherty, 2001). Approaches to the development and implementation of workplace technological innovations today continue to echo elements of the STS framework (see for example Blackler & Brown, 1985; Hyer, Brown, & Zimmerman, 1999; Margulies & Colflesh, 1982; Niepcel & Molleman, 1998).

The Job Characteristic Model (JCM) developed by Hackman and Oldham (1976) attempts to bring together job characteristics and workers' psychological states for the achievement of positive worker and organisational outcomes. By manipulating key job attributes (i.e. skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback), managers as architects of jobs may be better able to engage workers (psychologically) and therefore improve productivity outcomes (Campion & Stevens, 1991; Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Kramar, McGraw, & Schuler, 1998; Landy, 1989; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2008). Various research was fuelled by the inception of the JCM, including research focusing on job enrichment (see for example Orpen, 1979; Paul & Robertson, 1970; Wall & Clegg, 1981), and on job designs to improve worker motivation and satisfaction (see for example Blumberg & Pringle, 1982; Guzzo, Jette, & Katzell, 1985; Herzberg, 1982; Landy, 1989). Research testing various aspects of the JCM (see for example Champoux, 1991; Fried & Ferris, 1987; Holman, Wood, & Wall, 2005; Johns, Xie, & Fang, 1992; Kelly, 1992; Parker & Wall, 1998; Torraco, 2005) generally supports the relationship between core job characteristics and worker psychological states (e.g. satisfaction and motivation), worker psychological states and behaviour as well as the mediating role that psychological states play in the job-outcome relationship. Research investigating the impact of job characteristics on worker behaviour and performance as well as which combinations of job dimension are most effective, however, has shown varied results (Ambrose & Kulik, 1999). The JCM continues to be (with some modification) discussed in modern day management texts as a useful means of understanding and designing jobs (Robbins, et al., 2010).

In the early 1990s Campion and McClelland (1991, 1993) developed the interdisciplinary work design framework to research the impact (beyond employee satisfaction) of initiatives aimed at redesigning jobs. By evaluating the costs and benefits from four common approaches to job redesign (i.e. the mechanistic perspective, the motivational perspective, the perceptual perspective and the biological perspective), these authors provide an insightful analysis of the outcomes of the different approaches to job redesign. The findings of this research suggest that the way jobs are redesigned impacts on job outcomes in different ways. For example, redesigning jobs by increasing the number of tasks within the parameters of a specified job show improved motivational outcomes (e.g. worker satisfaction), improved perceptual outcomes (e.g. lower mental load and error likelihood) but worse engineering outcomes (e.g. poorer use of workspace). At the same time increasing the number of tasks within the parameters of a specified job may increase an organisation's HR costs by requiring workers to have greater training and compensation. In their conclusion, Campion and McClelland (1991, 1993) propose that taking into account the impacts of job redesign from an interdisciplinary perspective gives organisations a better understanding of the costs and benefits of such interventions but also better accounts for the impact of such interventions on both individuals and organisational systems of work.

In considering the approaches to work and job design discussed so far, one key feature stands out – the ways in which workers are positioned. In the early frameworks encompassing the bureaucratisation of work, mass production and scientific management, workers were understood as no more than implements of production – unthinking doers of machine driven work. This positioning shifted when theorists began to challenge such mechanistic approaches and began to recognise that productivity could be improved by designing work in ways that would motivate employees. In the motivational perspective, workers were repositioned – from implements of production to human beings who may be motivated towards improving their own circumstances as well as the production outcomes of the organisation. In calling for a balanced relationship between workers and work technologies, the STS framework proposed that work and jobs should be designed in ways that encompass meaningful tasks that could at least in part be controlled by workers, quality values and positive workplace relations. In the STS perspective workers were again repositioned – workers became construed as valuable

resources in the achievement of organisational outcomes (Denison, 1982; Emery, 1980; Fortado, 1991; Macy, 1980).

The positioning of workers as psychological beings with needs and motivations that could be harnessed for the betterment of individual and organisational outcomes was a feature of the JCM and a driver of its widespread application across organisations. However, what remains unclear about the JCM is the degree to which workers are understood as active participants in the design of the work itself. An overarching commonality across applications of JCM in organisations is the positioning of managerial representatives as the architects and designers of work and jobs. Managers (and human resource specialists) appear to be the ones charged with the responsibility of defining the contextual, relational and task elements of jobs. Through various job redesign techniques (often with limited, if any, worker input) these organisational representatives are understood as responsible for improving the motivational aspects of jobs, worker job performance and, ultimately, organisational productivity (Campion & Stevens, 1991; Kramar, et al., 1998; Landy, 1989; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Although understood as valuable resources, workers in the JCM continue to be positioned as somewhat passive in the determination of the ways in which their work and jobs are organised. Finally, although the interdisciplinary work design framework has encompassed at least four perspectives on understanding the impact of job changes, in this model workers continue to be positioned as passive recipients of redesigned jobs.

5.3 Theories of work and job design that position workers as active participants

In contrast to the approaches discussed in the previous section, a small and emerging body of research labelled by some as “informal work redesigns” (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2008, p. 77) identifies workers as active participants in the design of their work (Grant & Parker, 2009). Crant (2000), Frese and Fay (2001), Frese, Garst and Fay (2007), Organ (1988, 1997) and Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) discuss different perspectives (e.g. proactive behaviour, personal initiative, organisational citizenship behaviour and job recrafting) to highlight workers as active in extending and influencing their work activities beyond the parameters of their jobs.

According to Crant (2000), “taking initiative in improving current circumstances or creating new ones...challenging the status quo...rather than passively adapting” (p. 436) shows ways in which workers may be proactive in the fulfilment of their job requirements or in redefining their own roles in the organisation (Campbell, 2000). In these theorisations, proactive behaviours appear to be targeted towards specific outcomes, such as achieving role clarity, better social integration, learning and career management. Proactive behaviours are associated with individual worker characteristics (e.g. proactive personality, initiative, self-efficacy) as well as job characteristics (e.g. job breadth). Other researchers focused on understanding the relationships between personality concepts such as personal initiative and worker proactive behaviours (see for example Frese & Fay, 2001) and the achievement of organisational outcomes including sales performance (see for example Crant, 1995) and innovation (see for example Kickul & Gundry, 2002). The findings from this research suggest that personality and personal initiative impact on organisational performance, and that organisations implicitly rely on proactive workers to make things work and to initiate change. Jobs that are designed in ways that enable workers some degrees of freedom in taking initiative impact an organisation’s functioning and outcomes positively (Frese, et al., 2007). Specifically, jobs with embedded flexibility and autonomy, coupled with workers’ perceptions of capability in completing particular job tasks, appear to be directly linked to proactive behaviour (Parker, Williams, & Turner, 2006). Jobs designed to promote autonomy also appear to have a positive impact on the degree of personal initiative demonstrated by workers. According to other research, however, this relationship appears to be mediated by personality concepts such as worker self-efficacy and control tendencies as well as motivation concepts such as role breadth, self-efficacy and role orientation (Ohly & Fritz, 2007).

Organ (1988) defines organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) as those behaviours that workers do that are “not directly or explicitly recognised by the formal reward system...that are discretionary and that in aggregate promote[s] the effective functioning of the organisation” (p. 4). Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine and Bachrach (2000) identify seven types of OCB – helping behaviour, sportsmanship, organisational loyalty, organisational compliance, individual initiative, civic virtue and self-development. Each of these types of OCB are linked to both individual and organisational outcomes, which by the most part are understood as positive. It seems that in the OCB literature also, workers do not simply execute their jobs as

prescribed by their managers and described by their job descriptions. Workers are often engaged in their workplaces in ways that go beyond such parameters and that impact organisational effectiveness in various ways (Organ, 1997).

In taking up considerations of the ways in which workers may go about redefining their jobs, the work of Wrzesniewski & Dutton (2001) provides some useful insights. Worker initiated changes or job crafting occurs when workers become active players in the interpretation and design of their jobs. Workers may undertake job crafting by making changes to their jobs in terms of the physical, cognitive and relational elements, or any combination of these. In changing the physical elements of their jobs, workers may change the boundaries of tasks. In Wrzesniewski & Dutton's (2001) research, hospital cleaners altered their cleaning tasks (physical elements) so that these fitted in better with the patient care routines carried out by the nursing staff. In changing the physical task elements of their work, these workers altered the way they thought about their jobs (cognitive elements). Rather than simply thinking about their work as cleaning floors or bathrooms, this group of cleaners construed their cleaning work to be an important contribution to and part of patient care. By altering the nature of the interactions with others at work, workers may also change the relational boundaries of their jobs. For example, the catch-up and self-disclosure conversations that occur between hairdresser and client during an appointment may alter the relational boundaries of hairdressing work. Through the establishment of a closer relationship with their clients, the hairdressers in Wrzesniewski and Dutton's (2001) research recrafted their jobs beyond the tasks of cutting or colouring hair — they expanded their roles to include being confidants, advisors and perhaps even friends with their clients.

Job crafting is impacted on not only by workers' individual characteristics but also by the characteristics of the organisational and work contexts. The extent of task interdependency and discretion in a work setting may constrain or enhance job crafting. High degrees of task interdependence appear to restrict job crafting. This is because any changes in the physical elements (task boundaries) of one job may impact on the physical elements of other workers' jobs, hence making changes more difficult to implement. Conversely, high levels of discretion may be understood as enhancing opportunities for job crafting, while work contexts characterised by high levels of supervision appear to inhibit workers' job crafting activities (2001). In more recent research, Leana, Appelbaum and Shevchuk (2009) explore the notion

of collective job crafting in a child care centre. Autonomy, interdependence and a supportive supervisory environment were factors that were found to facilitate job crafting both at the individual and collective level in this research. Further, collaborative job crafting was found to be positively related to critical performance outcomes such as quality of care. In considering job crafting and workers' hierarchical position, Berg, Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2010) reported that "employees' structural location in the organisation" (p. 158) impacts on possibilities for job crafting.

In contrasting the approaches discussed above, a number of similarities and differences emerge. First, the proactive behaviour, OCB and job-crafting approaches recognise workers as active participants in reshaping their work in ways that go beyond the achievement of job description requirements or performance requirements outlined by managers. Second, in some instances, workers' reshaping of their own jobs also appears to have some impact on the activities of other workers in the organisation (e.g. job crafting or proactive behaviour), and this phenomenon is one that workers at different levels in an organisation's hierarchy undertake. The proactive behaviours and OCB approaches focus predominantly on workers undertaking additional activities and do not consider the degree to which such behaviours are organisationally aligned (or misaligned). Third, in the job crafting approach, workers as a collective (i.e. collective job crafting) may also reshape group activities in ways that positively impact on group and organisational outcomes. Finally, in contrast to proactive behaviour and OCB approaches, the job crafting approach goes some way in recognising how contextual characteristics may facilitate (or inhibit) job crafting, in ways that the OCB and proactive behaviours do not.

Although the approaches discussed above may be contrasted, a commonality among them is that workers are understood as active participants in the design and redesign of their work. Understanding workers in this way troubles the underlying premises of previous work and the job design literature (e.g. bureaucratic work designs, motivational job design and JCM) which for the most part understand workers as a simple means of production or as passive participants in the execution of management directives. Approaches discussed above which position workers differently have gone some way in drawing attention to the need to rejuvenate

thinking in the work and job design field in ways that reflect contemporary organisations and workers.

5.4 Recent theories of work and job design

In a recent revitalisation of work design research new consideration is given to the relationship between job design and job characteristics, job performance (Morgeson, Delaney-Klinger, & Hemingway, 2005), relational characteristics of jobs (Grant, 2007; Grant & Campbell, 2007) and wider organisational issues such as learning (Parker & Sprigg, 1999). Others such as Morgeson and Humphrey (2008) and Grant and Parker (2009) work towards expanding existing job design models in ways that take into account the changing nature of work and the context of contemporary organisations. Morgeson and Humphrey (2008) developed what they describe as an Integrative Framework of Work Design. By drawing from previous job and team design research, these authors integrate contextual and social dimensions of work and organisations with traditional task dimensions of job design. Building on the work of Morgeson and Humphrey (2008) and others (see for example Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007; Morgeson & Campion, 2003; Scott & Davis, 2007), Grant and Parker (2009) have highlighted the relational and proactive perspectives as important, yet neglected areas in work design research.

In the Integrative Framework of Work Design, Morgeson and Humphrey (2008) account for organisational and worker characteristics in terms of contextual (e.g. work conditions, boundary spanning physical abilities, trust and experience), social (e.g. social support, feedback, interdependence, personality characteristics) and task (e.g. task variety, significance, specialisation, job knowledge and skills) dimensions of work. These dimensions are understood as interrelated aspects of organisations and jobs that impact on not only the ways in which work may be designed, but also work and worker outcomes. This multi-dimensional view of work brings to the fore the interrelationships that workers must understand, negotiate and participate in, in their day to day work (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2008), thus adding greater depth to traditional models of job design which have predominantly focused on “attitudinal, behavioural, cognitive, wellbeing and organisational outcomes” (Morgeson, Dierdorff, & Hmurovic, 2010, p. 351).

Building on the work of Morgeson and Humphrey (2008), Morgeson, Dierdorff and Hmurovic (2010) draw attention to occupational and organisational context which these authors maintain should be taken into account when redesigning work. Occupational context is described as “the environment surrounding an occupation” (Morgeson, et al., 2010, p. 353) which extends beyond any one organisation. Occupational context frames the requirements of work and workers in a particular occupation. For example, the responsibilities and tasks of management accounting and the skills, knowledge and abilities of a person undertaking the management accounting occupation are framed by the occupational environment of accounting, thus work design must take into account these aspects. Organisational context is understood as the “broader organisational environment” (Morgeson, et al., 2010, p. 353) and may encompass organisational characteristics such as climate, technical systems and structures. The organisational context may play both a facilitating and restrictive role in the design of work. For example, in organisational contexts where occupational safety is highly regarded, more attention may be paid to the physical and ergonomic features of work. The technical features of an organisational context may also have an impact on the degree to which work may be monitored (e.g. in call centres) or the degree of autonomy workers may be given (e.g. telecommuting enabled through technology). Finally, organisation contexts characterised by high degrees of formalisation or centralisation of decision making, for example, work designs that include autonomous work teams, may not be possible (Morgeson, et al., 2010).

In attempting to respond to the changing nature of contemporary organisations (e.g. greater interdependence between workers, customers and suppliers; greater uncertainty), Grant and Parker (2009) developed the Relational Work Design Model. This model identifies relational and proactive aspects of work as key features in work and job design. Encompassing five elements, social characteristics (e.g. support, task interdependence), contextual moderators (e.g. diversity, goals/rewards, trust and task characteristics), relational and emotional mechanisms (e.g. cohesion, social worth, commitment), individual moderators (e.g. extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness) and outcomes (e.g. motivation, absenteeism/turnover, helping and citizenship, customer reactions), this model addresses both the increasing interdependence and uncertainty of contemporary work. The relational perspective of the model focuses on the multifaceted nature of interdependence — interdependence within organisations (e.g. team-based work),

outside the organisation (e.g. in service work, where the customer becomes part of the work) and among organisations (e.g. in joint ventures, strategic alliances, subcontracting). The proactive perspective of the model focuses on the growing need for workers (and organisations) to respond to the increasing uncertainty both in organisations and in the environments of which organisations are part. Through workers becoming proactive by doing tasks beyond their assigned jobs, changing their jobs to better fit their own needs and wants or by lobbying issues to achieve better organisation-environment fit, the proactive perspective highlights the ways in which workers have a greater impact on and input in reshaping their jobs and day-to-day work (Grant & Parker, 2009). As this model has only recently been developed, empirical testing has been limited (Grandey & Diamond, 2010). However, intuitively the model makes sense and encompasses aspects of work previously discussed and tested by others (see for example Berg, et al., 2010; Frese, et al., 2007; Podsakoff, et al., 2000).

The shifts in understandings which were highlighted in the job design models discussed in this section are further emphasised by Grant, Fried, Parker and Frese (2010) in their editorial comments of the special issue *Journal of Organizational Behavior – Putting Job Design in Context*. Grant et al. (2010) call for a revitalised focus in work design research, one which captures the contemporary organisational landscape. According to these authors, changes in the context of work including globalisation, the emergence of service industries and knowledge work, team-based structures and the technological intensification of work – factors not present when popular work design models (e.g. JCM, STS theory) were developed – raise questions about the efficacy of these models for the design of work in present day organisations.

To address the misalignment between popular work design models and the contemporary context of organisations, Grant et al. (2010) propose that future work and job design research become “cross disciplinary [and] cross level” (p. 146). Similarly, Oldham and Hackman (2010) emphasise the importance of the social aspects of work and the active role that workers play in shaping and recrafting their jobs, and they maintain the need for a more expansive view of work. These authors recognise that since the inception of the JCM (Hackman & Oldham, 1976, 1980) not only has the context of organisations changed but also the very concept of what

constitutes a job. No longer can work be understood in terms of jobs that can be clearly defined and discretely organised in the hierarchy of an organisation.

In contemporary organisations, relationships between workers and their jobs, among workers and their colleagues and between workers and their organisations have changed. Within contemporary organisations, workers may be members of several teams, serving different ends and projects and balancing several activities and relationships across multiple work contexts (Oldham & Hackman, 2010). With the emergence of flexible employment relationships (e.g. temporary contracts, casual work and subcontracting) what it means to be a contemporary worker has also been re-cast. As “portfolio professionals” (Fenwick, 2004, p. 229) or “self-employed contract workers” (Fenwick, 2008c, p. 12) some workers may have a temporary relationship with one organisation, perform one or more jobs at the same time, or may have multiple contractual relationships with a number of organisations at the same time. For these kinds of contemporary workers, the boundaries of a single job (and job description) may play a lesser role in determining what these workers do and how they carry out work (Fenwick, 2004, 2006a, 2008c).

It is these changing characteristics of contemporary work and organisations, Oldham and Hackman (2010) maintain, that make much of the existing work and job design literature less useful. For example, in the bulk of this literature it is the management of an organisation, their representatives or specialist consultants that have undertaken the task of designing jobs. Through job enlargement and enrichment programs, managers are responsible for redesigning jobs to improve worker satisfaction and organisational outcomes. In these traditional models, workers play a limited role, usually one of informant, providing their managers with information about the specifics of jobs. In contrast to these early approaches, Oldham and Hackman (2010) recognise that today’s workers appear to have greater input into the content of their jobs as well as “considerable latitude to customize...their jobs [make]...changes in the structure and content of jobs...[workers] do not necessarily have to wait for managers to take the initiative” (p. 470). In recognising the significant changes that have occurred in the context of work since the inception of the JCM, Oldham and Hackman (2010) maintain that the “design of work is now inextricably bound up with the structures and processes of organisational systems...rather than specific jobs” (p. 476). Furthermore, these authors call for research into the “fluid relationships among people and their various

work activities” (Oldham & Hackman, 2010, p. 476). Work and job design in today’s complex organisational and work environments must be informed by more comprehensive and multidisciplinary approaches.

5.5 Practice as a theoretical frame for understanding work and jobs

So far in this chapter I have highlighted the prominent frameworks that have informed the design of work and jobs over the past five decades and the ways in which workers and organisations are positioned in these frameworks. Much of the early research positions workers as passive participants in the design of jobs and work. Furthermore, what is recognised in recent commentaries by Oldham and Hackman (2010) and Grant, et al. (2010) is that seminal models of work and job design cannot adequately capture the complexities of contemporary organisations and contemporary work and workers. These authors suggest that new research should focus on the development of models that take into account both contextual and relational characteristics of contemporary organisations and work. Such models should also take into account understandings of workers as active participants in the design of work and jobs.

Although more recent approaches to work and job design position workers as active participants in designing their jobs and encompass factors such as context and relations, these continue to subscribe to an individualistic ontology. In these approaches organisations continue to be understood in terms of aggregates of related individuals, and individuals (and their minds) continue to be understood as ontologically separate from the organisations and activities that constitute them. To put this another way, these approaches subscribe to a number of theoretical positions that view the social as resulting from the interrelationships among individuals or where “individual psyches and hence individuals systematically presuppose” the social (Schatzki, 1996, p. 6).

What appears to be a missing part of the research landscape relating to the design of work and jobs in contemporary organisations is a shift from the prevalent understandings of organisations as entities and the ontological separation of the individual and the context where organisational life transpires. To this end, I propose Schatzkian notions of practice as a powerful frame for understanding workers, work, jobs and organisations and the interrelationships among them. As discussed in

earlier chapters, a practice frame provides a meso level of analysis (Schatzki, 2006) or a means of understanding the interconnections between individual, organisation and context. By decentring both the individual worker and the organisation, a practice frame understands these as mutually produced in sites (or contexts). In a practice frame not only is context important, but it is relationally tied to the human lives and events that are part of it and that constitute it. A practice frame provides a means of understanding the complexity of organisational life, not through the development of multivariate models, but through practices unfolding as a part of the social site (Schatzki, 2002, 2003).

As discussed in previous chapters, organisations as part of the social site are described by Schatzki (2006) as “bundles of practices and material arrangements” (p. 1863). Organisations are understood as a nexus of existing and altered practices which entwine people, technology and spaces where practices occur (Schatzki, 2005, 2006). In organisations, practices are what interconnect context, entities and events – what happens, what is said and done, how it is said and done and by whom it is constitutively tied to the context, entities and events through practices. Workers enact organisational practices through participation. To be a participant in organisational practices entails an “immersion in an extensive tissue of coexistence that embraces varying sets of people” (Schatzki, 2002, p. 87) as well as the “webs of interweaving practices” (Schatzki, 2002, p. 88) which constitute the organisation.

In the enactment of organisational practices workers draw on their “practical intelligibility” (Schatzki, 2002, p. 74) – they draw on their understandings of the practice’s organising structures, they carry out at least some of the activities (doings and sayings) associated with the practices and accept that the practices being enacted are what they ought to do. While the acceptance of a practice as what one ought to do in a particular organisational context ensures the perpetuation of organisational practices, this acceptance does not mean that workers are determined by practices. This is because in drawing on their practical intelligibility workers carry organisational practices forward and at the same time vary those practices in some way. Workers carry with them understandings of similar practices from other contexts (e.g. previous jobs, prior experiences and or knowledge) and in enacting organisational practices, workers’ understandings of those practices (structure-action elements) become enmeshed with previous understandings of similar practices from other contexts (Schatzki, 2006).

