Imagining the Future through the Past: Organization Development isn't (just) about Change

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This paper extends Bushe & Marshak's (2018) call to move away from equating Organization Development with organizational change and adopt the generative metaphor that OD is about creating great teams and organizations. We contend that OD emerged from a spirit of inquiry that lost its way when prescriptive models used to diagnose teams and organizations took over the field. Instead, what defines OD is engagement and inquiry by stakeholders in a process of improvement. We argue that the 75% failure rate often attributed to organizational change, occurs from the top-down, visionary leadership models of change management. We review research that supports our contention that successful OD occurs when leaders lead a change process that engages stakeholders in defining the changes they will ultimately implement. Since every solution to a problem of organizing creates a new problem, no generalized model of a great organization can endure; however, all models of great organizations embraced by OD over the past 60 years envision widespread engagement in inquiry. Thus, by engaging stakeholders in a process of inquiry while working on a concrete issue, OD creates great organizations. We conclude by offering three criteria of "development" that identify what a more developed team or organization looks like, that can be used to guide and assess OD practice.

For more than 30 years we have studied, practiced and written about organization development (OD), whose popularity waxes and wanes with the overall trends of businesses. In an alarming number of occasions, a concern that "OD has lost its relevance" has been expressed. What we see happening across the world at this moment is mixed. While the central institutions of OD in North America (NTL, OD Network, ODC Division of the Academy of Management) are retrenching, OD institutions in Europe, Africa and Asia appear to be growing (e.g., the growth in membership of the European OD Network, the growth in institutes providing OD education in South Asia). We believe that while the label "organization development" may wax or wane, the spirit that vitalizes the field is still very much alive, even when it is called something else (e.g., Quality of Work Life, HR

Business Partners, change management, organizational agility). In other words, OD is not dying but fragmented and depleted despite the wide use of its tools and perspectives, especially by those who have never heard of OD. How is it that OD finds itself in the curious position of being relatively unknown or marginalized even as businesses, government and non-profit organizations increasingly require and call for the perspectives and insights that OD practitioners retain in abundance?

We believe, as Bushe and Marshak (2018) have recently argued, that OD is being stifled by a generative image that no longer serves us; that "OD is about change". In our view, OD practitioners are often trapped by the image that *OD is about change* and sidelined into situations where clients ask for what OD doesn't do well (change management) while unaware of what OD can do at its best (engagement and inquiry). In this article we will build on Bushe and Marshak's (2018) suggestion that OD would be better served by the image: *OD is about creating great teams and organizations*.

OD is about change has been the dominant image of our field during the past 30-40 years. To stand on the past to re-imagine OD, however, it is important to bear in mind that OD didn't set about that way. As Edger Schein (2015) has recently reminded us, in its early days OD was animated by a "spirit of Inquiry". The founders believed that engaging stakeholders in inquiry, framed by democratic values, authenticity, and informed decision-making, would lead to better human relations, teams and organizations (Argyris, 1970; Beckhard, 1969; Bennis, 1969; Schein, 1969). However, a bifurcation took place between those who advocated continuous engagement in inquiry and those providing models and solutions, like Blake and Mouton's (1964) 9.9 organizing. Slowly the spirit of inquiry got lost as clients were more eager to buy solutions that came packaged as diagnostic tools with a pre-identified model of what a great team or great organization looked like. Likert's (1967) System 4 Organization and Trist and others' socio-technical systems (STS) theory (Trist et al., 1951) were early examples embraced by OD.

But by the mid-80's; the 1960's image of OD as helping to create great organizations was under assault, due to the escalated competition from other management approaches to creating great organizations but derived from different root metaphors (e.g., Total Quality Management, Lean Production System, and Process Re-engineering). Under the pressures from the new competitors, the field of OD began to use its expertise in *change* to differentiate itself from other approaches. OD and change became completely intertwined, probably because 1) OD always had a problem defining itself, so organizational change provided a secure foothold, and because 2) clients prioritized *managing change* as so important, it fueled large and financially lucrative consulting practices. OD and change became intertwined in our textbooks and graduate programs.

Graduate programs and textbooks went from OD to OD and Change. The OD Division of the Academy of Management changed its name to the OD and Change Division in 1990. The consequence of the popularity of "change", however, has been confusion and lack of momentum among OD practitioners. In our view, the more OD is thought to be mainly about facilitating or managing change (change management), the more the original passion for organization *development* is lost and the strategic aspects of the OD brand are damaged. In North America today, most B-Schools courses delete OD from their course and program titles, using new names such as "change leadership" instead. The Academy of Management seriously considered dropping "Organization Development" from the division's title just a few years ago.

It is worth looking for a moment at the consequences for practitioners when OD is only about change. As Bushe and Marshak (2018) argue, OD practitioners are likely to find themselves in the position of having others define the change and then being asked for advice on how to implement it, how to facilitate it, how to manage it. Business leaders came to see OD as something about implementation (the journey) but not about what to change (the destination). We are put in the same bucket as "change management", which is in some ways antithetical to OD. And we aren't very good at change management – our tools, process, and values don't align well with forcing change upon stakeholders who have had no say in their