By participating in organisational practices workers enact and become part of those practices. Through participation (enactment) in practices workers develop and establish understandings about action (meanings and how to's) of the practices that constitute their organisations. At the same time, it is through such actions that workers influence those very practices that help constitute their actions. Thus, practices constitute organisational life in which workers participate and through participation in practices, workers also constitute those practices and organisational life (Price, Scheeres, & Boud, 2009; Schatzki, 2002). While a worker's participation in practices does not entail determination, practices do frame workers' action possibilities. This occurs through organisational practice memory. According to Schatzki (2005, 2006), organisational practice memory is the medium through which practices are understood and carried forward in organisations. Organisational practice memory encompasses understandings, rules, ends and projects as elements of practices that exist even when practices are not being carried out. These persisting rules, ends and projects are often captured in organisational documents, history and infrastructure and enable them to exist beyond the aggregate memories, interpretations and understandings of individual workers. In taking up the idea of practices having social and historical dimensions that go beyond the immediate context, practices can be considered as transcending any one worker or any one organisation. The transcendence of practices beyond any one worker or organisation suggests that practices may be the social 'thing' that connects organisations and helps us understand what organisations are and the ways in which workers participate in them (Price, Scheeres, & Boud, 2009; Schatzki, 2005, 2006).

How do Schatzki's notions of practice and social site bring together the concepts of context, relations, worker and task in ways that broaden understandings of these beyond managerialistic models of work and job design discussed above? First, in contrast to the work and job design model proposed by Morgeson et al. (2010), Schatzki's notion of context goes beyond simple understandings of context as the "broader organisational environment... shown to influence a variety of individual outcomes" (Morgeson, et al., 2010, p. 355) or "the environment surrounding an occupation" (p. 353). According to Schatzki (2002), context (i.e. social site) is not a separate entity or thing that exists and that acts upon the entities in it. Rather,

context (or site) exists in a mutually constitutive relationship with events and entities that coexist with it.

Second, according to Schatzki (2005), organisations are not understood as entities that encompass social interactions of ontologically separate individuals. Rather, organisations and individuals are understood as aggregates of practices that entwine people, technology and spaces interwoven in and across interconnected organisational sites. In this way Schatzkian notions of practice encompass relational elements of work not only in terms of “social characteristics of work... interdependence, social support, and interpersonal feedback”, as proposed by Grant and Parker (2009, p. 338), but also in terms of mutually constitutive relations beyond individuals or groups of individuals.

Third, Schatzkian notions of practice also enable a focus on specific elements of work by drawing attention to practices as “doings and sayings” (Schatzki, 1996, p. 89). A practice perspective makes it possible not only to understand what workers do and say as they enact the practices pertaining to their jobs, but also how what they do and say is linked to other organisational practices. It highlights, through the concept of organisational practice memory, how the rules, goals and ends of the practices that workers enact as well as the rules, goals and ends of other interwoven practices, frame possibilities for what workers do and say in the context of work.

Finally, Schatzkian notions of practice position workers as active participants in the enactment of organisational practices, not because they “engage in proactive behaviours” (Crant, 2000; Grant & Parker, 2009, p. 342) or job crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), but because the very essence of human coexistence necessitates participation in social practices. As workers enact organisational practices they draw on their practical intelligibility and carry practices forward and at the same time vary those practices in some way, enmeshing elements of existing practices with previous understandings of similar practices from other contexts – therefore, to be human and to be a worker is to enact practices.

In summary, Schatzkian notions of organisations and social life enable the exploration of workers’ contributions to the design of work and jobs in ways that account for and are framed by contextual and relational considerations. Notions of practice bring to the fore a means of understanding organisations as well as workers

as active co-constructors of work and jobs by providing a meso level of analysis that interconnects the individual and the social, not as elements of a comprehensive model of work design, but as a fundamental way of understanding human existence as part of the “site of the social” (Schatzki, 2002, p. 123) of which organisations form part. In the following section I present the data from College, Council and Utility to illuminate how a Schatzkian practice frame is useful in explaining the mutually constitutive relationship between individual workers and organisational context (or site).

5.6 Remaking jobs and practices at the College, Council and Utility

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated the mutually constitutive relationship among organisations and social site as it emerges through the phenomenon of change. I discussed the ways in which the practice shifts within the social site (i.e. introduction of neo-liberal practices into the policy and operational contexts of State and Federal Governments in Australia) of which College, Council and Utility were part, and had rippling effects on the practices of these organisations. These rippling effects were evident in the introduction of the new practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management as well as in the reorganisation, recomposition and elimination of one or more existing practices in these organisations. In this section, I focus on the ways in which the new organisational practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management unfold through new and existing workers’ enactments of their jobs.¹⁶

One way in which College, Council and Utility sustained the shift towards new practices was through the recruitment of new workers. These new workers talked about how in the enactment of their jobs they varied those jobs and the practices inherent in them — I named this remaking of one’s job. At College, Council and Utility new workers remade their jobs by drawing on their practical intelligibility as well as knowledge, experience and understandings from other contexts (previous jobs, organisations and life experiences). Existing workers were also remaking their jobs by drawing on their practical intelligibility and readings of their changing organisational circumstances. An important feature of remaking one’s job was that new and existing workers, at the same time as remaking their jobs, they were also

¹⁶ Some of this discussion has been published in Price, Scheeres and Boud (2009).

remaking or recomposing the practices of their organisations, and in some cases, other workers responded to this by further remaking their own jobs.

The data that I draw on here represents workers' recounts of remaking and as well as some organisational documents. These recounts include workers' experiences of their jobs in their current organisations as well as their reflections on their knowledge, understandings and experiences from organisations they had worked in previously. Organisational documents discussed include job descriptions and procedures. From the College, I draw on the recounts of Emma, Zorro and Jenna. I discuss the recounts of Ron, Bill, Kevin, Stan, Guy, Sally and Kirk, workers from different divisions, units and hierarchical levels of the Council. Finally, from the Utility, I draw on the recounts of workers Fabio, Miles, Sam, Alan and Harry who work in the Project Services Unit of the Springvale Region.

5.6.1 New workers remaking jobs and practices

Emma, Ron and Fabio are workers who were recently recruited to their respective organisations from outside the industry sectors to which their new organisations belonged. Emma works at the College, Ron at the Council and Fabio at the Utility. In recounting their experiences as new workers, these workers talked about the ways in which they enacted their new jobs and through these enactments also remade those jobs. When Emma joined the College, she had extensive experience in customer service roles in the private sector. Emma described her work experience as corporate, and she saw this as having made her "...*very business focussed*". Ron joined the Council after having had more than twenty years' experience as a Marketing Executive in the private sector. He described the Council's expectations of him in his job as Group Manager of the Service Contracting division:

They wanted me to bring the commercial world into local government... they were changing the direction of this ship and they weren't going to do it with somebody that had steered similar ships in the past.

Fabio joined the Utility as Projects Services Manager after having spent years as a project manager in the private sector. Fabio's extensive private sector project management experience was preceded by a "*history in government utilities*". Fabio

described his Manager's expectations of him in his role as Project Services Manager as fulfilling:

a need the organisation saw for more responsibility in the area of managing and planning the actual process [of project management].

In the case of these new workers, it appears that a crucial determinant in their appointment to their jobs was their extensive work experience in the practices that their new organisations were initiating. In the College, the newly initiated practices were the practices of customer service, in the Council these were the practices of commercialisation and in the Utility these were the practices of project management. It appears that these workers were understood by their managers as having the capacity to bring with them understandings and knowledge useful to College, Council and Utility, in the application of the new practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management.

At the College, Emma was appointed to the Customer Service Team Leader position. Her duties and responsibilities were communicated to her in formalised organisational documents including her job description. In these, Emma was charged with the implementation of customer service practices. As Customer Service Team Leader, Emma was responsible for the day-to-day operations of a small team of workers who answered telephone enquiries and processed course enrolments. At the Council, Ron was appointed to the Group Manager Service Contracting position. Not unlike Emma, Ron's duties and responsibilities were communicated to him in formalised organisational documents including his job description. In his job as Group Manager, Ron was expected, according to his Contracting Group Manager job description, to drive Council's commercialisation practices throughout his division, by "*directing and controlling of Service Delivery Contracts*". At the Utility, Fabio was appointed as the Manager of the newly created Project Services Unit. In his job as manager of this unit, Fabio was expected to drive the "*focus... on design planning and project management*".

In leading the customer service team Emma talked of how she took these organisational descriptions of her job as a starting point, but at the same time brought into the College new understandings about customer service practices she had developed in other work contexts. In describing her initial period in the role of

Customer Service Team Leader, Emma talked of how she reconciled the differences in what she understood to be customer service practices and her understandings of the already existing customer service practices of the College.

I saw a need for increasing the customer service [because there wasn't] a lot of customer service focus [in the College].

Emma talked of how she saw opportunities for extending the College's practices by "...looking at customer service from every angle" and described one of the ways in which she achieved this through her job:

I put together a package for [George, the Principal] to look at a role that managed the whole of Customer Service, so all the offsite stuff, managing all the casuals...increasing the customer service training of staff...pushing every limit...the title of Customer Service Manager which I kind of made up myself because there wasn't that job before.

By drawing on her fifteen years' experience in customer service practices, Emma may be said to have perpetuated and at the same time varied the customer service practices of the College – she achieved this by remaking her job as Customer Service Team Leader by taking an overarching approach to customer service (the commitment to customer service was also reflected a framed copy of the Customer Service Charter being displayed in the College reception area – Field Note 1 College).

At the Council, Ron talked of how he had made explicit to his team, what he understood to be commercialisation practices in the Service Contracts division. Ron described the Service Contracting division as a "a totally new role in local government" and rather than simply focusing on "directing and controlling service delivery contracts", Ron told of how he took a marketing approach in his job as SC Group Manager:

Here, nobody knew, literally, nobody knew [what all of Council's services were]...One of the first things we did was actually put together a list of our products, and I think we came up with something like 126... the work silos

was perfect for local government, and so, that's one of the things we've broken.

Through his job, Ron introduced new understandings of the ways in which Council's products and services were to be managed. He shifted disparate operational practices towards commercial service delivery practices. The existing Council practices of commercialisation became enmeshed with Ron's understandings (from other contexts) of commercial service delivery practices. Ron remade his job as Service Contracting Group Manager and at the same time recomposed and reorganised the practices of the Council. During his interview Ron also described how he was continuing to remake Council's practices to be more in line with those of a commercial enterprise by continuing to remake his current job as General Manager. When he was appointed to his current job of General Manager, Ron described how he had reconciled Council's financial management practices with those he understood (from his previous experience in the private sector) to be the practices of a commercial enterprise. He redefined the parameters of his current job to have direct control over the financial management of the organisations. He talked of how as General Manager, he was:

very uneasy with having people like finance in [the for-profit division of Council from which Council was purchasing services]... if you're going to run an organisation, the manager, the CEO needs to have direct contact with the all aspects of [Accounting and Finance function] — so I brought Finance back.

At the Utility, Fabio talked about how he took on the newly established role of Manager Project Services Group. He understood that in this new job he would be fulfilling a growing need for appropriate project management of maintenance and construction projects. Fabio understood this emerging need to be as a result of changes in State Government policy priorities:

[Since the end of the contestability and contracting program] the focus is back on getting work done because a lot of things have been let go [our infrastructure is in] need to be attended to...the big push is maintenance, focus on maintaining the assets, rather than previously, when we were commercial...[now] the dollars seem to be around... from the State

Government's point of view, [it's about] reliability of systems...around about three years ago, there was seen to be a need for the Project Services Group, which is a planning and design group, and project management group in this region. [Previously] there was some design people under the distribution managers, and the distribution managers were primarily responsible for the field activities and the installation. So their focus was on that, not particularly on design planning and project management and proper management of our infrastructure, there were no project managers in the region.

In his new job, Fabio introduced what he describes as a discipline to get “*design, planning and project management [activities] more controlled, monitored and processed*” (the focus on planning, controlling and monitoring was also reflected in current projects’ Gantt charts being posted on the walls of Fabio’s office and in the project managers’ work areas – Field Note 2 Utility) to address the gaps in the previous approach. To do this Fabio established the framework and resources for his group:

The first thing I had to do was appoint three project managers, design services coordinator, and other works programming manager, customer services manager, all these things that were sadly needed in the region.

What was revealed by Emma, Ron and Fabio is that in perpetuating the practices of their organisations (i.e. customer service, commercialisation and project management) they were enmeshing their readings of those organisational practices with their own already existing understandings of those practices as new workers. In doing this, these new workers were doing something different in terms of their jobs. In working out how to do their jobs and enacting the practices of their new organisations, these new workers were remaking their jobs in ways different from how their new organisations understood and described those jobs in organisational documents such as the workers’ job descriptions. I use the term remaking because the jobs that Emma, Ron and Fabio were appointed to were already established within the possibilities of the already existing organisational practice memories and understandings of the College, Council and Utility.

In remaking their jobs and the practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management, Emma, Ron and Fabio did not have *carte blanche*. Rather, this

remaking was framed within the possibilities of already existing and persisting practices embedded in the organisational practice memories of the College, Council and Utility. These workers negotiated between their understanding of customer service, commercialisation and project management and the already organisationally embedded understandings of those practices. For example, in the College Handbook, prior to the introduction of customer service practices, course participants are referred to as *students* rather than *customers*. This different naming reflects the already existing organisational practices of student administration rather than the newly introduced practices of customer service. Similarly, in the Council's organisational structure charts, prior to the introduction of commercialisation, those responsible for a functional area are referred to as Directors and Assistant Directors rather than Group Managers. Such naming reflected the already existing understandings and practices of the Council as a local government organisation rather than the newly introduced practices of commercialisation.

These negotiations surfaced tensions between the remade jobs, the remade (recomposed and reorganised) organisational practices and the already existing and persisting practices of the College, Council and Utility. At the College, Emma recognised that in reorganising and recomposing the customer service practices she found herself "*continually pushing it*" because of the dual mentality of being a community organisation as well as an organisation attempting to be more like the private sector. She could see that there was "*a limit*" to the extent that customer service practices as she understood them could be implemented. For Ron, persisting organisational practices that framed the possibilities of his remaking were experienced when he attempted to enact a commercial approach in his dealings with the elected Councillors. In the new context of commercialisation, the Councillors were expected to enact the practices of a private sector Board of Directors. These new practices required Councillors to disengage from micro operational issues and focus on corporate outcomes and strategic policy decisions. Yet, when Ron attempted to work with the Councillors in these new ways — drawing on the ways he had previously worked with corporate boards — he found this new approach difficult and constrained because the elected Council was:

much more disparate, less focussed on a corporate outcome, but that's just the nature of the beast, it's not something that I'm going to change, or anyone else is going to change.

Finally at the Utility, Fabio found that the application of the new project management practices was framed by the existing organisational practices and structures. Fabio's newly implemented practices of managing projects were in a context where:

Project managers don't have the authority to be project managing [in the sense that is understood in other industries]...with the Utility the Operations Managers [are the ones with the say about how projects progress] 'cause they're in charge of the crews.

For Fabio, the existing organisational structures and practices resulted in the segregation of project management and project implementation (this was also reflected in the Operations Managers being physically located in a different part of the administration building, separated from the project managers work area by a long corridor and several doors – Field Noted 3 Utility). In the application of project management in the context of the Utility, Fabio and his team were negotiating structural and hierarchical boundaries.

In summary, new workers appear to have been brought into their organisations because of their previous experience and knowledge in the new practices their respective organisations were initiating. These new workers represented and embodied these practices. In having been selected and appointed to their jobs these new workers also appear to have had an organisational mandate for remaking (e.g. as shown in Ron's statement "*they wanted me to bring the commercial world into local government*"). In remaking their jobs, these new workers seem to have taken as their starting point organisational documents such as their respective job descriptions as well as other existing organisational documents such as procedures, planning documents as well as interactions and discussions with colleagues and supervisors. These new workers were enmeshing their readings of already existing organisational practices as *new* workers in their new organisations with their own already existing understandings of those practices developed over time and in different contexts. In working out how to do their jobs and enacting the practices of their new organisations, these new workers have been recontextualising their existing understanding of the new practices (customer service, commercialisation and project management) into the already existing contexts. At the same time, through the enactment of the new organisational practices the already existing

organisational contexts were also being reconstituted. It is this mutual reconstitution of practices and contexts that enabled the new practices to be sustained.

5.6.2 Existing workers remaking jobs

In remaking their jobs and the practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management Emma, Ron and Fabio negotiated between their understanding of customer service, commercialisation and project management and the already organisationally embedded understandings of these practices. This negotiation also extended beyond Emma, Ron and Fabio. Other workers in each of these organisations had also begun to remake their jobs in ways that were more aligned with the emerging understanding, meanings and practices.

At the College, in remaking her job into Customer Service Manager, Emma became responsible for a group of workers who were Site Coordinators at the College's geographically dispersed teaching venues. The Site Coordinators were an existing team of workers who attended to the leased venues while courses were being conducted. Emma described the original jobs of these workers as "*sit at the venue and open* [prior to the classes commencing] *and close it* [at the end of the night]". In remaking the existing practices of customer service to encompass the jobs of the Site Coordinators, Emma shifted the work practices of the Site Coordinators and redefined these jobs to include a focus on customer service. Emma described this shift as creating tensions between old and new and required the Site Coordinators to learn about and become "*customer service... representing the College*". Zorro, the Senior Site Coordinator, who had initially been a student at the *College* as part of community based labour market program (Field Note 2 College) highlighted how he had begun reframing his understanding of his job in his paradoxical statement:

I'm not the customer mentality... I'm the community mentality...people who pay money to do a course you're not a customer...you're a student...it's a bit hairy...because they are a customer and the customer is always right....

Further, in negotiating both the needs for delivering good customer service, through a well-run venue (located some 800 metres away from the College office in an older building on a different street – Field Note 4 College) and at the same time maintaining the community ethos that he understood as a critical part of his job,

Zorro remade his job to include other aspects of maintenance that would have otherwise been tendered to contractors (evidence of this was seen during the tour of the facility when Zorro showed a small room which he had set up as a workshop to store his tools and materials – Field Note 4 College):

I'm running this facility and I like it its great it's my little empire [I am expected to deal with small] maintenance issues or hire contractors [for bigger issues]... I've got my little workshop, I've got tools...if I have to do a paint job, I'm not going to hire contractors that will charge twice as much as I get an hour, I'll get that done in between [teaching] terms [this is my understanding of a community organisation]...instead of hiring contractor that is going to be bleeding money... if I can fix those things myself... I'm saving us a fair whack of cash, because I know we need to look very closely at ways to cut out expenditure because we're funded but our funding has been cut. I can see that we do make a profit on the classes but that money is ploughed back into [community and equity] development of projects.

For Jenna, another worker at the College, the remaking of Emma's job into Customer Service Manager has also meant a remaking of her own job in ways that brought more focus and that supported the new Customer Service practices of the College. Jenna described her original job as encompassing:

look[ing] after all the cancelled courses... venue issues... [at the same time]...I'd be trying to edit the brochure [which is one of our main ways of communicating our course offerings to customers] and at the same time, it would be the first week of term, where there would be a problems like a tutor not turning up... and that of course made it kind of difficult to get the brochure done...[then Emma suggested the introduction of a Customer Service Manager role]...looking after customer service, looking after all the cancelled courses and the venues, whereas the venues were part of my job before... [I supported that]...we brought it up with the Principal and he was pretty happy with the changes and it's worked pretty well...[Now my job is focused only on] the brochure and PR [public relations] so I write press releases and if there is anyone with advertising enquiries and things like that come through me...that's [now] my job in a nutshell.

By divesting herself of the venue management functions which were originally part of her job, Jenna took the opportunity to remake her job to have a more promotion and public relations focus. This remaking not only enabled the customer service practices to be better managed by Emma (because now customer service officers were able to enact the wide range of customer service practices including venue management) but the increased focus of Jenna's job on marketing, promotion and public relations enabled Jenna's job to be better aligned with the College imperatives of being more competitive in the adult education sector.

At the Council the remaking of jobs was a practice that could be traced back to the early stages of the application of commercial practices in the Council. Echoing the comments made by Ron, Bill, a council worker for over twenty years, told of how, during the early stages of the commercial reforms, he was asked to take on a job in the newly created Human Resources Unit:

When the then General Manager came along, he wanted to restructure, he asked the directors to nominate one person in each group... to do some things for him... I was nominated...after a while [the General Manager appointed me] Acting Human Resources Manager for the Council until [the permanent manager came]...I had no formal training in human resources, a lot of it was just hands on experience with a bit of background in the joint consultative committee... manage the role...hiring and dismissing staff, dealing with staff issues, and there was no help...it was just fly by the seat of your pants... [in looking back] you wouldn't believe how much you've learnt through this hands-on [approach].

Although Bill had no formal training in human resource management he was given the opportunity to remake the job of acting human resources manager in ways consistent with his understandings of what constituted that job and his reading of the organisational context of that time. Bill drew upon his previous experience in dealing with employee and human resource issues as part of his membership of Council's Joint Consultative Committee (2007)¹⁷ as well as his own understanding of what

¹⁷ The Joint Consultative Committee is a committee established in accordance with the Local Government (State) Award 2007 within each Council in NSW that is made up of representatives of Council management and employees. It is a forum for consultation about matters including award implementation, training, consultation with regard to organisational restructure, job redesign, salary systems, communication and education mechanisms, performance management systems, changes to variable working hours arrangements for new or vacant positions, local government reform.

constituted human resource practices, Council's people management practices and work context, which had been developed during his time at Council.

The opportunity to remake one's job appeared to extend across different areas of Council, including the service provision areas. Guy, the Libraries and Community Services Manager, told of how he remade his newly acquired job by drawing from his previous role as a Civil Engineer and by undertaking an entrepreneurial approach to community services:

I manage what is called community development and services – there's a planning policy type area of the unit and there's also service delivery which is the library and also meals on wheels service, immunisation service [before I came to this job]... I didn't know a lot [about libraries or community services] but I was active participating in projects that involved [libraries and community services] areas...it was as a given in the engineering areas [where I had mostly worked] that you only had to put up a technically difficult report to get the most money – because no one could understand it...I could see the struggle that was happening in the [libraries and community services] areas and I thought how do I move the pot hole to the library or to community development? So I took up that challenge... how do I move that pot hole to the library – I used a similar analogy to try and achieve better resources [in this role as Library and Community Services Manager] – I knew it was going to be difficult...its more difficult to equate the value of project of wellbeing of the community or the value that a library may bring to a family over 50 years...[as opposed to a road] and that's always been a toughie to win in terms of traditional senior management structure if they're economic rationalists...the social entrepreneur [is] really about my view on how I can build a stronger community development area through some entrepreneurial approaches – like moving the pot hole to the library – I've worked with some of the private donation organisations to get some programs up in [this area].

For Guy “moving the pot hole to the library” meant remaking the traditional job of a library manager to have a greater focus on talking up the library as a community asset, of bringing to the fore more ways of demonstrating to the “economic rationalists” its value to the organisation. Similarly, in utilising “entrepreneurial

approaches” and networking with philanthropic organisations from Sydney’s wealthiest suburbs, Guy told us how he was able to access private donations, for example, to fund a community group of “*senior women looking for some support to do things* [for seniors in the area] – *well 10 grand just came along straight up*”.

Sally, who had worked with Council for about 18 years, talked about having been part of the Council when it had initiated its commercial practices. She described how she saw this time as an opportunity and “*jumped on the change management wagon very excitedly* [and became] *part of the continuous improvement squad*”. Her impetus for change and commercialisation continued when she became a team member in the Policy Unit. In continuing her focus on change and moving towards implementing the practices of commercialisation, Sally told us of how she remade her job of Policy Analyst, from having a narrow focus of “*developing strategies and policies*” to a broader organisational focus of managing the process for developing the Council’s overall management plan and planning practices:

My job title is policy analyst but I have become specialised in creating, developing and producing Council’s management plan which is [Council’s] combined strategic and operational plan for the future, the strategic plan which runs about five years into the future and the operational plan runs about 12 months ahead...my main focus is the management plan [process] and what goes into developing it and that includes some heavy consultation, some management workshops, some councillor workshops... the sorts of things you might do in strategic planning and sometimes in change management as well sort of aligning the vision and the council’s strategies and actions with what’s getting done day to day....

In remaking her job to manage the Council’s management planning, Sally moved beyond Council’s previous practices of management planning which encompassed:

just putting a document together [and telling the operational areas] *this is our plan based on the budget, you get the budget and you can see the actions in it and that’s what we’re going to do and there you have your plan.*

Sally focused on reorganising the management planning practices to encompass internal and external consultation. Sally told of how her remade job is about:

building relationships with the departments and the managers who have to implement the action plans that the management plan represents and that means that there's a lot of formal and informal relationship building going and the informal part... the sort of work that you need to do to that isn't always part of your job description...it is the team building stuff you might have and the sorts of meetings that you might have that you do work ancillary...that gives a little bit of relationship building... certainly facilitation... negotiate...manage conflict when there's different priorities and managers are really stressing out about their things and they want them to get done and in the budget.

In remaking her job and remaking the organisational practices of management planning, Sally also realigned existing practices of management planning with the Council's commercialisation imperatives and understandings of the Council as "managing a \$125 million business [with] over a hundred services". Sally recomposed the management planning to include budgeting practices (evidence of the coming together of management planning and budgeting practices was noted in the management planning and budgeting process flowchart that was posted on the wall adjacent to Sally's desk – Field Note 3 Council)..

The opportunity to remake one's job was not only afforded to Council's managers or those who worked in specialist positions, rather this practice was one that proliferated across Council's units and was one enacted by workers across Council's hierarchy. Stan, a Parking Patrol Officer, understood his job as not simply about issuing infringement notices, rather he remade his job as:

not so much giving people tickets, I think for me it's enforcement by presence, I think it made a big difference...I found you can get a lot more people to start doing the proper thing, not so much [by] coerc[ing] them... but [by saying to them] listen, you can't be here...They'll go, yeah [because] they don't want a ticket no more than I would want to give people tickets. I'll give one if there needs to be one but if you just tell them to move on...the people that I've told to move on, they remembered it so the next time.

The opportunity for Stan to remake his job appeared to be expressed to him implicitly in the way he was inducted in his job. As part of his initial training Stan shadowed more experienced Parking Patrol Officers so that he could develop knowledge and understanding of the Parking Patrol job:

[I shadowed other Parking Officers initially]...so I could learn [and] pick what I want from [the more experienced Parking Officers] and then formulate what's good for me...there's a thing that's set in stone [i.e. the infringement process]. [Shadowing] gives you the opportunity to [say] that's pretty good...that's not so good and then you take [what works for you]...I think it has paid dividends in my opinion.

A similar story was told by Kevin. In his job as Customer Service Officer in Council's call centre, Kevin talked of the ways in which what he did day-to-day differed from the job as described to him when he was appointed to his position. Kevin understood and enacted his job in ways that focused more on a "helping people" approach:

You look at the job description you only have a brief outline... whenever you start the job you realise that there are so many fields that off shoot...there is so much more than that...when you are helping people... [for example] Council has a Clean-up Service where you call us and we make an appointment for it and the resident [can only] put the rubbish at the front the night before [the scheduled collection date]... we get a lot of calls from aged people who unfortunately don't have any family, don't have any contact with their neighbours...so they're virtually stuck....I set up a thing with Kate [Team Leader Waste Office] to organise unbeknown to Council, someone from the Waste Officers to go out and help the elderly person put their clean up stuff out. And in most cases if it was just a washing machine they used to put it at the back of the Ute and take it away the same day...there's all those little things that you step outside the boundary for [another example was for the payment of rates and elderly people who found it too difficult to write a letter or who were not from an English speaking background]...I could call Keith who is in charge of the Rates department and he would say ok send me an email and we'll wipe off the interest... I think that it's very hard to get a job description down pat, mostly what can you say about a call centre

operator...sit down and answer the phone....This is what you must do...you must only book it in under these circumstances...you follow those guidelines...but...it's more of an instinct that you gain on the job...the job description gives you a basic outline of what you do but on the job you learn that you can actually you can do this, this and this....And then you look around the office and see this needs doing and this... this team here is an excellent team and here everybody oversteps their job description if you like...to get what has to be done....

In understanding and enacting his job as “*helping people*” Kevin moved beyond the requirements of the organisational definition of what constitutes a Customer Service Officer’s job. By not simply taking a Clean-up Service booking and explaining the policy of the service to the customers or writing submissions for customers to the Rates department, Kevin remade the practices of his job as Customer Service Officer. In negotiating alternative practices for the Clean-up Service and Rates with others in the organisation such as the Waste Services Team Leader or the Rates Team Leader, Kevin’s remaking of his job also impacted the practices of others in the organisation. For example, the Waste Officer’s job practices were remade to cater for the needs of elderly customers trying to access the Clean-up Service.

At the Utility, in remaking his job of Project Services Manager to have a more project management focus, Fabio created four new jobs and reshaped the structure of the Project Services Group. In establishing three project manager jobs and a design services coordinator job, Fabio implemented what he understood to be a best practice approach from his experience “*working in [project management] in similar jobs for over 30 years*”. The remade practices in the newly established Project Services Group impacted upon the ways in which other workers in the group understood and enacted their jobs. Fabio’s remaking of his job and the practices of his group led to further remaking by other workers. Miles, one of the newly appointed Project Managers in the Project Services Group, talked of the ways in which he negotiated the challenges of his new role:

I’m a project manager. I administer time frames and budgets for the construction and do some reporting on the progress of those processes in my portfolio in particular. It means that I get out and deal with the fellows in the field sometimes and...contractors... Project Manager...It’s a little bit of a

misnomer in that we don't directly have control of the resources [i.e. the construction crews that actually do the work], there's a number of interposing stages between me and the guys that do the work, and that's a source of frustration at times.

Although in his new role as Project Manager Miles was responsible for the management of projects from both the financial and technical perspective, his authority did not extend over the workers that actually undertook the projects' construction. In order to address the disconnection of authority and responsibilities for the project, Miles remade his job to have a greater focus on relationships:

I don't have anyone that directly reports to me... [the construction crews report to the Operational Managers who are in a different division]...I can't demand anything, I can only ever ask...I find that I've got to try and foster relationships...with [construction crews and their managers, the Operations Managers] key players in the measurement of my output, so I've got to make sure that there is a good relationship between us... that I deal with in those areas well, and understand what their concerns are, if they come to me with a query about some jobs or I need something shoved into the [Construction] program, having a good relationship helps.

In a similar way to Miles, other workers, such as Sam, a Project Officer in the Project Services Group, also remade his job to have a greater focus on relationships. Although Sam understood that the new parameters of Project Officer and Project Manager's jobs require a less hands-on approach, he remade his job in ways that enabled him to continue to be involved in the construction process by interacting with the Operation Managers and construction crews (Notations on the Project Services Group "In and Out" board showed project managers and project officers spending time at project locations or at Operations Team meetings – Field Note 4 Utility). Sam talked of how the building of strong relationships enabled him to achieve his project management objectives:

What I used to do [before the termination of the contestability program and the inception of the Project Services Group] was very much run the project... now [Project Managers and Project Officers have] become more of a process manager...more monitoring what's coming in, what's coming out,

dollars, units... before we ran the job by actually being on site...There still is involvement and you can make yourself become involved and quite often I still do, I'll see an ops manager for his opinion, I'll see leading hands, I'll go on site and I'll discuss things, so I haven't let it become totally stagnant I want the closeness still with field staff because I think it's a very important thing. I know some of the managers don't want that, they want that separation because they think sometimes it can be time wasting. But to get a personal relationship with people I think is very important and I think to just keep it as business and you only talk to people when you require something I think is a mistake and I think sometimes we're driven to go like that I don't like it, I ignored it. I will go on site and I'll speak with people and I'll discuss things and see how things progress.

Sam remade his job to include relationship building and negotiation practices to ensure strong relationships developed with those who control and do the physical construction of the projects. This shift was necessary because the existing organisational practice structures for project management and project construction continued to be segregated. As a Project Officer, for Sam, not unlike his colleague Miles, the existing practices of project construction framed the ways in which the newly introduced practices of project management were enacted by both new and existing workers.

Alan, also a Project Officer and a colleague of Miles and Sam in the Regional Services Group, told a similar story of how he remade his job to have an IT focus. While still encompassing the functions of “*electrical design for the overhead underground distribution systems*” inherent in the job he was appointed to, Alan saw the recent organisational investment in technology as an opportunity to remake his job to encompass work relating to the development and testing of the new organisational IT system for the design and costing of projects. He told of how he initially became:

a super user for the ELIPS system [a system for the production of project estimates and invoicing]...I was involved with implementing it... the testing process to see whether it was going to suit [our needs]...then I became involved in another user group for building a web interface... as well as streamlining our design practices, I am currently involved in another IT

project to retrieve information from what we draw and put it into our mapping system... trying to automate it by using AutoCAD and developing computer scripts to sort of convert AutoCAD to GNET which is what the system is called... I've been involved with testing and implementing that and it is almost ready to go...that's been a three year involvement...It's something I choose to do.

In the Project Services Group not only was there a certain amount of freedom for workers to remake elements of their jobs, in some instances the remaking of jobs was actually encouraged. This was explicitly discussed by Harry, a worker in the Project Services Group who was dubbed by his colleagues as “*Everything Man*”. Harry described his job title as Engineering Officer and his job as one that Fabio, the Project Services Manager, had put together to meet a staffing need that could not be fulfilled with the employment of another Project Manager because “*Sunnydale Region was told they weren't allowed another project manager, so we snuck around that, by calling me Engineering Officer*”. In describing his job Harry talked of how his job:

changes every day...it's the sort of position you probably put two different people in and you get two very different outcomes... now I've got things that I know I need to do, [when I started], it was defined but not defined, it was defined, but that really didn't mean anything, it was really, wade your way through until you made sense of it, whereas now, there's still a lot of that, there's still a lot of grey area, now that grey area is like a lucky dip, and you sort of do the stuff that you know you have to do now, and just put your hand into the barrel every now and again and pull out another job...I came up with it.

What may be seen from Harry's recount is that not only was he encouraged to remake his job, such remaking was necessary in order to get work done. As a result of organisational constraints on extending the number of Project Managers in the Project Services Group, Harry's job as Engineering Officer had to be remade to be more like that of a project manager, in order to achieve the goals and ends of the new practices of project management.

In summary, in remaking their jobs and the practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management new workers at College, Council and Utility also created the impetus for further remaking by existing workers in these organisations. Some workers in each of these organisations whose work related to these new workers also began to remake their own jobs. This remaking by existing workers occurred where the jobs were more aligned with emerging understandings, meanings and practices (e.g. Jenna at the College, Sally at the Council). For other existing workers the remaking of their jobs reflected a negotiation of tensions between new and old practice understandings, where the new practices were embedded in the remade jobs in ways that enabled them to achieve the new organisational imperatives while negotiating the parameters of existing organisational practices and contexts that continued to persist (e.g. Zorro at the College and Miles and Sam at the Utility).

For some existing workers, the practice of remaking one's job was one that they undertook in response to their own readings of the organisation's changing context and newly introduced practices. In remaking their jobs, these existing workers drew on the organisational narrations of their jobs as represented in job descriptions, procedural and planning documents, and also in existing practices, history and evolving organisational context developed over their time in the organisation. These existing workers appear to have remade their jobs from a starting point of having experienced the practices of their organisation from the perspective of immersion, by having been part of the organisation and its practices over time (e.g. Bill and Guy at the Council). In remaking their jobs existing workers appear not only to have drawn on their existing organisational knowledge and understandings, but also on knowledge and understandings of new practices gained through training, through the interaction with new workers, or participating in experiences with others outside the organisation. In remaking their jobs these existing workers appeared to have been recontextualising new practices in ways that fit their understandings of the existing organisational context (e.g. Jenna at the College, Guy and Sally at the Council and Miles at the Utility).

Finally, for other existing workers, the remaking of their jobs was reflected in their daily enactments of organisational practices and the practices that encompassed their jobs. The remaking of their jobs by these workers did not appear to reflect an organisational mandate or an impetus for implementing new organisational

practices. Rather, for these workers, the remaking of their jobs simply reflected the ongoing practice accommodations that were necessary for the achievement of the outcomes of their jobs (e.g. Kevin assisting customers or Stan enforcing parking regulations at the Council or Alan improving IT systems for design at the Utility). By drawing on their “practical intelligibility” (Schatzki, 2002, p. 74), these workers perpetuated organisational practices (of customer service, parking enforcement and computer aided design) and at the same time in reading daily contextual cues made adjustments to those practices – these workers were at the same time carrying organisational practices forward and varying those practices in some way. Further, as these workers were interconnected with other workers through practice arrangements, the remaking of their jobs through practice variations also triggered other workers to remake elements of their jobs.

5.6 Bringing together notions of jobs, workers and practices

Schatzkian notions of practice avoid individualist accounts of workers as passive doers of managerially designed jobs or work (e.g. Job Characteristic Model) or as proactive individuals engaged in crafting their own jobs (e.g. Proactive Behaviour, Organisational Citizenship, Job Crafting models, Integrative Job Design Framework and Relational Job Design Model discussed above). Rather, using Schatzkian notions of practice I have shown that through the unfolding and enactment of practices workers are in a mutually constitutive interrelationship that interconnects individuals (workers) and the social site (organisations) in which their (work) lives unfold. A Schatzkian practice frame adopts a site ontology which takes into account elements of both societist and individualist ontologies without giving primacy to either (Schatzki, 2002, 2003).

In contrasting Schatzkian notions of the social site with the notion of context described in the Job Characteristic Model and Integrative Job Design Framework (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2008), and the notion of interrelationships described in the Relational Work Design Model (2009), significantly different meanings emerge. Schatzki (2002) moves beyond the notion of context as an element to be considered in the design of work and jobs. For Schatzki, context (or the “social site” as he refers to it) and its interrelationships are much more, the “context and the contextualised event or entity constitute one another – what the entity or event is, is tied to the context, just as the nature and identity of the context is tied to the entity or event”

(Schatzki, 2005, p. 471). The interrelationships between context and entity/event, (organisation/worker/practices) are mutually constitutive. In the data that I have discussed in this and the previous chapters, the mutually constitutive relationship unfolds in two ways. First, it unfolds in the ways in which the practice shifts within the social site (i.e. introduction of neo-liberal practices in State and Federal Governments in Australia) of which College, Council and Utility were part, had rippling effects on the practices of these organisations. Second, it unfolds in the ways in which the newly introduced practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management were introduced and remade by new and existing workers enacting their jobs in these organisations.

Workers perpetuate and at the same time vary the practices of their organisations. In the data that I have discussed in this chapter, workers do this through the enactment and remaking of their jobs. New workers such as Emma, Ron and Fabio were understood by their organisations as having the capacity to bring with them new understanding and knowledge useful to College, Council and Utility in the application of customer service, commercialisation and project management practices. In enacting these practices as part of their jobs these workers perpetuated these practices and at the same time varied them by drawing on existing understandings and knowledge. However, the practice understandings and knowledge that Emma, Ron and Fabio brought with them had been enacted and developed in other industry and organisational contexts (i.e. private sector organisations in different industries) and could not simply be applied directly. Rather, these needed to be recontextualised into the already existing contexts (or sites) of College, Council and Utility. The extent to which these new workers could remake the practices of their jobs and their organisations was framed by the already existing organisational practices.

Already existing organisational practices frame the possibilities for workers remaking their jobs and practices of their organisations. This occurs because rules, ends and projects as elements of practices are maintained and carried forward in organisational practice memory. Organisational practice memory is embedded in an organisation's documents, history and infrastructure. At the College, for example, Emma's enactment of her job was initially framed by existing understandings of customer service practices as described in her job description as Customer Service Team Leader. At the same time, Emma's attempts at recomposing and reorganising

the customer service practices of the College were framed by the College's existing practices and history of being a community organisation. These already embedded practices of the College were highlighted in already existing organisational documents such as the College Handbook which included documents that described enrolment procedures and the roles to be undertaken by Site Coordinators and Tutors. Similarly, at the Council, Ron's attempts at working with Councillors as a commercial board of directors (which required them to take a macro view of council affairs) were framed (and often limited) by the already existing practices of Councillors of micro-managing and becoming involved in the day-to-day running of the Council. Finally at the Utility, Fabio found that the application of the new project management practices (where project managers have complete control over projects) was framed by the already existing organisational practices and structures that divided authority for the management of projects between the newly established Project Services Group Project Managers and the existing Operational Managers that executed the projects' construction.

In taking up the idea of practices having social and historical dimensions that go beyond the immediate context, practices can be considered as transcending any one worker or any one organisation. This suggests that practices may be the social *thing* that connects organisations and helps us understand what organisations are and the ways in which workers participate in them (Price, Scheeres, & Boud, 2009; Schatzki, 2005, 2006). This was seen in the ways in which Emma, Ron and Fabio in working out how to do their jobs and enacting the practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management were enmeshing their own existing understandings of those practices (from other sites/organisations) with the already existing organisational understandings and practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management as well as other already existing organisational practices (e.g. the practices of a not-for-profit community organisation, of local government, of a government utility).

This enmeshing occurred through these new workers doing something different in terms of their jobs – through these workers remaking their jobs. In remaking their new jobs these workers were remaking the already existing practices and contexts of their new organisations. Emma remade the customer service practices of the College by bringing together the disparate customer service activities under her leadership, by increasing customer service training and by establishing a customer

service approach across other College practices; Ron by shifting silo-based operational practices towards commercial service delivery practices and by shifting existing financial management practices towards the financial management practices of a commercial enterprise; and Fabio by establishing the project management framework (as described in organisational document – Project Management Procedure) and appointing project managers and a project coordinator to sustain the project management framework.

The perpetuation and variation of practice is not only undertaken by new workers. At College, Council and Utility existing workers were also noted remaking their jobs. At the College, some workers such as Jenna were remaking their jobs in ways that sustained the newly introduced practices of customer service. Others such as Zorro were remaking their jobs in ways that sustained the already embedded (in the organisational practice memory) organisational understandings of the College as a community organisation, while at the same time attempting to enact (at least in part) the newly implemented practices of customer service. Remaking jobs was also a practice seen across a number of areas of the Council. In some instances, workers such as Guy, in taking up an entrepreneurial approach to community service, were attempting to find ways of enmeshing existing community service practices with Council's new commercial imperatives. Similarly, Sally in focusing her job towards the development of a coherent and integrated management planning process, was remaking her job in ways that aligned her work practices with the practices of a commercial enterprise. In other instances workers such as Bill, Stan and Kevin, in the remaking of their jobs, reflected the ongoing enactment of practices, where workers draw on their "practical intelligibility" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 74) and in doing so carry practices forward and at the same time vary those practices in some way. At the Utility too, existing workers such as Harry and Alan were remaking their jobs as a means of doing what made sense for them to do in the emerging and changing circumstances of their day-to-day work.

To conclude, Schatzkian notions of organisations and social life enable the exploration of workers' contributions to the design of work and jobs in ways that account for contextual and relational considerations. Notions of practice bring to the fore a means of understanding organisations as well as workers as active and in a mutually constitutive relationship with the site in which their lives unfold. This mutual constitution appears to occur through workers' (new and existing) simultaneous

perpetuation and variation of organisational practices — through workers enacting organisational practices through their jobs and varying those practices by remaking their jobs in various ways. In the next chapter, Chapter 6, I discuss the ways in which knowing becomes reshaped amid remaking of jobs and organisational practices.

Chapter 6

Remaking Knowing in Practice

6.1 About this chapter

In the previous two chapters I considered the implementation of organisational practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management. I discussed the ways in which the implementation and enactment of these new organisational practices by new workers instigated further changes in these and existing organisational practices – the recomposition and reorganisation of organisational practices at College, Council and Utility. Second, I discussed the ways in which new and existing workers in remaking and enacting their jobs may be implicated in the recomposition and reorganisation of these new organisational practices and already existing organisational practices. In this chapter, I draw attention to the Schatzkian notions of practical intelligibility, practice understandings, knowing how and organisational practice memory (Schatzki, 1996, 2002, 2005, 2006). I discuss the ways in which the remaking of organisational practices and jobs may be implicated in the reshaping of knowing embedded in practices and in organisational practice memory, and how this reshaping constitutes learning.

I begin this chapter with an overview of the literature pertaining to learning in the context of work and organisations. I focus in particular on the theoretical shifts in this literature, from understanding learning as a cognitive operation, to learning situated in practice, to notions of learning and knowledge in action, and finally to knowing in and through practice (for a review of the learning in work literature from 1999 to 2004 see Fenwick, 2008a). Although this literature has gone a significant way in developing understandings of learning beyond the traditional bounds of formal institutions (i.e. schools, universities, technical colleges), and has drawn attention to work and the workplace as sites for learning, what constitutes learning continues to be contested (Fenwick, 2010b). From this literature, I take as my focus the work of other authors who have focused on understanding notions of learning and knowing in practice. In the theoretical discussion presented in this chapter I bring together key ideas that have emerged from the research by Cook and Brown (1999), Gherardi (see for example Gherardi, 2006, 2008, 2009b; Gherardi & Nicolini, 2000) and Orlikowski (2002) who have done considerable work towards developing the

theoretical concepts of knowing-in practice with Schatzkian notions of practice (Schatzki, 1996, 2002, 2005, 2006).

6.2 Working, learning, practising and knowing

6.2.1 Working and learning

In considering the relationship between work and learning, the research generally suggests that workplaces are major sites of learning (Fenwick, 2006b, 2008a, 2010b; Fuller & Unwin, 2010; Hager, 2010). The workplace learning literature in particular has focused on understanding the ways in which learning and work may become unified in ways that facilitate the advancement of both workers and their organisations (Ellström, 2001; Skule & Reichborn, 2002). These understandings have given rise to multiple studies, some of which have focused on structured or formal learning at work and the kinds of learning that lead to a qualification (Fuller & Unwin, 2003). Other studies have focused on the relationship between formal and informal learning, while others still have focused on the ways in which learning unfolds through everyday work activities (Hager 2010).

This conceptual diversity is reflected in the review of learning in work literature conducted by Fenwick (2006b, 2008a, 2010b). In considering literature spanning the period from 1999 to 2004, Fenwick (2008a) identifies eight emerging themes for understanding learning, including: sense-making and reflective dialogue (learning vs meaning-making); 'levels' of learning (how learning occurs across levels of analysis e.g. individual, group and organisation); networks of information transmission (learning as information transmission); communities of practice (learning as participation in a community of practitioners); individual human development (learning as an individual development pursuit); individual knowledge acquisition (learning as cognitive/mental phenomenon); co-participation and emergence (learning as social phenomenon or socio-material phenomenon through everyday participation); and individuals in community (learning as individual cognitive phenomenon occurring in community context). In the post-2005 literature, Fenwick (2010b) further identifies a growing area of learning research which takes up practice-based theorisations.

Contributing to the diverse and contested understanding of learning in this literature, according to Fenwick (2008a, 2010b), the ways in which learning is talked about, understood and researched is as process, outcome and practice; as individual or collective; as cognitive or constructivist and so on. This diversity goes beyond perspectives or “investigating different parts of the same thing” (Fenwick, 2010b, p. 90) and is more indicative of research taking up multiple ontologies and ideologies. Therefore learning needs to be understood as “multiple objects, as very different things in different logics of study and practice” (Fenwick, 2010b, p. 90) and by accepting difference rather than striving for continuity or similarity in our research of learning, Fenwick (2010b) maintains, we may germinate new cross-disciplinary dialogue and understandings.

Other authors, such as Sawchuck (2010) and Fuller and Unwin (2010), dissect the literature pertaining to learning in work by considering disciplinary perspectives, for example, the organisational studies/management perspective and the educational perspective. In considering an organisational studies/management perspective, Sawchuck (2010) suggests that the emphasis of workplace learning research is on understanding the ways in which learning enables “development of human assets, organizational commitment, flexibility and sustainable competitive advantage” (p. 166). Notable researchers following this organisational/managerial perspective include organisational and management theorists such as Argyris and Schön (1978), Marsick and Watkins (1990) and Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995).

The work of Argyris and Schön (1978), for example, brings to the fore cognitivist notions of learning in the context of organisations. They highlight the concepts of single loop learning and double loop learning. According to these authors, single loop learning may be understood as engaging cognitive processes of thinking, understanding and responding to situations by drawing on our previous understandings of similar situations we have experienced before. Double loop learning on the other hand not only engages one in thinking, understanding and responding to situations by drawing on previous experiences, it also engages one in reflection on what was learned from those experiences (Sawchuk, 2010). The framework developed by Argyris and Schön (1978) highlights not only the different kinds of learning that may be occurring, but also a means of differentiating the depth and quality of such learning. Further research by these authors independently gave rise to related concepts such as reflective learning and the reflective practitioner

(Schön, 1983, 1987) and the concepts of theory of action (i.e. an individual's articulated rules believed to guide own actions and understand others' actions) and theory-in-use (i.e. the difference between an individual's theory of action and how an individual actually acts) as a means of enabling enhanced learning of individuals in organisations.

Marsick and Watkins' (1990) work introduced the concepts of "informal and incidental learning" (p. 12) into the workplace learning discourse. According to these authors, informal and incidental learning may be distinguished from the already well researched concepts of formal learning, which includes training and education programs conducted both within and outside of the workplace (Fuller & Unwin, 2010; Hager, 2010). The work of these authors is particularly useful in highlighting the possibility for learning to occur outside formal learning settings, and as part of what workers do on the job day-to-day. Hager (2010) recognises the work of Marsick and Watkins (1990) as particularly important for introducing different conceptions of the sources of learning (i.e. experience, doing and self-directed learning) into the learning discourse.

The work of Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) articulates the linkage between organisational competitiveness and learning. In their comparison of American and Japanese firms, these authors found that the commitment of Japanese management toward understanding knowledge and learning as embodied, tacit and implicit in aspects of work made Japanese firms more able to innovate, be more creative and therefore become more competitive (Sawchuk, 2010). The work of Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) is useful not only because it highlights the interrelationships between learning and work, but also because it implicates learning as a critical aspect in driving organisational performance.

The second major cluster of literature focusing on learning in the workplace is described by Fuller and Unwin (2010) as stemming from an educational perspective. This research predominantly reflects the endeavour of developing understandings about the ways in which people learn in the workplace, and how this kind of learning may be differentiated from the learning that occurs in formal educational institutions (i.e. schools, technical colleges, universities) as well as less formal educational institutions (i.e. community setting and at home). Fuller and Unwin (2010) identify a number of notable researchers adopting this perspective, including Lave and

Wenger (1991), Billett (see for example Billett, 2001, 2002, 2004), Fuller and Unwin (2004), Engeström (see for example Engeström, 1990, 2001, 2004) and Eraut (see for example Eraut, 2000, 2004).

The situated learning framework, first developed by Lave and Wenger (1991), brings to the fore notions of learning as not in the minds of individuals, but learning as a social thing that occurs in a “community of practice” (p. 56). According to these authors, novice workers learn a significant part of what to do through participation – participation as an inherent and inseparable aspect of learning (this material will be discussed in greater detail in Section 6.2.1 below). Building on the notions of participation, the work of researchers such as Billett (2001, 2002, 2004) and Fuller and Unwin (2003, 2004) foreground the different kinds of participation that may facilitate (or inhibit) learning in the work setting.

According to Billett (2002), workplaces may afford workers opportunities for participation in a variety of activities that may contribute to knowledge development. Practices such as peer observation, coaching and mentoring, and reflection are examples of such activities. These workplace opportunities, which Billett (2001, p. 210) named “affordances”, may not be evenly distributed across the workplace. The patterns of distribution of such learning opportunities may be representative of the power structures of an organisation. Organisational power structures may therefore significantly influence access to highly contested learning opportunities. Access to organisational learning opportunities may be influenced by worker characteristics, social affiliations and status. At the same time, workers are also understood as potentially active players in making choices about which opportunities to contest and become engaged in and which to ignore (Billett, 2001, 2002, 2004).

Fuller and Unwin (2003, 2004), who analyse work practices and learning through a cultural-historical activity theory lens, focus on developing better understandings about the kinds of organisational environments that may enhance or inhibit participation. In outlining the expansive-restrictive continuum as a means of understanding the learning environments of an organisation, these authors provide a means of understanding the ways in which organisational environments shape learning opportunities for workers. Fuller and Unwin (2004) argue that organisations which provide workers with opportunities to participate in many internal and external communities of practice provide cross-organisational learning opportunities, and

recognise and support learners, for example, reflect organisational learning environments that are expansive (Fuller & Unwin, 2004). Furthermore, those organisations that sustain expansive learning environments may not only be implicated in individual work-focused learning but also in the “integration of personal and organisational development” (Fuller & Unwin, 2004, p. 127). Like the work of Billett discussed above, the work of Fuller and Unwin (2004) recognises that individual workers play a key role in accessing (or rejecting) the learning opportunities available in an organisation’s learning environment. Both the work of Billett (2001, 2002, 2004) and Fuller and Unwin (2004) have provided strong evidence for understanding learning in the workplace in terms of an integration of both individual learners and social processes (Hager, 2010).

Engeström (2001), whose work is also grounded in cultural-historical activity theory, maintains that in order to understand learning in the workplace, one must also understand the social systems inherent in organisations and society and how the dynamics of such systems impact learning (Fenwick, 2012). Engeström proposes activity theory as a framework to facilitate understanding of such social systems. In the framework of activity theory, organisations may be understood as activity systems (encompassing histories, rules, technologies, artefacts) engaged in production (Engeström, 2001; Engeström, et al., 1999). Inherent in activity systems, which in this framework are understood as open systems, are “contradictions” (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). Contradictions, according to Engeström, are “sources of development and change” (Engeström, 2001, p. 137) for the activity system and therefore for those participating in it. As an activity system develops, changes and transforms, Engeström maintains, those in it “must learn new forms of activity”, often at the same time as such activities are “being created” (Engeström, 2001, p. 138).

A key understanding that can be drawn from the work of Engeström is the instability of knowledge in organisations. According to this author, the learning that occurs in an activity system (or organisation) should not be understood as giving rise to stable knowledge that is easily describable. Rather, according to Engeström (2004), the learning that occurs is “expansive learning” (p. 151) where individuals are learning knowledge about new activities and at the same time the learning itself transforms the existing activities and knowledges to generate new activities and knowledges. Engeström’s work highlights the interrelationship that exists between activity

systems of work and new forms of learning and knowledge, and how both may be implicated in their mutual transformation (Fuller & Unwin, 2010).

Another contribution to the workplace learning research domain is the work of Eraut (2000, 2004). Eraut's work focuses on developing better understandings of what constitutes informal (or non-formal) learning in the workplace. Rather than defining informal learning as being in a dichotomous relationship with formal learning, Eraut proposed that informal and formal learning be understood as existing on a continuum. In his typology of informal (or non-formal) learning, Eraut's work recognises both intention to learn (i.e. implicit, reactive or deliberative) and the timing of events that provide the focus for learning (i.e. past episodes, current experiences or future behaviour) as key factors in understanding how learning occurs at work as a result of workplace experiences. Eraut (2004) demonstrates that the informal learning that occurred in the workplaces he investigated "involved a combination of learning from other people...learning from personal experience, often both together" (p. 248). What can be surmised from the work of Eraut is that in the context of the workplace, not only may workplace experiences be implicated in learning, peers, colleagues, clients and customers, as well as mentors and workers themselves, may also be seen as playing a critical role in mediating workplace learning (Eraut, 2004).

To summarise, the literature interrogating learning in the workplace is diverse and represents multiple ontologies and ideologies. From the work of the authors mentioned in the above discussion, a number of ideas about learning and the ways in which it may be understood can be drawn out. Research from a managerialist perspective suggests that different kinds of learning (single and double loop learning; formal and informal learning) may occur as workers participate in organisational life. Learning may also be implicated in the development of workers as organisational assets to sustain a competitive advantage. Learning may be understood as a key determinant in an organisation's capability for innovation and performance. The literature that adopts an educational perspective also maintains workplaces as sites for learning and emphasises the importance of learning that occurs as workers participate in everyday work. Not all workers, however, are afforded the same opportunities for learning. Organisational power structures as well as workers themselves help to shape how organisational learning opportunities are distributed and accessed. Learning at work occurs as workers experience work and

interact with others within and outside their organisations. An organisational environment may be expansive or restrictive and this has implications for what is learned and how. Learning does not occur in isolation, rather it unfolds in a relationship of mutual transformation with the activity system within which it exists. In the section that follows, I turn to literature by researchers who theorise their work on learning from a practice perspective.

6.2.2 Learning situated in practice

In considering notions of learning situated in practice, attention is drawn to learning not as cognitive phenomenon that happens in the minds of individuals, but rather as something that is social and that is enacted in the domain of practice (i.e. knowing-doing) (Skule & Reichborn, 2002). In the practice domain, learning becomes the “activity that mobilizes the knowledge used and usable in organising” (Wenger, 1998, p. 132), that is situated in practice (Orr, 1996; Wenger, 1998) and is participative (Fenwick, 2008a).

The situated learning literature has its foundation in the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) and the work of Brown and Duguid (1991). As exponents of “situated learning” Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 135) understand learning as an inherent and integral part of social practice. For these authors, learning is not about acquisition of abstract knowledge, rather it is about learning to perform a practice through participation — through stories shared with others, through observing, listening and questioning that are situated in the context of those practices and in the practice community. An example of such sharing and learning is seen in Orr’s (1996) investigation of photocopier technicians — here stories (about both the machine and its use in a context) were the means by which the technicians learned about their practices (Contu & Willmott, 2003). In explicating participation, Lave and Wenger (1991) talk of “legitimate peripheral participation” (p. 14) where the learner participates in the practices of an expert (of the practice community) to a limited extent. The learner’s participation is limited both in terms of degree of participation and level of responsibility for practice outcomes, and as the learner becomes more competent such limits are reduced (Hager, 2010). As individual learners actively participate in practices, they become socialised and more adept at understanding and interpreting (in ways congruent with the practice community) the context,

meanings and relationships pertaining to those and related practices, and therefore further learning ensues (Contu & Willmott, 2003).

Drawing on the early work of Orr (see for example Orr, 1990, 1996) Lave and Wenger (1991) and Brown and Duguid (1991) propose “learning-in-working” (p. 41) – learning as an inherent feature of work as it unfolds in practice. Critical of organisational representations of work when contrasted with how work is actually conducted, Brown and Duguid (1991) suggest that organisational representations of work, actual work, learning and innovating are often in tension. The abstract representations of work that are commonplace in organisations (i.e. job descriptions, process and procedural manuals, training courses) appear to downskill work. These canonical descriptions are often insufficient in representing how work gets done and may be a hindrance to actually getting the job done. The fissure between these canonical descriptions and the actual work are often traversed by workers, through work-arounds and on the spot improvisations that diverge from documented company procedures – workers create non-canonical practices. Workers often use narration to reveal the complex webs of practice that unfold in their work. In sharing stories workers also collaborate in the construction and renarration of those stories and the practices encompassing their work. Workers socially conceptualise their own and their (emergent) practice community’s identity. It is through these kinds of enactments of practice, traversing the fissures between canonical practice and actual work practice, in emergent practice communities, that working, learning and innovating ensue (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Hager, 2010).

Building on his earlier work, Wenger (1998, 2000) draws attention to the notion of social learning systems constituted by communities of practice, boundary processes and identity creation. Wenger (2000) maintains that learning is inherently social and ensues through participation in one or more practice communities (i.e. industry, workplace, specialty/discipline and so on). In this view, communities of practice are framed by boundaries that emerge from a number of sources. These include a community’s particular history, understandings and practices – the ways of doing, talking, being, competencies and ends. Inside communities of practice, competencies, understandings, experiences and practices converge, practitioners learn these and develop their own and their practice community identity. Thus, boundaries are important for enabling learning and identity development in a practice community. At the same time as enabling learning in a community,

boundaries may also be understood as characterised by fluidity or permeability. This characteristic is important for learning between communities where sharing of different perspectives, practices and understandings may be implicated further in new learning within and across communities (Wenger, 2000).

Finally, according to Wenger (2000), our “learning is an interplay between social competence and individual experience” (p. 226) – whether we are a novice or a master, learning occurs whenever there is a shift in either of these (social competence or individual experience). For example new workers, in becoming part of the new workplace, align their own experiences and understandings with those of their new workplace – their community practice of the new workplace “pull” (Argyris, 1991, p. 227) on the individual experiences. In other instances, experienced workers may become exposed to new experiences (from outside their community of practice or at the boundary of their community of practice) which may be in tension with the practices or social competences of one’s work community – the individual experiences “pull” (p. 227) the community competence along. The interrelationship between people and the social learning system may be implicated in learning both in terms of personal and system change.

Gherardi, Nicolini and Odella (1998), echoing notions of situated learning, maintain that learning occurs not only as an individual cognitive pursuit, through formalised education and training, but also as part of work in organisations or workplaces. In considering workplaces as encompassing communities of practice (Brown & Duguid, 1991), learning is embedded in what people do – in their activities. Novice workers, through participation in work activities, mediated by the “situated curriculum” (Gherardi, et al., 1998, p. 280), learn the necessary “know how” to carry out those activities (p. 288). Through the situated curriculum, both learning and know(ing) may be understood as social and participative. In terms of learning through work, the notion of situated curriculum implies, firstly, that there is some patterned approach to the ways in which newcomers are socialised, learn and become knowledgeable practitioners (and eventually experts or masters) in a community of practice and, secondly, that such patterns are localised to the particular community and context.

Extending the above research findings, Gherardi (2000) maintains that as one participates in social practices, not only does one acquire knowledge-in-action, but also produces and reproduces such knowledge through participation in those

practices. This view follows Gergen (1999), who proposes a social view of knowledge, where “knowledge is not something that people possess in their heads, but rather something that people do together” (p. 270). Knowledge may therefore be understood as processual and unfolding through performances in a social context that is characterised by multiple people, technologies and ways of acting and interacting. Another way of saying this is that doing knowledge is in itself learning and that such learning is “social and participative” (Gherardi, 2000, p. 215).

In summary, what can be seen from the work of the authors discussed in this section is that there are shifts in understanding. First, by recognising learning as something that is social, that which is learned, know-how and knowledge may be understood as existing beyond the individual and emerging through social interactions. Practices, as a social thing, may be considered as carriers of knowledge. Furthermore, by considering the notion of participation and learning as what people do in practice, knowledge may no longer be understood as static and as something that someone possesses in or through their mind, or located in texts or databases or some place in the world. Rather, knowledge becomes understood as knowledge-in-action, fluid, evolving and changing. In the context of organisations, learning occurs through the enactment of organisational practices, and learning knowledge-in-action is a way of experiencing and understanding ourselves and being experienced or understood as competent doers of those practices – attaining and enacting knowledge-in-action may be understood as a way of learning and becoming a competent practitioner.

6.2.3 Knowledge, practice and knowing

In the above section I considered the literature that brings to the fore notions of learning and knowing-in-action as situated in practice. In this section, through the work of researchers such as Ryle (1949), Polanyi (1966), Cook and Brown (1999), Gherardi and Nicolini (2000), Gherardi (2006, 2008, 2009b) and Orlikowski (2002), I explore the relationship between knowledge, practice and knowing.

The early works of Ryle (1949) and Polanyi (1966) are useful in understanding the relationship between knowledge and knowing. Ryle (1949) distinguished two ways of knowing – knowing that (factual knowledge, such as knowing that the capital of Italy is the city of Rome) and knowing how (practical knowing, as knowing how to

snow ski). Ryle (1949) maintains that these two ways of knowing are co-dependent yet learned in different ways: Knowing how is “learned by practice” (p. 41) (or through the enactment of practice) and knowing that, through “learning or acquiring information” (p. 59). Similarly Polanyi (1966) proposes two distinctive kinds of knowledge — tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge, neither of which, the author maintains, may be transformed into the other, but both of which are implicated in the enactment and description of action respectively. According to Polanyi (1966), tacit knowledge may be described as the knowledge people demonstrate but cannot explain, for example, staying upright when snow skiing by shifting one’s body weight back and forth between each ski in response to one’s reading of the terrain in front of them. In contrast, explicit knowledge may be described as the knowledge that people can express, for example, that to snow ski down a mountain one must bend one’s knees and lean forward down the slope. The difference between tacit and explicit knowledge is essentially the difference between being able to describe an activity (explicit knowledge) and being able to enact an activity even though one cannot entirely explain how one has done so (tacit knowledge) (Wenger, 2000). Although the works of Ryle (1949) and Polanyi (1966) do not discuss explicitly the relationship between knowledge, knowing and practice (as a theoretical concept), it can be seen from the work of these authors that they too perceive knowing (knowing how/tacit knowledge) as a practical accomplishment as different from knowledge (knowing what/explicit knowledge) absent from its practical application.

Building on the work of the above authors, Cook and Brown (1999) propose an epistemology of practice alongside an epistemology of possession, to account for knowledge and knowing that is ascribed to individuals and groups and that occurs in the context of work and organisations. Broadening the traditional parameters of an epistemology of possession (which reflects the long held view that knowledge is something that resides in people’s minds or is possessed by them), these authors maintain four kinds of knowledge (individual/explicit; individual/tacit; group/explicit; group/tacit) which are “irreducible” and “conceptually distinct” (p. 383) and which come into play in our interactions and give “a particular shape, meaning and discipline” (p. 392) to them.

In contrast to an epistemology of possession, an epistemology of practice maintains practice as “action informed by meaning drawn from a particular group or context” (Cook & Brown, 1999, p. 387) and takes as its focus the notion of “knowing as a *part*

of action [emphasis added]" (p. 383). Here, knowing does "epistemic work" and "is dynamic, concrete and relational" (Cook & Brown, 1999, p. 387). The interrelationship between the two epistemologies emerges as we interact in the world. Through "productive enquiry" (Cook & Brown, 1999, p. 394), our knowing how to act, in our focused and disciplined attempts to resolve problems in our world, we draw on knowledge (individual/explicit; individual/tacit; group/explicit; group/tacit) as tools. It is in these enactments of action aimed at solving problems that new knowing, new knowledge and new "ways of using knowledge" (Cook & Brown, 1999, p. 394) may emerge. Saying this in another way, there is a reciprocal interrelationship between knowledge and knowing as we interact in our world and this interrelationship shapes both our knowledge and knowing in practice.

The relationship between knowledge and knowing is further discussed in the work of Gherardi and Nicolini (2000) who propose understanding knowledge and learning as "social and cultural phenomena" (p. 330). These authors do not discuss knowledge in terms of categorisations such as individual/group, tacit/explicit (as in the work of Cook & Brown, 1999), rather they focus on the way in which knowledge becomes enacted in practice. In their investigation of safety practices in the Italian construction industry, these authors describe safety knowledge as a body of knowledge that may be practical (i.e. through the enactment of safety practices) or theoretical (i.e. safety knowledge taught in universities) and which may transcend organisational boundaries (i.e. from construction companies to government, to specialist researchers). These authors highlight the provisional and evolving nature of (safety) knowledge as it is constituted, circulated and institutionalised within and across organisational contexts. Knowledge is translated from abstractions (i.e. manuals, standards) to the practical (i.e. how to be safe on this worksite or operating this machinery) and vice versa. A key take away from this research is that the body of safety knowledge did not in itself produce safety in the organisations discussed. Rather, safety emerged as workers in situated contexts enacted such knowledge in their everyday work practices — when workers are enacting knowing safety in practice (Gherardi & Nicolini, 2000). It appears that knowledge (in this case safety knowledge) becomes most useful when it is enacted in practice (i.e. becomes knowing how to work safely). Additionally, Fenwick (2012), interpreting Gherardi and Nicolini's (2000) work through a sociomaterial perspective, highlights the importance of materiality. The equipment used by the workers and the history of its use in activities, transmits safety knowledge that emerges in the performance of activities.

Thus, for Fenwick (2012), learning is understood as social, cultural and material phenomena.

For Orlikowski (2002), “knowing is an ongoing social accomplishment, constituted and reconstituted in everyday practice” (p. 252). In contrast to Cook and Brown (1999) above, for whom tacit knowledge is a tool employed in knowing, Orlikowski (2002) maintains that “tacit knowledge is a form of knowing and inseparable from action” (p. 251), therefore such distinction is superfluous. In proposing that knowing and practice are in a mutually constitutive interrelationship, Orlikowski (2002) draws on the work of Giddens (1984) and in particular his notion of knowledgeability, as inseparable from one’s agency and “inherent within the ability to go on within the routines of social life” (p. 4). Orlikowski (2002) understands knowledgeability as knowing-in-practice that is enacted through one’s daily activities as one participates in and is part of the social world. This distinguishes Orlikowski’s understandings (and Giddens’) from notions of knowledge as something that exists in people’s heads or out there in the world waiting to be discovered. As an ongoing social accomplishment, knowing is evolving, emergent, changing, provisional and “enacted in the moment” (Orlikowski, 2002, p. 252). As people go on with their lives they enact social practices and at the same time they are reproducing, reconstituting and modifying their knowing. This is because those enactments occur at different times and in different contexts – at different times and in different contexts people enact their practices differently. Therefore, as people enact practices they also change those practices in some ways and in doing so “knowing also changes” (Orlikowski, 2002, p. 252).

Drawing on her empirical investigation of “knowing how to do” (Orlikowski, 2002, p. 256) product development in a complex and geographically dispersed international software company, Orlikowski (2002) identifies different kinds of interdependent knowing that emerges and is constituted in different kinds of interdependent practices. These everyday and ongoing work practices are at the same time individual (because they were enacted by individuals) and organisational (because organisational norms and structures moulded and were moulded by them). Through participation in these practices across geographically dispersed contexts, workers are able to learn such knowing. In the practice of sharing identity, for example, the knowing that emerges is knowing the organisation; in the practice of interacting face to face, the knowing that emerges is about the players in the game (i.e. those who

were involved in the product development game); in the practice of aligning effort, the knowing that emerges is about how to coordinate product development activities across time and space, and so on. Although prevalent, these practices are also “open-ended” (p. 257), open to being modified as well as to the emergence of new related practices (and knowing). Orlikowski (2002) characterised this knowing as a capability that may be best understood as an emergent, situated and an ongoing part of day-to-day life.

Drawing on the findings of the above research Orlikowski (2002) presents the following conclusions. First, from the enactment of different kinds of practices different kinds of knowing emerge. Second, organisational practices are at the same time prevalent and open-ended. Third, knowing in organisations is best understood as provisional, “constituted and reconstituted” (p. 252) by workers in their everyday enactments of workplace activities and practices. Fourth, in organisations knowing how may be shared through processes that sustain organisational members in learning to enact practices (and the knowing in practice) in a variety of situations (i.e. contexts and under different conditions).

Bringing together the ideas of Cook and Brown (1999), Gherardi (2000), Gherardi and Nicolini (2000) and Orlikowski (2002), it can be posited that knowledge, knowing and practice are inseparable and intertwined phenomena. Gherardi (2008) proposes these are related in three ways – containment, mutual constitution and equivalence. First, practices contain knowledge in the sense that in order to recognise some things as practices, practitioners must have some knowledge about them that is already in the world. Second, knowing and practising are mutually constitutive, interacting and producing one another in the enactment of practices. Third, “practising is knowing in practice” (p. 518) – acting as a practitioner (practising) is exhibiting knowing in practice. Put another way, enactments of practice create knowledge in performance.

Gherardi (2008) understands knowledge as a practical accomplishment or knowing that is situated in practice in multiple ways: It is *situated in the body* (emphasis in original) – the body acquires knowledge (through its senses), and the practitioner enacts practices in time and space through the knowing body (Gherardi, 2008). It is *situated in the dynamics of interactions* – knowing arises in the interactions with others, other practices and materials, where meanings are conveyed and negotiated

and where new knowing emerges. It is *situated in language* — discursive practices shape meanings (and knowing) as they are enacted in different contexts by different people and as part of different practices. Finally, the knowing process is *situated in a physical context* — the physical space and the materials within it may be understood as materialisations of knowing, which shape how practices are conducted (i.e. new technologies may shape how a practice is conducted; a broken machine may inhibit the ways in which a practice is enacted). These different meanings of situated illustrate the multiple ways in which knowledge and knowing may be implicated in the organisation of action (Gherardi, 2008).

The literature discussed in this section demonstrates that knowledge, practice, knowing and learning are related concepts and the relationships among these are understood in different ways. To highlight this relationship some authors categorise knowledge into different types: knowing that/knowing how or explicit/tacit knowledge, with one categorisation (knowing how and tacit knowledge) being most closely associated with doing/acting or practice. Others suggest that knowing is embedded in the execution of actions and knowing in practice utilises different kinds of knowledge (individual/explicit; individual/tacit; group/explicit; group/tacit) as tools. Others still suggest that knowledge becomes most useful when it becomes enacted in practice in situated contexts (body, language, interaction and the physical context) — when knowledge becomes knowing how to. Finally, for other authors, the distinction between tacit knowledge, knowing and practices is superfluous — practising is inseparable from knowing in practice and in the context of organisations workers enact practices and knowing and at the same time reshape those practices and knowing. The common thread that emerges from the above perspectives is that knowing (knowing that and knowing how) and doing (practising) are inseparable concepts and in participating in practices people learn knowing. These conceptualisations of knowing in practice equate knowing with doing or knowing as an “ongoing social accomplishment, constituted and reconstituted in everyday practice” (Orlikowski, 2002, p. 252) which may further be understood as constituting learning.

6.3 Linking learning and knowing with Schatzkian notions of practice

Schatzki does not explicitly discuss learning in his theoretical work on practice. He does, however, discuss concepts such as understandings, ability and practical

intelligibility that may be connected with people's capacity to enact practices. In order to discuss these concepts I draw on notions of practice discussed in Chapter 5. In Chapter 5, I discussed Schatzki's thesis that as part of practices people acquire the abilities to perform the actions that compose those practices. Practices are "*organised* [emphasis in original] nexuses of actions...doings and sayings...linked through (1) practical understandings, (2) rules, (3) teleological structure, (4) general understandings" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 77). It is through understandings and intelligibilities carried as part of practices, Schatzki claims, that "social order and individuality results" (Schatzki, 1996, p. 13). Schatzki also maintains that to be a participant in social practices entails an "immersion in an extensive tissue of coexistence that embraces varying sets of people" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 87) in "webs of interweaving practices" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 88) which are constitutive of the social site. Practical intelligibility is described as a phenomenon that pertains to the individual and that is characterised by "how the world makes sense" and "which actions make sense" (Schatzki, 1996, p. 111). I suggest that practical intelligibility interconnects knowing and practice.

One's sense of practical intelligibility, or how the world makes sense, and which actions it makes sense to someone to do next, is shaped by both individual mental conditions (mental conditions are considered an ascribed feature of human beings; see Chapter 5) and practices. One's mental conditions reflect one's goals, emotions, interests and pursuits. Social practices, through the role that they play in shaping one's mental conditions (i.e. goals, emotions, interests and pursuits), shape one's sense of practical intelligibility. The elements of social practices that may be implicated in shaping one's sense of practical intelligibility are rules and teleoaffective structures. Rules, as "normative formulations" (Schatzki, 2001b, p. 59), shape people's ways of behaving, for example, through praise and sanctions. People's understanding of rules is often exhibited (but not always) in what actions make sense for them to do next. Thus, rules and people's understanding of rules are exhibited in people's actions. Teleoaffective structures (goals, ends, beliefs, emotions) may be implicated in shaping one's sense of practical intelligibility because these reflect those things for which people are willing to act, what goals and ends matter to them sufficiently for them to act (Schatzki, 2001b). The role that social practices play in shaping one's sense of practical intelligibility is complex and multifaceted. This is because people in participating in social life, take part in multitudes of practices (often at the same time) and develop multiple ways of

enacting similar practices (in different contexts) (Schatzki, 1996), therefore this shaping cannot be ascribed to any one social practice.

The role that practices play in shaping one's sense of practical intelligibility does not necessitate one being determined by practices (determined in the sense that one has no choices in how to act). This is because the doings and sayings which compose practices are not set to any specific number nor is it determined which doings and sayings belonging to one or more practices people may enact. There is no determination, prior to people's enactment of doings and saying, what people may do, or what makes sense for them to do. It is likely that people will do the things that are normatively expected of them to do; however, people have the option to do something different. Further, it should also be noted that practical intelligibility may not necessarily (or always) be equated with rationality. What it makes sense to do next may in fact correspond to the rational thing to do, but not always (Schatzki, 2001b). For example, a mother having a coffee at a café may yell at her child having a tantrum. Yelling may not be the rational thing to do in the situation as such behaviour on the part of the mother may inflame rather than calm the situation. However, given the mental states (e.g. emotions, goals of having a well behaved child, having herself been disciplined in such ways as a child), yelling at the child may be the thing that made sense to the mother to do. It is this feature of indeterminacy that enables practices to be open-ended, changed or varied (Schatzki, 2010, 2012).

One's sense of practical intelligibility is formed, and I suggest learned, as people become immersed in and enact social practices. At the same time, in the enactment of practices, people also draw on their sense of practical intelligibility (Schatzki, 2002). It seems that one's sense of practical intelligibility is formed and at the same time drawn upon in the enactment of practices. One's sense of practical intelligibility (through one's mental conditions) exists, it seems, in a mutually constitutive relationship with the practices one experiences and enacts. This perspective on the interrelationship between an individual's sense of practical intelligibility and practices is consistent with Schatzki's notion of site discussed in Chapter 2, a site being "the context or wider expanse phenomena, in and as part of which humans coexist" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 147) where the "context and the contextualised entity or event constitute one another – what the entity or event is, is tied to the context, just as the

nature and identity of the context is tied to the entity or event” (Schatzki, 2005, p. 468).

Inherent in one’s sense of practical intelligibility are one’s abilities pertaining to being able to act. For Schatzki these abilities are described as “knowing how to” (Schatzki, 1996, p. 91). Using a theoretical example of the practice of X-ing, Schatzki describes being able to act as the “abilities that pertain to the actions composing a practice...knowing how to X, know how to identify X-ings and knowing how to prompt as well as respond to X-ing” (Schatzki, 1996, p. 91). Therefore, one’s sense of practical intelligibility, through one’s abilities of knowing how to act, enables participation in practices. When participating in a practice, one must at least in part be able to “perform, identify and prompt some subset of a practice’s doings and sayings” (Schatzki, 2002, p. 78) – in performing a practice one automatically exhibits some knowing how to.

These understandings of knowing how and practical intelligibility bear some resemblance to Gherardi’s (2008) understandings of the relationship between practice and knowing and situated knowledges discussed in the previous section of this chapter. Gherardi’s notion of containment (knowledge inherent in a practice that enables us to identify the practice as such and such practice) bears resemblance to Schatzki’s understandings of knowing how to recognise a practice, for example, the practice of X-ing. The notion of mutual constitution (knowledge and practice produce one another through enactments) bears similarities to Schatzki’s understandings of the mutually constitutive relationship between practical intelligibility and practice discussed above. Finally, although Schatzki does not explicitly discuss the notion of equivalence (i.e. practising is knowing) in the same way as Gherardi, for Schatzki to enact a practice implicitly means knowing how to perform some of a practice’s doings and sayings.

Practical intelligibility and knowing in the enactment of practice may also be related to Gherardi’s (2008) notion of situated knowledge. Gherardi (2008) understands knowledge as a practical accomplishment or knowing that is situated in practice in multiple ways (i.e. situated in body; in interactions; in language; and in physical context). For Schatzki (2002, 2003, 2010), one’s sense of practical intelligibility enables an individual (whether consciously or unconsciously) to draw on their understanding or knowing how to carry out at least some of the doings and sayings

of a practice — it enables an individual to draw on knowledge situated in their body (and mind), because an individual is able to use their body to execute at least some of the activities of the practice. Second, practical intelligibility enables individuals to draw on knowledge embedded in the language of practices — the meanings that surface or emerge in the enactment of the practice. In enacting practices, individuals demonstrate knowing how to enact some of the sayings pertaining to practices. Third, practical intelligibility enables an individual to read the emergent meanings in a context, recognise a practice as that which makes sense for them to do as well as knowing how to enact and vary that practice in ways that are consistent with contextual conditions. Fourth, one's sense of practical intelligibility enables knowing how to respond to the interactions that emerge from the enactment of a practice. Finally, one's sense of practical intelligibility enables knowing how to respond to the physical context of a practice — knowing how to draw on a practice's material arrangements, to move through and in the space of the practice (Schatzki, 2006).

Conceptualisations of practical intelligibility, knowing how and practice open-endedness may also be applied to the context of organisations (see for example Price, Scheeres, & Boud, 2009; Schatzki, 2005, 2006). In organisations, as in social life, workers enact practices and in doing so draw on their sense of practical intelligibility, their abilities or their knowing of how to. Workers may draw on their practical intelligibility and knowing how to of the practices of their existing organisation as well as from other organisational contexts (e.g. previous jobs, prior work and life experiences) they have experienced. In drawing from such diverse practice understandings and knowing, workers may perpetuate and vary the enactment of their job and organisational practices in different ways. Given workers may perpetuate and at the same time vary the practices pertaining to their jobs and organisations, what happens to knowing?

Before I attempt to discuss this question in greater detail, I consider a feature of organisations highlighted by Schatzki (2006) — organisational practice memory. As discussed in previous chapters (i.e. Chapters 2, 4 5), organisational practice memory may be understood as an extra individual phenomenon that enables organisational practices to be understood and carried forward. Encompassed in organisational practice memory are the structural elements of practices — understandings, rules, ends and projects as elements (i.e. knowledges) of practices. These structural elements continue to exist even when practices are not being

carried out. These are the elements of practice structures that persist from the past into the future.

In considering the prevalence of practice structures in organisational practice memory, Schatzki (2006) uses the example of academic grading practices in a university department. Understandings of grading practice prevail (persist) in practice memory even when no students are being graded. The persistence of practice understandings (knowing how), Schatzki (2006) explains, does not necessitate ongoing performances of grading practices for these to persist. It is sufficient for future enactments to be recognised and be intelligible as grading practices by members of an academic department. Of course, with the passing of time, if there are no further enactments of such practices, these may in time disappear or be replaced by other practices altogether.

Rules are another element of practices that persist as part of organisational practice memory. These persist as a result of rule following behaviours by participants in practices as well as the sanctions that are applied to those who do not follow the rules. In continuing the example of grading practices, rules pertaining to awarding a pass or a fail are maintained and persist by the application of these in the grading of students' assessment as passes or fails. Rules also persist through documentations of them in documents such as policies, procedures and academic rule books and so on. In a similar way to practice understandings and rules, practice ends, projects and goals and general understandings persist as part of organisational practice memory (Schatzki, 2006).

To the end of maintaining practice understandings, Schatzki (2006) understands "teaching or transmitting" (p. 1868), and I suggest the complementary phenomenon of learning, as essential in the perpetuation of practice understandings — knowledges and knowing how to's. In teaching novice academics how to grade assessments or teaching novice academics how to respond to assessments of different quality, academics' (existing and novice) sense of practical intelligibility, abilities and knowings about grading (and other academic practices) may be drawn on in conjunction with elements of organisational practice memory. Such elements may include documents such as marking rubrics, university policy documents or minutes of grading meetings held at the end of term, as well as more widely used items such as academic articles on assessment theory pertaining to the wider

academic community. Thus organisational practice memory is not static, rather it is “interactionally maintained” (Schatzki, 2006, p. 1869) through the “actions, thoughts experiences and readinesses” (p. 1869) of organisational members enacting, teaching and transmitting (learning) organisational practices and drawing on organisational material arrangements.

In the wider context of organisations in general, in line with Schatzki I suggest that versions of organisational practice memory are often captured in material arrangements such as organisational documents and databases (business plans, annual reports, job descriptions, web sites and procedure manuals), history (documented in reports and publications or artefacts, prevailing stories and ceremonies) and infrastructure (delegations and reporting structures, hierarchical structures, and other material arrangements). Versions of organisational practice memory are also reflected in individual memories in that these represent “different combinations of versions or incarnations, of structural understandings, rules, and teleologies” (Schatzki, 2006, p. 1869). In line with Schatzki (2006), it is important to understand that organisational practice memory is more than such documentations or the collective sum of the memories and interpretations of individuals in an organisation – organisational practice memory is that which emerges in the interactions and enactments of organisational practices. In terms of knowing, I suggest that Schatzki’s conception of organisational practice memory along with individuals’ sense of practical intelligibility may be understood as that which interactionally sustains the knowing how of practices as well as practice knowledges including the rules, goals and ends that shape the enactments of practices in organisations.

In returning to the question posed above: Given practices pertaining to one’s job and organisation are at the same time perpetuated and varied, what happens to the knowing? It seems that organisational practice memory and individual sense of practical intelligibility as well as practice enactments may be implicated in the persistence of practices – practice understandings (knowing how), rules, projects and ends are maintained through the interactions and enactments of practices by organisational members and as organisational practice memory. At the same time, in drawing on their sense of practical intelligibility (doing what makes sense to for them to do), workers carry practices forward and at the same time vary those practices in some way. Whether consciously or unconsciously, workers carry with

them understandings or “acquired know-how”(Schatzki, 2006, p. 476), of similar practices from other contexts (e.g. previous jobs, prior experiences and or knowledge) and in enacting organisational practices, workers’ understandings of those practices (structure-action elements) become enmeshed with previous understandings of similar practices from other contexts (Price, Scheeres, & Boud, 2009; Schatzki, 2006). I suggest that as workers reshape practices they also reshape practice understandings, the knowing how to of practices as well as the rules, ends, goals (practice knowledges) of practices that exist as organisational practice memory. It may be that as workers enmesh their already existing knowledge, understandings and knowings from other contexts with the knowledges, understandings and knowing that emerge in the enactments of practices at different times, existing knowing is reshaped and new knowing emerges (Price, Scheeres, & Boud, 2009; Schatzki, 2006).

The work of Orlikowski (2002) discussed in the previous section of this chapter sustains the above view point. For Orlikowski, (2002) knowing and practice are inseparable and exist in a mutually constitutive interrelationship. The mutual constitution of knowing and practice described by Orlikowski (2002) is congruent with Gherardi’s (2008) and Schatzki’s (2001b) understandings of the interrelationship between practice and knowing – for Gherardi (2008) knowing and practice produce one another through enactments; for Schatzki there is a mutually constitutive relationship between one’s sense of practical intelligibility (or knowing how to) and practice. Similar to Schatzki and others (e.g. Gherardi, 2006; Gherardi, 2008; Orr, 1996; Wenger, 2000), Orlikowski (2002) maintains that knowing-in-practice is enacted through one’s daily activities as one participates in and is part of the world. As people go on with their lives they enact social practices at different times and in different contexts. In these situated enactments people enact practices differently, they change practices in some ways. Thus, in enacting practices, people are at the same time reproducing, reconstituting and modifying their knowing-in-practice.

From her investigations of knowing in the organisational context, Orlikowski (2002) concludes that in organisations different kinds of interdependent knowing emerge and are constituted in different kinds of interdependent organisational practices. Like Schatzki (2002, 2011, 2012), Orlikowski (2002) maintains that practices are open-ended and therefore knowing in practice is best understood as provisional. In

discussing organisational knowing, Orlikowski (2002) describes this as an “enacted capability...constituted every day in the ongoing and situated practices of [an] organisation’s members...collective distributed and emergent” (p. 270). The collective nature of knowing as described by Orlikowski in the above quotation can be related to Schatzki’s (2006) conception of organisational practice memory being “interactionally maintained” (p. 1869) through organisational members’ enactments and interactions and organisational members’ perpetuations and variations of organisational practices.

To conclude the theoretical discussion presented in this chapter, I maintain, in line with Schatzki (2001b, 2002, 2006), Gherardi (2008, 2009b) and Orlikowski (2002), that practice and knowing exist in a mutually constitutive relationship. In organisational contexts, workers enact practices and at the same time perpetuate and vary those practices in some ways; in varying practices workers also reshape knowing and (organisational) practice memory and their sense of practical intelligibility sustain practice knowing.

6.4 Knowing in practice at College, Council and Utility

As discussed in previous chapters, the existing organisational practices and existing jobs and the remade practices and already existing jobs at College, Council and Utility were in tension. I take as the starting point of my discussion the accounts of new workers Emma, Ron and Fabio about the ways in which knowing in practice was being remade (reproduced, reconstituted, reshaped). In enacting the practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management, these workers were doing so in organisational contexts new to them. Their knowing how to enact these practices was being reshaped by the practices and contexts of their new organisations. At the same time they were remaking and reshaping those contexts in which they were enacting the practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management. Emma, Ron and Fabio were questioning and examining the existing practices of their new organisations. In remaking her job to Customer Service Manager, Emma told of how she had been adapting knowing how to be a customer service manager and the customer service practices she had learned in business, the sector from which she came, in response to the existing practices and context of the College:

Because I am corporate background and very business focussed, I am very black and white especially with staff, you know...three strikes and you're out... here it's a lot more softly approach there's a lot more community and I am adapting.

For Emma, knowing how to manage workers as a Customer Service Manager in the business sector meant implementing disciplinary practices “*three strikes and you're out*” when workers were not performing their customer service roles in line with the organisation’s customer service goals and objectives. In the new work context of the College, Emma’s sense of practical intelligibility and knowing how to be a Customer Service Manager were being reshaped. Emma was developing new understandings about the ways in which to manage workers that were not performing their work in line with the newly introduced practices of customer service. At the College what made sense to do was different, it required knowing how to apply a “*softly approach*” in the management of performance.

Also coming from the business sector, Ron talked about how when he first joined the Council as the Group Manager of the Service Contracting division he “*knew nothing about local government*” but soon came to know about this new work context and industry. Knowing how to enmesh his understandings of business practices developed through the years working as “*Director of Marketing for [name of company omitted for the purpose of de-identification] in Australia*” with his newly acquired understandings of local government, enabled Ron to be recognised by his Council peers and the elected Councillors as the natural successor for the General Manager’s position. As General Manager, and enacting the practices (and responsibilities) of General Manager, Ron soon discovered that he needed to continue to develop new understandings which focused on knowing how to raise revenue within the constraints of local government. In the context of the Council, commercial practices such as raising funds by increasing prices were constrained by State Government legislation (during the interview Ron showed some financial charts which graphed Council’s projected revenue increases against projected expenditure – Field Note 4 Council):

[Council] is not flush with money...[and it] can't put...price[s] up other than the rate cap [imposed by State Government], which is 3%, and that the award increase is 3½ % every year, so anything that comes in goes straight

out...[and unlike in the corporate world]...can't generate funds... by adding new products...get market share by promoting, going interstate or exporting....

In his new role as General Manager, Ron was now working more closely with the elected Councillors. In the new context of commercialisation (see Chapters 4 and 5), the Councillors were expected to enact the practices of a corporate Board of Directors. These new practices required Councillors to disengage from micro operational issues and focus on corporate outcomes and strategic policy decisions. Yet, when Ron attempted to work with the Councillors in these new ways — drawing on the ways he had previously worked with corporate boards — he found this difficult. Ron found “... *working with and placating*” the elected Council was “...*very different... much more hands on*” way of managing. Knowing how to work with elected Council members was a new way of working for Ron. Ron’s sense of practical intelligibility, what made sense for Ron to do and knowing how to work with corporate Boards of Directors, was being reshaped through his present work with the elected Council members.

At the Utility, Fabio’s previous history in government utilities made him “...*a bit more familiar with the culture than others who may not have been part of how public service works*”. However, in moving from the private sector back into the public sector he described the culture as having shifted from valuing technical skills to valuing softer skills. For Fabio, this was understood as a significant loss in knowing how, particularly in knowing how to enact critical organisational practices such as engineering:

I think one of the difficulties of this organisation is that, if you don't have an engineering person as a manager in engineering organisation you finish up with a lot of the soft skills being pushed, in preference to a lot of the technical areas...there's not enough people who are technically qualified, who have been in industry [for a long time]... who have actually gone through, from a trade to engineering...[I've had to] try and understand why these important technical facts aren't important anymore... 20 [or even 30] years ago [we] had all those practices in place...[but]... current apprentices...current tradesman and engineers, aren't being taught in the formal sense...

[responsibility] *is being put on the organisation...which doesn't have the information.*

Upon his return to a public sector utility, Fabio discovered what constituted the practices of managers in the Utility had shifted. Being a manager at the Utility now necessitated more than knowing "*important technical facts*" of engineering. The practices of the organisation had shifted so that new ways of knowing how to be a manager now required knowing how to apply "*the soft skills*". Knowing how to manage people was now a critical element of being a manager at the Utility.

At the same time as new workers like Emma, Ron and Fabio were remaking their jobs and the practices of their organisations and reshaping their own understandings of those practices, existing workers had also been remaking the existing practice of their jobs and reshaping their understandings. Existing workers were now experiencing new organisational directions and practices and needed to develop new ways of enacting these practices in their jobs. At the College, in remaking her job to Customer Service Manager, Emma became responsible for a group of workers who were Site Coordinators at the College's geographically dispersed teaching venues. The Site Coordinators were an existing team of workers that attended the leased venues while courses were being conducted. In their original job these workers were expected to "*sit at the venue [allocated to them] and open [prior to the classes commencing] and close it [at the end of the night]*". In remaking the existing practices of customer service to encompass the jobs of the Site Coordinators, Emma shifted the work practices of the Site Coordinators and redefined these jobs to include a focus on "*customer service...representing the College*" (During the interview Emma pointed to the procedural manuals on her bookshelf, which she had developed to assist the Site Coordinators in underaking their work in line with the newly introduced customer service approach – Field Note 5 College). Emma described this shift as creating tensions between old and new and required the Site Coordinators to develop new understandings and knowing, in order to successfully enact these new practices.

Knowing how to be a Site Coordinator required workers at the College to enact their jobs differently. Emma described the ways in which Site Coordinators responded to these changes as mixed and found that some "*like it and some [not]*". These

tensions between old and new were highlighted by Zorro, one of the Senior Site Coordinators:

I'm not the customer mentality... I'm the community mentality...people who pay money to do a course you're not a customer...you're a student...it's a bit hairy...because they are a customer and the customer is always right....

For Zorro knowing how to be a Site Coordinator now required him to develop new understandings. What made sense for him to do at work, when course participants were understood as students, was no longer sufficient. Zorro was now expected to enact the practices of customer service which required him to develop new understandings including knowing how to assist Sessional Tutors as internal customers in line with the newly developed *College* procedures (procedure manuals were located on his desk – Field Note 6 College) and how to respond to student/customer needs in line with the Customer Service Charter (a framed copy of the customer service chart was posted on the wall in the reception area near Zorro's office as well as in his office – Field Note 4 College).

Similarly, in remaking the practices of the Council to be more akin to the practices of commercial organisations, Ron described how existing workers in Council's FPSD division had been reshaping their understandings about new ways of working through participation in teams re-engineering projects. By working in teams existing workers challenged existing work practices and *"came back and said, well, look, if we're going to be competing in the plumbing business, [by doing what we do] at the moment... it's not going to happen"*. By examining the practices of other successful organisations and questioning Council's existing organisational practices these existing workers were developing new understandings about what it meant to become a commercially focused division and the kinds of practices and knowings that were necessary in a competitive environment.

Also at the Council, Sally, a Policy Analyst in the Policy Unit, talked about how in implementing integrated planning practices and managing Council's planning process, she developed new understandings. She highlighted that these new practices necessitated new knowing – knowing how to *"consult [in the community and in the Council] and [knowing] how to ask the right questions in order to get meaningful feedback"*. In working in these new ways and adopting integrated

planning practices also required Sally to develop new understandings about how to break down the “*silos to get things done*”, which required knowing how to manage “*informal relationships*”.

At the Utility, Miles, a worker who has undertaken the newly established role of Project Manager in the Project Management Services group, described his job and how he had been reshaping his understandings of existing and remade organisational practices. For Miles being a project manager in the Utility now meant knowing how to manage relationships:

I'm a project manager... [but I] don't directly have control of the resources... I can't demand anything, I can only ever ask... so I've got to make sure that there is a good relationship between us... the key players in the measurement of my output...I've got to make sure I can develop those relationship skills with the people that I deal with...understand what their concerns are.

It can be seen from Miles' comments that the shift in knowing how to apply the “*the soft skills*” were not only necessary at the divisional and unit manager level as described by Fabio. Project Managers such as Miles also needed to develop new understandings and knowings in the enactment of the practices of project management.

The data discussed so far, I suggest, highlights a number of theoretical issues discussed above. First, as new workers (e.g. Emma, Ron and Fabio) do their jobs in new organisational contexts they recognise differences in their own understandings of practices and the understandings of those practices in the contexts of their new organisations (e.g. the difference between private sector/business organisational contexts and community/public sector organisations). For these workers, it appears that what made sense for them to do previously needed to be reshaped to fit in their new work contexts. Second, as these new workers enact known practices (e.g. customer service practices, commercialisation practices, project management practices) in the new organisational contexts they remake and vary those practices in some ways. In doing so, they enmesh existing understandings with new understandings gleaned from the contextual characteristics of their new organisations, reshape existing knowings and develop new knowings. Third, existing

workers were also reshaping their understandings. For existing workers, the introduction of new organisational practices meant the need for them to develop new ways of knowing how to be a worker with their organisations. For existing workers (e.g. Zorro, Miles and Sally), too, what used to make sense for them to do has shifted also. In experiencing the newly introduced practices these workers reshaped their sense of practical intelligibility and knowings. The reshaping of one's sense of practical intelligibility and knowing how to in practice appears to occur at the same time as practices are being remade. What may be gleaned from the data discussed so far is that it sustains Schatzki's (2002) and Orlikowski's (2002) theoretical perspectives discussed above. Practical intelligibility and knowing how to act or knowing-in-practice become reshaped as practices are at the same time perpetuated and varied.

As practices were being remade by new and existing workers, new meanings, goals and ends also were becoming embedded in the organisational practice memories of College, Council and Utility. In the College, customer service practices were understood as a necessary part of being competitive and attracting Commonwealth and State funding to the College. As an organisation, the College was negotiating the tensions between the rules, goals and ends of the new practices of customer service (characteristic of business) with the already existing goals and ends of social justice. Angie, a Faculty Manager at the College, described the negotiation of these tensions as a balancing act. These new customer service practices were what now made sense to do:

The only way you can really do it is that you can say – without the business side of things there wouldn't be a community college – and all those equity programs would disappear – and that's the justification for going down that path.

It appears that at the College new and existing goals and ends were being enmeshed and new ways of understanding the nature of being a community college organisation in the Australian educational context. The organisational practice memory of the College was being reshaped. This was also seen in the shifting language in the College handbook. In this collection of documents, there are at least two ways in which course participants are referred to. In policy documents prepared prior to the introduction of customer service practices, course participants are

referred to as students. In later documents, including the customer service charter, course participants are referred to as customers. During field observations at the College, it was also noted that new existing and new workers referred to course participants in both ways, some referring to course participants as customers while others referred to them as students.

At the Council, Kirk described new goals and ends as emerging in the FPSD division – these were about how to enact commercialisation practices and the tensions that failure to be competitive created. He told of how Council:

closed up a business last year and 10 people were made redundant after five or six years of trying [to run the business profitably] it was a continual battle, one getting the work, two getting to make a profit on it and three getting the money in... there was \$1/2 million owed to us... I had to go out there and really heavy people and... my God is this what it comes to...the organisation continually changes as a result of those learning experiences.

Being a Manager in Council's FPSD division meant enacting new organisational practices. The new goals and ends of competing in the commercial world, for Kirk meant knowing how to win contracts, how to make a profit and how to ensure payment was received and that failure to be successful meant people lost their jobs. The implementation of commercialisation in the Council also meant a shift in the goals and ends of the division – success no longer meant simply completing work, it now meant completing the work and making a profit. Again the goals and ends embedded in the organisational practice memory of the Council were being reshaped to include the goals and ends of commercial practices. Further evidence of the reshaping of organisational practice memory was seen in successive Council operational planning documents, where a shift occurred from local government language to business language. In these organisational documents, Directors have become Group Managers, departments have become business units, coordinators have become Managers and supervisors have become Team Leaders.

At the Utility, the goals and ends of asset management through planned asset management projects were being enmeshed with the existing organisational goals and ends – the organisational practice memory was being reshaped. Fabio described a reshaping of understandings as occurring slowly and in subtle shifts

“slowly – the people [here and] at head office are quite supportive of my stance on things [i.e. a planned approach to asset maintenance]”. The shift was from the “emergency mentality, charge out on a white horse” response to customer complaints about assets, to a more planned and measured responses to upgrading the ageing assets through asset and project management planning. These shifts were reflected in the ways in which customer relationships and service targets were now being managed. At the Utility, the goals and ends of assets and the planned management of asset upgrade projects were now being balanced with the previously reactive approach to customer complaints – “the customer and the organisation [needs are] on a par”, Fabio explained.

This shift in the goals and ends of the organisation was further highlighted in a discussion with Harry, a Project Assistant in the Project Management Services group responsible for managing Service Level Time (SLT), a customer service performance indicator for the group that monitored the level of service outages (i.e. number of hours customers were left without service) (the current month’s SLT Chart was posted on a notice board near Harry’s desk- Field Note 5 Utility). Harry told of how he was now monitoring SLT in a different way *“if we’re [above the target] for the month...and I can say, well that’s fine, because we haven’t got enough work [over the next few months], so you’re going to come back under, keep going with the asset maintenance work [whereas in the past the focus was on]... stay below the target [at all costs]”*. The goals and ends of a balanced approach between servicing customers’ immediate needs and the long-term approach towards planned asset and project management was being embedded in the organisational practice memory including performance indicators.

What is evident in these organisations is that there are many and varied versions of organisational practice memory. This is seen in the coexistence of multiple doings, sayings and knowings as well as in organisational artefacts such as planning and policy documents, performance indicators and organisational goals and ends of College, Council and Utility. Existing practices, doings, saying and knowings of workers as well as other organisational artefacts maintain the organisations in their trajectories of executing certain kinds of goals and ends – elements of the existing practice memories of College, Council and Utility persist. At the same time the newly introduced practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management and the emergent doings, sayings and knowings of new and existing

workers work to reshape the organisational practice memories of these organisations. It can be said that Schatzkian notions of organisational practice memory being “interactionally maintained” (Schatzki, 2006, p. 1869) through the enactments of practices is evident in these organisations.

In summary, the tensions between remade jobs, remade practices and already existing practices were found to be sites where new and existing workers were learning new understanding and knowings. As new workers at College, Council and Utility participated in their new workplaces and remade the practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management, they developed new understandings about these practices and contexts in which they were working — they developed new knowings. As new workers reshaped organisational practices and created shared meanings and understandings of those practices with existing workers, the existing workers were also developing new understandings and knowings about the new practices and how to enact them. As new and existing workers were developing new understandings and knowings and enacting the remade organisational practices, these different understandings not only contributed to the simultaneous perpetuation and variation of practices but also to the reshaping of knowing embedded in them (Schatzki, 2005, 2006). Finally, through the enactments of practices and the emergence of new knowing enacted in practice, the contextual characteristics and interrelationships of practices embedded in the organisational practice memories of College, Council and Utility were also being reshaped. The rules, goals and ends of the new practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management were being enmeshed with the rules, goals and ends of existing practices. In this way the organisational practice memories of College, Council and Utility were being remade.

To conclude, in this chapter I discussed the work of various researchers who propose knowledge, practice, knowing and learning as related concepts. In line with these perspectives, I maintain that knowing (knowing that and knowing how) and doing (practising) are inseparable concepts and that in participating in practices people learn knowing. Furthermore, I have worked to demonstrate the ways in which remaking of organisational practices and jobs may be implicated in the reshaping of knowing embedded in practices and in organisational practice memory and how this reshaping constitutes learning.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Implications

7.1 About this chapter

In this last chapter I begin with a review of the key findings from each chapter and discuss the ways in which the research questions posed have been addressed. Next, I discuss the contributions of this research. I present the theoretical and empirical contributions that this research makes to the study of organisations through a Schatzkian practice frame. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of ideas for future research.

7.2 Revisiting the thesis

In Chapter 1, I argued that Schatzkian notions of practice and social site provide a strong theoretical and empirical frame for understanding and investigating social phenomena such as organisations, change, jobs and knowing. Further, I proposed Schatzkian notions of practice and social site as a theoretical and ontological alternative to managerialist views of organisations and organisational phenomena. Schatzkian site ontology interconnects individual workers and organisations in a mutually constitutive interrelationship through practices. Understanding organisational phenomena through Schatzkian theorisations challenges understandings of organisations as entities, change as linear, jobs as easily describable and knowledge as something embedded in workers' minds.

I expressed this central argument more explicitly in the research questions explored in this research. Specifically, my first research question focused on understanding the ways in which a Schatzkian perspective enables alternative understandings of organisational phenomena. I posed the question:

- How can Schatzkian theoretical notions of practice and social site account for organisations, change, jobs and knowing in ways different from prevalent managerialist theoretical views of the same?

The second research question moved the emphasis from the theoretical to the empirical. In this question I focused on uncovering the empirical robustness of Schatzkian theorisations. Specifically, I posed the question:

- How can Schatzkian theoretical notions of practice and social site account for organisations, change, jobs and knowing as empirical phenomena?

In each of the chapters that followed, I worked to sustain the central argument of this thesis and address specific elements of the research questions posed.

In Chapter 2, I presented the conceptual foundations and positioned this study within the theoretical frame of 'practice'. Next, I discussed the work of social theorists Bourdieu (1977) and Giddens (1984) and cultural theorist Reckwitz (2002) as different practice theorisations that share an understanding that social life and its various aspects are elements of and unfold as part of the field of practices (Schatzki, 1996). I contrasted the work of these theorists with that of Schatzki (1996, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2011, 2012) and argued that the strength of Schatzki's account is reflected in the ways in which it addresses some of the shortcomings of these alternative theorisations of practice. For example, Schatzki avoids Bourdieu's tendency towards social wholes by refraining from conceptualising practice as ordered into sets and subsets of social worlds (Schatzki, 2002). Similarly, Schatzki in his theorisations of practices and rules avoids Giddens' objectivist slippage by not privileging rule following over social relations as a means for individuals knowing how to go on in social life. I proposed further that the strength of Schatzki's theorisations is also reflected in the way in which the concept of social site brings together the individualist notion of human coexistence with holism/socialism notions of the social context in a way that privileges neither, while emphasising a mutually constitutive relationship between the individual and the social.

In Chapter 4, I contrasted Schatzkian notions of organisations and change with prevailing managerialist and processual views of the same. I argued that a Schatzkian practice perspective provides a third but related account of organisations and change. By framing organisations as practice and material bundles, which exist in interrelated organisational nexuses in and as part of the social site, Schatzki (2002, 2005, 2006) provides an alternative perspective on change, where change and stability are understood as inherent parts of the nature of practices — at the

same time stable and open-ended. By explicating ongoing change and stability not as dichotomous phenomena, as in the prevailing managerialist literature, or through a metaphysical reversal as in the processual perspectives, I maintained that Schatzkian notions of practice and social site position these concepts as co-occurring phenomena and inherent features of organisation and the social site. I illuminated these characteristics of practices, organisations and social site by presenting some of the empirical findings of this study. I discussed the ways in which the introduction of the new practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management at College, Council and Utility stemmed from shifts in the context (or social site) in which these organisations operated. A shift in the priorities, goals and ends of the practices in the context of these three organisations necessitated the introduction of these new practices as well as the recomposition and reorganisation of existing organisational practices – change and stability were co-present in the organisations studied.

In Chapter 5, I positioned the Schatzkian perspective in contrast to prevailing managerialist views and maintained that the managerial concept of a job and its associated artefact of a job description are not very useful in accounting for what workers do in organisations. I argued that in doing their jobs workers at the same time perpetuate and vary organisational practices in some ways. Thus, what workers do is in part emergent and sustained by their understandings and readings of the organisational context *in situ* and therefore not easily describable within the parameters of a single job and its associated job description. Further, what workers do in organisations, how they enact the practices of their organisations, is framed by the multitude (or bundles) of practices that are enacted at the same time by themselves and other organisational workers. I argued that in organisations these aspects of perpetuation and variation of practices further reflect the Schatzkian notion of mutual constitution. Next, I illustrated empirically how new and existing workers at College, Council and Utility were remaking the practices of their jobs and organisations by drawing on their own experiences, own readings of the organisation's changing context, and from knowledge and understandings gained through interactions with others within and outside their organisations. In remaking their jobs, these workers were recontextualising new and existing organisational practices in ways that were aligned with their understandings of their changing organisational contexts and what they understood to be the thing that made sense for them to do.

In Chapter 6, I considered how remaking organisational practices and jobs may be connected with knowing and learning. In particular, I discussed how the Schatzkian notions of practical intelligibility and knowing how reflect understandings of knowing inherent in practising and how elements of knowing in practice exist as part of organisational practice memory. In enacting organisational practices, workers demonstrate knowing in practice (or practical intelligibility), and the perpetuation and variation of practices through workers' enactments (remaking) plays a role in the reshaping of existing knowing in practice, organisational practice memory and the emergence of new knowing and learning. By drawing on further data, I demonstrated empirically the ways in which, through the perpetuation and variation of organisational practices at College, Council and Utility, new and existing workers were learning new understandings and knowings. These different understandings and knowings not only contributed to the further perpetuation and variation of new and existing organisational practices, but also to the reshaping of knowing embedded in them and the practice memories of College, Council and Utility.

7.3 Theoretical contributions

In this thesis I have applied Schatzkian practice theorisations in three ways. As an empirical approach, I have drawn attention to the day-to-day activities or actions of workers, the ways in which workers enact their jobs and as a consequence of these enactments remake job and organisational practices. In addition to drawing attention to the day-to-day activities of organisational life, workers enacting their jobs and remaking job and organisational practices, I have also focused on developing understandings about the dynamics and relationships that emerged through these enactments — I have applied practice as a theoretical approach. Schatzkian notions of practice and social site have sustained this thesis ontologically. In line with site ontology I have repositioned understandings about organisational phenomena — organisations as special kinds of social sites and practices, as the social thing that interconnects organisations, change, workers and knowing in a mutually constitutive relationship.

7.3.1 Writing across literatures

In Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis I discussed five key concepts, i.e. organisation, organisational change, workers, work and jobs, and made a number of theoretical

contributions pertaining to these concepts. One theoretical contribution rests in the ways in which I brought together three distinctive theoretical domains, i.e. the management literature, the processual literature and the practice literature, and contrasted and discussed the different ways in which the concept of organisation and change are understood in these different domains. By crossing the boundaries of these different knowledge domains and bringing together these distinctive theoretical approaches, I was able to unravel underlying assumptions of each approach and how these shape understandings of such organisational phenomena – an endeavour that I could not have achieved by considering each theoretical approach independently and without contrasting it with the ‘other’.

Second, I maintain that in using Schatzkian notions of practice and social site to discuss phenomena such as organisations and change, I added a further perspective in the emergent theoretical debate which, alongside the processual perspective, continues to challenge prevalent managerialist views and western management theory and education’s understandings of these phenomena. This aspect of my thesis, I assert, has enabled a further reframing of the notion of organisation and change in a way that accounts for the emergent and somewhat open-ended nature of organisations as experienced by workers every day in their work life (Schatzki, 2005, 2006), and brings understandings of these concepts closer to the experiences of practising managers and workers.

In researching organisations, change, workers and jobs, I have considered these from a number of perspectives, and have questioned the often taken-for-granted ontological underpinnings of the theories that explicate these phenomena. I have argued that the individualist and positivist ontological standpoints that underpin managerialistic views of organisational phenomena preclude further understandings of the interrelationships among these phenomena. These interrelationships are most visible when organisations, change, workers and jobs are understood through and underpinned by Schatzkian site ontology. I maintain that views of organisations as stable entities undergoing episodic change and workers as doers of jobs that are easily describable and defined by management (Robbins, et al., 2003; Robbins, et al., 2010; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005; Weber, 1947) are insufficient (Tsoukas, 2001; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005). These existing representations of organisations, change, jobs and workers fail to account for the emergent and somewhat open-

ended nature of organisational life as it happens and is enacted by workers everyday (Schatzki, 2005, 2006).

I also considered the concepts of organisation and change from a processual perspective which is underpinned by the contrasting ontological standpoint of process philosophy (see for example Deleuze, 1988; Heidegger, 1962; James, 1909/1996; Serres, 1982). In the processual perspective organisations and change are made sense of through a “metaphysical reversal” (Chia, 1999, p. 210) where changing and organising (processes) rather than stability and organisation are considered the normative way of understanding organisations and social life (Nayak & Chia, 2011). Although useful in challenging managerialistic views of organisations and change, I argued that Tsoukas and Chia (2002) may also be slipping into individualistic territory, in their treatment of ongoing change and its institutionalisation. Specifically, it is unclear in the work of these authors whether either or both the individual and the institution are ascribed agency for changing categorisations and meanings which enable organisation, or under which circumstances one or both these concepts may be given primacy. Furthermore, what constitutes an institution (i.e. a collection of processes, a collection of individuals; a collection of meanings and categorisations) and the relationship between the individual and an institution, remains opaque in Tsoukas and Chia’s (2002) work. Unlike Tsoukas and Chia (2002), I argued that Schatzki (2002) makes it clear that he rejects the ontological separation of the individual and the organisation and that practices are the social thing that interconnects the individual and the organisation. It is this aspect of Schatzki’s work, I conclude, that sustains its robustness over alternative views.

What I believe is unique about my approach is not so much that I contrasted managerialistic views with processual views, but that I undertook a theoretical analysis of these two perspective together and that I argued that Schatzkian notions of practice and social site may be a robust alternative third view which accounts for the mutual interrelationship between humans and social context. By contrasting managerialist and processual perspectives with Schatzkian notions of practice and site ontology (Schatzki, 1996, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006), I maintain I have shown theoretically (and empirically) that concepts such as organisation/organising, stability/change, changing/organising may not necessarily be understood as irreconcilable dualities. Rather, when adopting a Schatzkian perspective of

organisations and change, the notions of practice reorganisation and recomposition provide a conceptual framework for explaining both stability and ongoing change as co-occurring phenomena. When adopting a Schatzkian perspective for the analysis of organisations, the concepts named above may be understood as emerging patterns of work activities and interpretations that unfold in and through practices as part of the social site.

The implications of the theoretical contributions discussed so far are two-fold. First, for researchers of organisations, practice theorisations offer an alternative perspective that frees research from ontological dualities and provides an ontological viewpoint that interconnects the individual and the social through practices (Schatzki, 2002). Practice theorisations, I argued, may enable research to closely attend to the day-to-day experiences of workers and managers doing their work. In doing so, both practical and theoretical knowledge may come together not in opposition, but rather, I maintain, in a complex and mutually constitutive relationship.

Second, Schatzkian theorisations of organisations, change, work and jobs enable a 'loosening up' of the rigid categorisations that have framed mainstream management literature in Australia for the past 30 years, and for knowledge (and knowing) about these phenomena to emerge in ways that capture the contextual peculiarities (and messiness) that are embedded in and characterise day-to-day organisational life. For practising managers and workers this kind of knowledge (and knowing) which emerges from practices and practising may facilitate understandings of day-to-day work. For example, through the application of Schatzkian understandings of practice and social site, I maintain that I challenged the implicit command and control message that is embedded in much of the organisational change literature (e.g. Kezar, 2001). In understanding organisational change through Schatzkian notions of practice recomposition and reorganisation and my own theorisations of workers remaking their jobs and organisational practices, it becomes clear that managerialistic views that maintain that workers should be empowered, that organisation must change in response to the external environment, and that change needs to be led by a change champion are a paradox. When applying practice theorisations, what an organisation is, is inherently interconnected to context (and environment) and the human lives and events are part of that context and constitute it. Shifts in any elements of these interconnected parts are

reflected in further changes. Workers, by the very nature of their day-to-day enactment of their jobs and organisational practices are inherently changing organisations and champions of change.

In recent commentaries, Oldham and Hackman (2010) and Grant, et al. (2010) suggest that seminal models of work and job design, which have been popular in the management literature for over five decades, cannot adequately capture the complexities of contemporary organisations. These authors suggest that new research with a focus on developing models that take into account both contextual and relational characteristics of contemporary organisations are needed. Counter to the above argument, I maintain that additional research which continues to subscribe to an individualistic ontology, and where organisations continue to be understood in terms of aggregates of related individuals, and where individuals (and their minds) continue to be understood as ontologically separate from the organisations that they are part of, will not necessarily enhance understanding of the ways in which workers participate in their jobs and organisations.

I further argued that the managerial concept of job (and job description) which continues to be widely used in organisations as a means of structuring the organisation and in recruiting, selecting and managing employee performance, is an insufficient means for understanding what workers do in organisations. In adopting Schatzkian notions of practice and social site, I showed theoretically (and empirically), that by reconceptualising workers as enacting organisational practices (rather than simply doing a job) the managerial concept of a job and its associated artefact of a job description become less useful in accounting for the lived experience of workers and organisations. For practising managers and workers (including those who have participated in this study) a practice perspective legitimises their lived experiences of life on the job.

7.3.2 Theoretical contributions to the work of Schatzki

Practices and knowing

In Chapter 6 I presented a theoretical discussion of the literature pertaining to learning, knowledge and knowing in the context of work and organisations. In this discussion I brought together the work of a number of authors who have considered learning, knowledge and knowing from a range of theoretical perspectives, including

management and organisational studies, workplace learning and practice. I focused in particular on the shifts in the different literatures that have shaped thinking – from notions of learning as a cognitive operation, to learning situated in practice, to notions of knowing in and through practice. As Schatzki (1996, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2011) does not explicitly discuss learning or knowing, I maintain that my theoretical contribution pertains to bridging the Schatzkian concepts of understandings, ability and practical intelligibility, with the key ideas of knowing and knowing in practice from the work of Gherardi (2006, 2008, 2009b; Gherardi & Nicolini, 2000) and Orlikowski (2002).

By comparing, contrasting and interconnecting the Schatzkian concepts of understandings, ability, practical intelligibility and organisational practice memory with the work of the authors named above, I maintain that I extended the work of Schatzki to include further understandings about the interrelationship between practice and knowing and how this constitutes learning. For example, both Gherardi (2008) and Schatzki (2002) talk of a relationship of mutual constitution with respect to knowledge and practice, yet neither author appears to have drawn on the other's work to explore the similarities and differences in each other's thesis. In my theoretical discussion of these concepts I was able to draw a conceptual link between Gherardi's (2008) version of mutual constitution, where knowledge and practice produce one another through enactments, with Schatzki's understandings of the mutually constitutive relationship between practical intelligibility of (or knowing how to) practices. Similarly, I provided a theoretical discussion of the ways in which Gherardi's (2008) notion of equivalence (practising is knowing) bears a strong conceptual resemblance to Schatzki's thesis that to enact a practice implicitly means knowing how to perform some of a practice's doings and sayings (Schatzki, 2002).

Similarly, a further contribution is reflected in the conceptual link that I developed between the work of Schatzki (2001b, 2002) and Orlikowski (2002), and one which appears to be absent in the work of both authors. The mutual constitution of knowing and practice described by Orlikowski is conceptually similar to Schatzki's notions of practical intelligibility (or knowing how to) do practices. Both Schatzki (2001b, 2002) and Orlikowski (2002) understand practices as open-ended and maintain that this feature of practices at the same time enables the reproduction, reconstitution and modification of knowing-in-practice or knowing embedded in the enactment of practices. This mutual constitution is most evident in the reshaping of

knowing that occurs as practices are enacted and varied by people in their day-to-day lives.

In bringing together the work of Gherardi, Orlikowski and Schatzki, it may be surmised that knowing is inherent in practising and that practices carry knowledge in some form. In the context of organisations, such knowledge, I suggest, exists as part of organisational practice memory. As workers enact organisational practices they learn knowing and demonstrate their knowing in practice, how to do at least some of the doings and sayings of those practices. The perpetuation and variation of practices (open-endedness of practices) that emerge as workers enact organisational practices plays a role in the reshaping of existing knowing in practice, the emergence of new knowing and the shaping and reshaping of organisational practice memory. I suggest that through my close analysis of this enactment of organisational practices I have been able to extend insights into workplace learning.

Remaking as a kind of dispersed practice

In considering the proliferation of workers remaking their jobs in the organisations discussed in this research, I maintain that remaking may indeed be a practice akin to the Schatzkian conceptualisation of dispersed practices. In Chapter 2, I discussed two categories of practices, “integrative” and “dispersed” (Schatzki, 1996, p. 91) practices. Integrative practices are those practices that pertain to particular areas of social life (e.g. business practices, medical practices) (Schatzki, 1996, 2002). In Chapters 4 and 5, I discussed particular kinds of integrative business practices implemented at College, Council and Utility, the practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management. These practices encompass multiple complex assemblages of doings and sayings (activities) that are organised and include multiple actions, ends, purposes as well as emotional states and expressions (Schatzki, 1996, 2002). Dispersed practices are described as those practices that permeate across many elements of social life and social situations including organisations. Examples of dispersed practices include “describing, ordering, following rules, explaining, questioning, reporting, examining and imagining” (Schatzki, 1996, p. 91). Unlike integrative practices, the doings and sayings (activities) that constitute dispersed practices are linked through understandings rather than the structural elements of rules, principles or teleoaffective elements. It is this characteristic that makes dispersed practices

widespread, because their existence is not linked to any specific project's purposes or beliefs.

In considering the remaking of jobs and organisational practices observed in this research, it appears that if remaking is considered a practice, it is most likely to be a practice akin to dispersed practices. I sustain this view on the following grounds. First, remaking is a practice that was observed as taking place adjacent to the integrative practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management – remaking was not in itself tied to the goals and ends of these practices (e.g. satisfied customers; improved profits; on-time on-budget projects). Rather, remaking occurred as a way for new workers to reconcile their own existing understandings of customer service, commercialisation and project management (integrative practices) with the prevailing understandings of these practices in their new organisations. Similarly, remaking was a way in which existing workers were able to navigate changing circumstances of their organisations and their jobs. Second, in remaking workers were doing similar kinds of things as described by Schatzki (1996) – they were questioning their own and existing knowledge and understandings of integrative practices, they were examining those practices and imagining how those practices could be reshaped. Third, remaking was widespread. Workers from different levels and divisions as well as in different organisations were remaking their jobs and the practices inherent in them. I suggest that the proposition of remaking as an additional kind of dispersed practice is a further contribution that this thesis makes to the work of Schatzki.

7.4 Empirical contributions

A key empirical contribution of this thesis is that it demonstrates that Schatzki's theoretical perspective on practice and social site holds up *in practice*. From the literature that I have interrogated, the empirical application of Schatzki's work to the study of organisations represents a first of this kind. By applying Schatzkian theorisations in my empirical analysis and discussion of College, Council and Utility, I demonstrated the empirical strength of Schatzkian theorisations of practice and social site for explaining certain kinds of organisational phenomena. In considering College, Council and Utility, I took as my focus the newly introduced organisational practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management in these organisations respectively and analysed the implementation of these organisational

practices by drawing on a number of key aspects of Schatzki's work – social site, mutual constitution, practice recomposition and reorganisation, practice perpetuation and variation, practical intelligibility and organisational practice memory. In the sections that follow I discuss the empirical application of these concepts in greater detail.

Social site and mutual constitution

Schatzki's notions of social site and the thesis that organisations exist in nexuses, as mutually constitutive parts (organisation/worker/practices) of the social site, are sustained empirically, in part, in this research. I worked to demonstrate empirically that as a result of these mutually constitutive relationships among organisational nexuses, changes or shifts in the practices in one part of such nexuses were implicated in the shifts in the practices of other interconnected organisations. I demonstrated this interconnection empirically in my discussion of the historical shifts in the industry and national contexts (i.e. social site) to which College, Council and Utility are interconnected. Specifically, I demonstrated that neo-liberal reforms by Australian State and Commonwealth Governments towards the adoption of efficiency and effectiveness in public and community service delivery led to practice changes at College, Council and Utility. A shift in the priorities, goals and ends of the practices in the context of College, Council and Utility necessitated the reorganisation and recomposition of existing practices and the introduction of the new practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management respectively within the bundles of practices and material arrangements constituting these organisations. At the beginning of this section I said that the relationship of mutual constitution was sustained empirically, in part. This is because through this research I was not able to demonstrate empirically that the shifts in practices in College, Council and Utility could be implicated in further shifts in the government and industry contexts with which these organisations are interconnected. Further exploration of the above phenomenon was beyond the scope of this research and will be further discussed in Section 7.6 of this chapter as a potential area for future research.

Practice recomposition and reorganisation

The Schatzkian notions of practice recomposition and reorganisation were found to be empirically robust and to sustain the understandings that emerged from the analysis of the changes in existing practices that occurred as part of the introduction

of customer service, commercialisation and project management practices at College, Council and Utility. For example, in order to remain competitive and demonstrate that customers were receiving quality education, the College's teaching practices were recomposed to include the activities of evaluation in line with the newly introduced AQTF principles, while maintaining the goals and ends of the existing teaching practices of providing community-based adult education. Similarly, at the Utility the practices of asset maintenance and construction were adjusted in ways that no longer necessitated the inclusion of competitive tendering, while at the same time continuing to maintain the existing goals and ends of these practices of delivering well maintained assets. Practice reorganisation was seen, for example, in the ways in which Council restructured and reorganised the goals and ends of its existing divisions and established a new profit focused division in order to sustain its newly established goals and ends of cost competitive services and commercialisation. Similarly, a shift away from the goals and ends of contestability resulted in the Utility reorganising its practices towards the new organisational imperatives and the goals and ends of delivering "*reliable service*" to customers and sustainable utility assets to the State Government. Through these recompositional changes both the Council and the Utility emerged as somewhat different kinds of public sector organisations. Clues to the recomposition and reorganisation of practices were also gleaned in organisational documents (as artefacts of organisational practice memory). For example, in the College handbook, course participants were referred to in different ways – prior to the introduction of customer service practices, course participants were named students, while after the introduction of these practices, course participants were renamed as customers or clients. Similarly, in Council's planning documents, post the implementation of commercialisation practices, Directors became known as Group Managers, Supervisors became known as Team Leaders and departments were renamed business units, to reflect the new goals and ends of commercialisation.

Practice perpetuation and variation

In his work, Schatzki discusses the open-endedness of practices, in the ways in which practices are perpetuated and at the same time varied through enactments. I demonstrated this feature of practices empirically in my discussion of the ways in which new and existing workers at College, Council and Utility were perpetuating and at the same time varying practices through their enactments of their jobs. For example, new workers such as Emma and Fabio were employed by their

organisations to lead the application of the newly introduced practices of customer service and project management, as part of their jobs as Customer Service Team Leader and Project Services Manager respectively. In enacting these practices as part of their jobs these workers perpetuated the practices of their new organisations and at the same time varied them by drawing on their own existing understandings and knowledge. Emma incorporated existing customer service practices at the College with what she understood to be customer service practices by “...*looking at customer service from every angle*” and remaking her job to be Customer Service Manager; by remaking customer service practices at the College to include “*the offsite stuff, managing all the casuals*” and “...*increasing the customer service training of staff*”; and by taking a more systemic approach to customer service. At the same time, Emma recognised that there was “*a limit*” to the extent that customer service practices as she understood them (from her previous experience in business) could be implemented, because of the persisting organisational practices that maintained the College as a community organisation.

Similarly, Fabio remade his job and reshaped the structure and practices of the Project Services Group to be more in line with what he understood to be a best practice approach, to drive the “*focus... on design planning and project management*” by establishing the project management framework (as described in organisational document Project Management Procedure) and appointing project managers and project coordinators to sustain the new framework. At the same time the existing practices of project construction, where construction crews were operated and managed separately to the Project Services Group, meant that Fabio could not completely reshape how project management was enacted in the Utility — some existing practices, for example, of consulting with the construction crew managers as part of the management of the project, were being perpetuated.

Practice perpetuation and variation was also found when considering what existing workers in these organisations were doing. Existing workers were also perpetuating and at the same time varying the practices of their jobs. For example, Kevin, as Customer Service Officer at the Council, remade the practices of his job as having more of a community “*helping people*” focus. In doing so Kevin moved beyond the requirements of the organisational definition of what constituted the job of a Customer Service Officer. In negotiating alternative ways of delivering the Clean-up Service and Rates payment arrangements for elderly residents, for example, Kevin

was perpetuating and at the same time varying some elements of the Council's Waste Management and Rate payment practices.

For the new and existing workers at College, Council and Utility practice perpetuation and variation was observed in these workers' possibilities to remake the practices of their jobs and their organisations and in the way such possibilities were framed by the already existing organisational practices. Finally, when considering the perpetuation and variation of practices by new and existing workers, a further empirical example of the Schatzkian notion of mutual constitution emerges. The ways in which workers varied the practices of their organisation by remaking their jobs and at the same time how such remaking was framed by the existing organisational practices highlights the interrelationship that connects individuals (workers) and the social site (organisations) in which their lives (work lives) unfold.

Practical intelligibility and organisational practice memory

In this research, I also worked to demonstrate empirically the Schatzkian concepts of practical intelligibility and organisational practice memory and in particular how these become reshaped through workers' enactments of practice. Schatzki (1996) maintains that practical intelligibility refers to "how the world makes sense" to an individual and "which actions make sense" (p. 111) for that individual to do. For new workers, what initially made sense for them to do in their new organisations was to enact the practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management in similar ways to how they had done so in their previous jobs. For example, for Emma what initially made sense was to use a "...*very business focussed*" approach in the implementation of customer service practices. Similarly, for Fabio, what made sense for him to do was to implement project management practices by ensuring that "*the important technical facts*" of engineering were being enacted. However, as these workers continued to experience their new organisations, what made sense for them to do, their sense of practical intelligibility became reshaped. For Emma this meant knowing how to implement customer service practices, while at the same time incorporating a more community focused mentality. For Fabio this meant combining "*the important technical facts*" with the "*softer skills*" of knowing how to manage people and negotiate outcomes with others outside the Project Services Group. Similarly, for existing workers such as Sally at the Council, who became responsible for the managing the new planning process under the commercialisation imperatives, what made sense to do no longer meant building a plan in isolation.

What made sense for her to do in the new context of commercialisation encompassed the practices of community consultation, managing internal relationships through formal and informal means and knowing how to seek meaningful feedback. For these new and existing workers, what had made sense for them to do previously, their sense of practical intelligibility, was being reshaped to be more in line with their readings and understanding of their new contexts of work.

According to Schatzki (2006), organisational practice memory encompasses the structural elements of practices – understandings, rules, ends and projects as elements of practices that persist in organisations beyond any one individual and that are often reflected in organisational documents. As new and existing workers' sense of practical intelligibility were being reshaped, organisational practices were also being remade by them, and new meanings, goals and ends emerged. These new meanings became embedded in the practice memories of these workers' organisations while existing meanings goals and ends persisted. For example Ann, a Faculty Manager at the College, talked of how the rules, goals and ends of the new practices of customer service (characteristic of business) were being enmeshed with the already existing goals and ends of social justice, and through this enmeshing new understanding, rules and ends were emerging. What it meant to be a College in the Australian context now was something different. These new meanings were reflected in the organisation's online presence, the development of a new customer charter as well as the continuation of the organisational values and value statement of social justice. Different organisational documents (as artefacts of organisational practice memory) reflected these emerging and contrasting understandings, ends and projects.

7.5 Further and future research

In concluding this chapter and this thesis, I outline some ideas for future research. These ideas emerged both during the empirical and the 'writing up' phases of this research. Some of these ideas were explored, in part, through the publication of a journal article, a refereed conference paper and a book chapter, while others remain as ideas yet to be explored.

Workers as practitioners

During analysis of the data, in particular, data pertaining to workers in organisations who were perpetuating and varying practices, I considered what features might distinguish the concept of worker from that of practitioner which is often discussed in the practice literature (see for example Kemmis, 2009). Furthermore, I considered what kinds of opportunities might emerge from positioning workers as practitioners in the study of organisations. I began discussing these ideas with a colleague who was also exploring similar themes in her own research and with whom I shared a professional background. I maintained that presenting our work at a traditional management academic conference would provide an opportunity to test our conceptualisations and perhaps go some way towards infiltrating traditional management thinking. From those initial discussions, we worked towards writing a joint refereed conference paper, which drew on our combined data. Price and Johnsson (2009) was accepted by the *Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management (ANZAM) Conference* as a double blind refereed paper in the Organisational Change Theory and Practice stream. ANZAM is the primary professional body for management and education and research in Australia and New Zealand, with a national and international membership. The annual conference associated with ANZAM attracts both national and international academics, researchers and higher degree students.

The paper argued that adopting a practice approach which repositions workers as practitioners would bring to the surface enriched understandings of the contextual, relational and discursive aspects of workers doing their day-to-day work. Further, the paper argued that these understandings of workers as practitioners provide a counterpoint to balance contemporary managerial views of workers as undifferentiated management resources (prevalent in the human resource management literature), and work as easily describable. Finally, the paper sought to challenge prevailing views about performance standards, learning at work and what it means to be a worker in Australian organisations.

In reviewing the conference proceedings, I found that of the 367 papers presented at the conference, only seven, in addition to my own, referred to 'practice' or 'practices'. Upon closer examination of these papers, I found that three used the term 'practice' as synonymous with process or procedure, three adopted theorisations from the communities of practice literature and one adopted aspects of

the Heideggerian notion of 'technique' – practice theorisations, it seems, are yet to be strongly adopted in Australian management research. I presented the paper in December 2009, and received varied responses from the predominantly academic and research student audience. From these responses, the practice theorisations that I presented appeared to have been somewhat peripheral to the understandings of some members of the audience. Those who were familiar with the term 'practice' considered practice in terms of a counterpoint to theory or understood practice in terms of communities of practice theorisations. Exposure to more recent practice theorisations, for example, Gherardi (2006, 2008, 2009b), Orlikowski (2002), Jarzabkowski (2004) or Schatzki (2002, 2005, 2006), was limited in this group. Overall, however, the audience appeared to be generally interested in finding out more about practice as a theoretical frame and ontological perspective.

In reflecting on my experience of presenting at this conference, I maintain that exploring practice theorisations in the study of organisational phenomena provides an opportunity to add to the growing research by Australian management academics, for example, Vickers and Fox (2010), Bjørkeng and Clegg (2010), Carter, Clegg and Kornberger (2008) and Keevers, Treleaven, Sykes, and Darcy (2012) in this research greenfield. To this end, upon submission of this thesis for examination, I plan to extend the conference paper and work towards developing it into an academic journal article for publication in a leading management journal.

Secondly, bringing practice theorisations and research into the development of a tertiary management education curriculum in Australia may provide a complementary enhancement to the current curriculum that is shaping the education of management graduates. A practice perspective may, I maintain, strengthen the capabilities of Australian management graduates in becoming managers who consider organisations from multiple perspectives, including perspectives such as practice which bring into question prevailing management views about organisations as easily describable entities and workers as undifferentiated management resources.

Employee generated innovation and practice

A further area of research which I maintain would benefit from further investigation using Schatzkian notions of practice, in particular, practice perpetuation and variation, pertains to the ways in which employees drive innovation in organisations.

Drawing on research data of the ways in which workers enacted and remade their jobs, I explored this research theme in a chapter that I co-authored with my doctoral studies supervisors. In Price, Boud and Scheeres (2012) the relationship between Schatzkian theorisations of practice and employee-driven innovation was examined. In this chapter, it was argued that employees in their day-to-day enactments of their work may contribute to organisational innovation in subtle ways, which may often go unnoticed because these on-the-job enhancements to work practices, processes and outputs may not be identified as part of an organisation's overall innovation program.

What remains unexplored in this area of research is whether the phenomenon of practice variation, through workers' enactments and remaking of their jobs, is indeed a phenomenon that pertains to employee-driven innovation of predominantly in mature organisations undergoing change (i.e. such as the ones researched in this chapter) or whether such phenomena may be found in new and emerging organisations (for example in the kinds of emerging enterprises discussed by Fenwick, 2003). Another area of further research may include the exploration of the kinds of "practice arrangement bundles" (Schatzki, 2011, p. 209), patterns or portfolios of practices, that may be implicated in fostering both employee-driven innovation and innovative organisations.

Mutually constitutive relationship

In Section 7.4 above, I considered one of the empirical contributions of this research as sustaining the empirical strength of Schatzki's theoretical perspective on practice and social site. In particular, I discussed the ways in which Schatzki's notions of mutual constitution were, in part sustained empirically. One aspect of analysis that was beyond the scope of the present research was considering the interrelationship of mutual constitution beyond the bounds of College, Council and Utility. In the present study, I maintain, I was able to demonstrate empirically how the shifts in practice goals and ends of the industry contexts of which College, Council and Utility were part impacted on the goals and ends of the practices of these organisations. I was also able to demonstrate empirically the mutually constitutive relationship that exists between workers and organisational practices — the ways in which workers remake organisational practices and at the same time the ways in which organisational practices frame possibilities for remaking. What remains unexplored in this study is the ways in which the shifts in the goals and ends of practice as well

as the introduction of the new practices of customer service, commercialisation and project management in College, Council and Utility may have further impacted on the goals and ends and practices of the government and industry contexts with which these organisations continue to be interconnected. I propose that the empirical exploration of this aspect of the mutually constitutive relationship described by Schatzki (2002) may institute a second and separate phase of research.

To conclude, in this thesis I applied Schatzkian practice theorisations in three ways: as an empirical approach, as a theoretical approach and as ontology. My theoretical contribution to the work of Schatzki pertains to the way I brought together his notions of practical intelligibility and organisational practice memory with theorisations of learning and knowing and knowing-in practice. Empirically, I demonstrated that Schatzkian theorisations of mutual constitution, practice recomposition and reorganisation, practice perpetuation and variation, practical intelligibility and organisational practice memory hold up *in practice*. As a researcher and dedicated practice scholar, I envisage my future work in researching organisations will continue to be influenced by practice theorisations.

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Appendix A: Interview Schedule

Introduction

“Hello, my name is Oriana, and I’m a Doctoral Student and co-researcher at the University of Technology, Sydney. Before going any further, let me first say thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview.

My colleagues and I are working on a research study called ‘Beyond Training and Learning’. The study is focused on everyday work ‘practices’ that are integrated in day-to-day work. We’re interested in how these practices are experienced by people and their effects of these practices in the organisation. I’m looking specifically at one practice that of how people take up their jobs and the kind of learning that happens in this way. It’s important to stress that we’re interested in the practices and not in evaluating individual workers.

Before we get started there are a few other things I want to explain to you.

Typically this interview takes around an hour. I also record the interview for accuracy; however, I only use this recording to aid transcription, and for no other purpose whatsoever. All the information you provide will be kept in strict confidence and anonymity will be maintained at all times.

Your participation is greatly appreciated.”

Informed consent

(give time to read consent form)

Talk specifically about how what they talk about here will be used.

“To get a good understanding about these work practices we are not only talking to several people here at <organisation> but also several other organisations as well. So what you say here will not lead directly back to you but will be combined with what other people say – to produce a sort of composite story.”

Later on when we are writing papers and other types of documents about this research we might use some of your exact words – if this is the case we will use a fake name.”

Stopping

“You can stop the interview at any time – without needing to give a reason.”

Ask if there are any questions.

Get ethics form signed.

Turn on recorder

Start the interview

Broad (Grand Tour) questions

1. Can you start by telling me about you and your work here at <Organisation>?
 - What are your major responsibilities?
 - What do you think your manager expects from you in your job?
 - What do you expect from your manager?
 - Is there anything that you do that is different or more than what is normally expected of you or your job? Who expects you to do these things?

2. Can you tell me a little about your career background and how you can to work here at <Organisation>?
 - Where were you before that and how did you come to work here?
 - Why did you decide to take this job?
 - How is this job different from what you have done before
3. I'd like you to think back to when you first started working here.
 - How did you know what you needed to do?
 - How did you learn about your job?
 - Where you already prepared for all tasks, or did you have to learn new things?
 - What was it like meeting your co-workers?
 - Who did you go to, to find out how things are done in this organisation and your work?
4. Can you describe a typical working day from the time you start to the time you go home? (Like, yesterday – starting from when you arrived.)¹⁸

5. Now that you've been in this organisation for a while, who do you go to if you're not sure about things that may crop up in your work?
 - Do others come to you to know how things are done in this organisation?
 - How does that work?
6. Sometimes new things come up in work, does this happen in this organisation?
 - How do these new things get done?
 - How do they become part and parcel of the work that is required of you or any of your workmates?
7. What's changed about your job since you first started? Who initiated these changes? Did these changes mean that you had to learn any new things? If so, how did you learn them?
8. During your time here what are the most significant organisational changes that you have experienced?
 - What did these mean for you and your work?
 - How did these affect your own work?
9. Can you tell me about job descriptions does this organisation have them?
 - How are job descriptions used and who uses them?
 - Did you have one when you started? Did you have about the things on it?
 - Do you have one now? How does it relate to what you do and what others do in their work?
10. Can you tell me about who you interact with as you do your job?

¹⁸ Ask questions in shaded box only if not already known from previous interviews.

- As this always been this way? How have these interactions changed?

Close the interview

Thank participant

Refer to the Consent form and Participant interview schedule

Appendix B: Field Notes Protocol

Field Note Schedule		
Site:	Who:	
Date:	Time:	Where:
Context Description:		Reflective Notes:
Observation Details		Reflective Notes
Follow up actions:		
Other Comments		

Appendix C: Introduction Letter

CONTACT NAME
POSITION
ADDRESS
DATE

Dear CONTACT NAME,

Thank you for your initial interest in participating in our Australian Research Council funded research project. Please find some information below that covers several important aspects of the project. This should help you decide if your organisation is willing to participate. Specifically, this letter covers:

- (1) An outline of the research project
- (2) A short biography of the researchers
- (3) What 'participation in the project' means for NAME OF ORGANISATION?
- (4) What might NAME OF ORGANISATION gain from agreeing to participate?

1. An outline of the research project

The Australian Research Council (ARC) recently funded the University of Technology, Sydney to carry out a three-year research project. It is funded as an ARC Discovery project. This means that while the research is not meant to lead to immediate impact on practice, it will contribute to the conceptualisation of practice. We have named the project, *Beyond training and learning: Integrated development practices in organisations* (or 'Beyond Training' for short). This 'Beyond Training' research project is located in the broad fields of organisational learning and workplace learning. Its focus is on everyday development practices that are integrated into the day-to-day work of organisations. As part of the Beyond Training project as further research by PhD Candidate Ms Oriana Price will be conducted. Oriana will be investigating one aspect of organisational learning practices.

We are undertaking this research because learning in organisations today is very different from the training practices of previous decades. The growth of knowledge work in advanced economies has resulted in an increasingly important and diverse role for learning within enterprises. In such contexts, learning is taking on a number of new manifestations beyond those traditionally understood as training or learning. These manifestations include organisational practices such as continuous learning, performance management, teamwork, career development, leadership, coaching and mentoring.

'Beyond Training' will analyse and theorise these practices as well as identify others as they are emerging in contemporary organisations. We are calling these practices Integrated Development Practices (IDPs). We have defined them as practices that:

- (1) facilitate learning in a way that is embedded in work processes
- (2) are independent of formal training programs and are not defined explicitly in terms of training education;
- (3) are managed or implemented by people whose primary job function is not training or learning.

'Beyond Training' aims to provide in-depth analyses of the lived experience of people involved in IDPs by developing and investigating detailed accounts of specific organisational practices and their effects. This will include people who facilitate IDPs and those to whom IDPs are targeted.

We are taking a pragmatic approach to learning, focusing on the diversity of IDPs in organisations, and focusing the analysis on practices (rather than learning and learners). We are interested in what learning *does* when it is integrated with commonplace organisational practices and how it changes our concepts of learning.

2. About the researchers

The chief researchers of the *Beyond Training* project are David Boud, Carl Rhodes, Clive Chappell and Hermine Scheeres, Research Associate Donna Rooney, and PhD Candidate Oriana Price.

David Boud is heading the research project. David's extensive work in adult learning is well known. Carl Rhodes is located in the Business Faculty of UTS and his research to date has focused on management and learning. Clive Chappell's research interests have largely been in the field of workplace learning. Hermine Scheeres' research interests have been in the area of organisational change. Donna Rooney is nearing the completion of doctoral studies. She has recently completed a similar ARC research project. Oriana is new to UTS and her doctoral studies specifically relate to the Beyond Training project and will be collecting data for her specific project.

3. What 'participation in the pilot' means for NAME OF ORGANISATION

Our focus is on providing in-depth understanding and analysis of the lived experience of practicing new forms of learning work. In broad terms, to achieve this we hope to:

- Look at organisational documents that relate to integrated development practices;
- get a general 'feel' for the organisations we collaborate with through attending formal and informal meetings
- interview a diverse range of people who work within several organisations from various sectors.

More specifically, for NAME OF ORGANISATION, we expect participation to mean that:

- NAME OF ORGANISATION will nominate a specific contact person who will liaise between the UTS researchers and potential interviewees
- NAME OF ORGANISATION will provide access to some documents (for example, quality management, procedures, policies, corporate plans)
- a researcher will spend a few days carrying out onsite observations
- NAME OF ORGANISATION will provide a room/space for the interviews to take place
- approximately 20 - 30 people who work in various areas of NAME OF ORGANISATION (e.g. management, administration, service delivery) will participate in interviews (up to 1 hour each) where they will be asked to talk about their work and their experience of development practices
- data gathering will be completed within a two months of your agreement.

In regard to ethical research practices, the project has been granted approval through the UTS Human Research Ethics Committee. This process commits us to undertaking a variety of strategies to ensure that ethical research practices occur. This includes gaining informed consent from all participants. Hence, workers from NAME OF ORGANISATION who decide to participate in interviews will be asked to sign a letter giving their consent. Before signing the interviewer will explain the letter's contents. In broad terms, the consent letter talks how we intend storing data and how participants are free to withdraw at any time. The letter also points out, that is likely that we will produce publications about the pilot and that NAME OF ORGANISATION, or any individuals that work for NAME OF ORGANISATION will not be identifiable in these publications.

4. What might NAME OF ORGANISATION gain from agreeing to participate?

In return for agreeing to participate in this research, UTS are offering to provide NAME OF ORGANISATION with a snapshot of any initial findings.

We will provide an overview of key findings in a synopsis document. We will discuss with you the highlights that have arisen in our investigations within your organisation. This may be helpful for your own management purposes, or local government more generally. Its use will be at your discretion. For your perusal, we have attached examples of synopsis documents from the current project and a similar previous project.

As researchers we will also be producing publications for academic journals and conferences. These will most likely include some data from NAME OF ORGANISATION. The data would normally be aggregated with those from other organisations, thus maintaining confidentiality. We are happy to share these with you at some later stage.

We hope this information helps you decide about your participation. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on 9514 3945 or via email: David.Boud@uts.edu.au

Yours sincerely,

David Boud (On behalf of the 'Beyond Training' research team)

Appendix D: Research Participation Information Kit

Beyond Training and learning: integrated development practices in organisations

Background

This project will investigate the increasing range of practices through which people learn within organisations. Many practices, which promote learning, are integrated with work, yet are often independent of more formalised learning activities like training programs. The research will analyse these types of practices.

The Australian Research Council (ARC) has funded the University of Technology, Sydney to carry out a three-year research project. The project began in early 2006 and it is expected to be completed by late 2008.

About the researchers

David Boud is heading the research project. David's extensive work in adult learning is well-known. Clive Chappell's research interests have largely been in the field of workplace learning. Hermine Scheeres' research interests have been in the area of organisational change. Carl Rhodes is located in the Business Faculty of UTS and his research to date has focused on management and learning. Donna Rooney is nearing the completion of doctoral studies. She has recently completed a similar ARC research project. Oriana Price is new to UTS and plans to undertake doctoral studies that specifically relates to the research.

Focus

The 'Beyond Training' project is interested in what particular work practices do when they are integrated with everyday work and how they might change our understanding of workplace learning. In other words, the focus is on practices rather than individuals.

Proposed Research Questions

There are three central questions that the Beyond Training project sets out to address. These are:

1. What is the nature of the integrated development practices in organisations?
2. How are these integrated development practices deployed and experienced?
3. What are the implications of these for the practices and meanings of learning at work today?

Methodology

The Beyond Training research project is employing qualitative methodology. This involves researchers working with a selection of employees across a range of organisations. Our aim is to provide in-depth analyses of the lived experience of people by developing and investigating detailed accounts of specific work practices and their effects for organisations. To do this we will collect data by reviewing official documents (e.g., management plans, policies and procedures), observations and interviews.

Expected outcomes

The outcomes of this project will help organisations make the most of the productive potential of these different forms of learning. It will do this by identifying the links between organisational imperatives and the development of personnel.

Need more information?

If you have further questions you can call David Boud on 02 9514 3945.

Consent Form

Beyond training and learning: integrated development practices in organisations

I have read the attached information sheet and I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and to receive further explanation about any risks involved. I understand that I may be asked to participate in a range of activities such as observations and interviews, and that the data generated from these activities may be analysed and used for the study. Any interviews or focus groups conducted may be recorded and transcribed for ease and to ensure that the information gathered is accurate.

I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time without penalty. In the event that this occurs, I agree to inform the research team about whether or not my data can be analysed or withdrawn.

The researchers undertake that:

That any confidential information shared with the researchers or inadvertently obtained will remain confidential and will not be revealed to any person outside the research team.

- The data will not be used for any other purpose than the ones stated.
- Any transcripts produced will be anonymised in order to protect the identity of the participants
- Any research publications or reports produced will be similarly anonymised
- All digital recordings and transcriptions produced will only accessible to members of the research team
- All data will be electronically stored, and will be accessible only to members of the research team

Participant consent

I understand both the project description attached and this consent form, and I give my consent to participate in the Beyond Training research project.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Researchers' undertaking

We undertake to abide by the undertakings made in this consent form.

Name:

Date:

(On behalf of the research team)

Signature:

About the researchers

There are four main researchers from the University of Technology, working on the Beyond Training. These are David Boud, Clive Chappell, Hermine Scheeres, and Carl Rhodes.

There is also a research associate Ms Donna Rooney) and a PHD student Ms Oriana Price who will be working on the project as well.

David Boud is heading the research team. David's extensive work in adult learning is well-known.

Clive Chappell's research interests are largely in the field of workplace learning.

Hermine Scheeres' research interests are in the area of organisational development and change.

Carl Rhodes is located in the Business faculty of UTS. His research to date is in organisational management.

Donna Rooney is nearing the completion of doctoral studies. She has recently completed a similar ARC research project.

Oriana Price is new to UTS and plans to undertake doctoral studies that specifically relates to the Beyond Training project.

You can find examples of research carried out by these researchers on the OVAL website:

www.oval.uts.edu.au

Want more information?

If you want to talk about this research project, or have further questions regarding participation, there are a few people you can contact.

You can:

- talk with the chief researcher (**David Boud**) on 02 9514 3945 or Oriana Price on 9514 3044
- talk to **Louise Abrams** from the UTS Human Research Ethics Committee on: 02 9514 1244
- write to any of the researchers at the address below
- talk to the '**contact name**' at ORGANISATION on 'phone number'
- ask around your **friends and family** and find someone that has participated in a research project, and then talk with them about their experiences.

OVAL Research
PO Box 123
Broadway, NSW, 2007
P: 02 9514 3044
F: 02 9514 3077
E: Oriana.Price@Student.uts.edu.au



Research at (Insert Name)

Over the next few months you might see some 'strangers' lurking around ORGANISATION

No, we are not management or industrial 'spies'! We're researchers from UTS.

We are working on a research project called '*Beyond training and learning: Integrated development practices in organisations*' - 'Beyond Training' for short.

ORGANISATION has agreed to participate in a pilot study and you are invited to take part in an interview.

This brochure provides you with an outline of the project and the researchers, what participation means to you, and answers some questions you might have.

What is this research about?

The Australian Research Council recently funded us researchers at the University of Technology, Sydney) to carry out a three-year project research project.

We're calling the project, *Beyond training and learning: Integrated development practices in organizations* (or 'Beyond Training' for short).

Beyond Training focuses on everyday development practices that are integrated into the day-to-day work of organizations.

Our aim is to provide in-depth analyses of the lived experience of people by developing and investigating detailed accounts of specific work practices and their effects for organizations.

To do this we will be collecting data in a three different ways. This will include:

1. Looking at official documents (eg, management plans, policies and procedures)
2. Observing (to get a 'feel' for SCC as a workplace)
3. Interviewing various people within SCC

Later on we will be looking at several other organizations as well. But for now we are carrying out a pilot study. A pilot study is a preliminary study where we develop our research methods. In large research projects there is often a pilot study so that the researchers can learn to ask better questions. ORGANISATION has agreed to participate in this pilot study.

This brochure explains some aspects of the pilot study that may be of concern to you.

Questions and Answers

Here are some common questions & answers that will explain what the researchers are doing, as well as helping you decide about participating in an interview.

- **What does 'observing the workplace' mean?** Observation is one way that researchers gather initial data. We are doing this to get a general feel for ORGANISATION as a workplace and to get a sense of how the organization 'works'. We are not interested in evaluating individual workers. We do not work for ORGANISATION and we are not management's 'spies'. In this project we are interested in *what particular work practices do* when they are integrated with everyday work and how they might change our understanding of workplace learning. So our focus is on practices rather than individuals.
- **What does participating in an interview mean for me?** If you decide to participate you will attend an interview at ORGANISATION. You will be encouraged to talk about your general experiences at work. Interviews will take about an hour, and they will be recorded on an audio-cassette. You will also be asked to sign a form that says you understand what participation means, but before signing the researcher will explain the form's contents and answer any questions you might have.
- **Who can participate in an interview?** We are interested in talking with people who facilitate various work practices as well as to people to whom practices are targeted. This includes, managers, supervisors and workers.
- **What happens to the information that is collected?** The information (data) collected throughout this research will be stored at UTS in accordance with strict ethical regulations. Tapes and paper copies of transcripts will be coded so individuals are not identified. Paper copies of surveys will be filed in locked cabinets that are only accessible by the researchers. All this data will be destroyed 5 years after the completion of the study.

- **Will anyone know that it's me?** When the research is published it will not have your name on it. It will not even have your organization's name on it. We may use a few of your exact words but they will have a pseudonym (a fake name).
- **Will my supervisor/manager know what I say?** No, they will not know what you say in your interviews. It is important to know that we do not work for ORGANISATION. And your organization is not involved because they want to find out what 'the workers' are up to either. Rather, both your boss and the researchers are interested in this project because it will eventually help develop work practices that support workers to learn.
- **Are there risks involved?** While there are no physically painful procedures involved, there is the possibility that talking about personal experiences might cause some people embarrassment or distress.
- **What if I change my mind part way through an interview?** That's OK. You are free to withdraw your support at any time, without having to give a reason.
- **What if I have more questions, or want to complain, about my participation in this research?** You can talk to a number of people about this research. Their names and phone numbers are listed on the back of this brochure.

I think I want to participate, what do I do now?

Contact *NAME* at ORG. on Number or *Oriana Price* at UTS on 9514 3044.

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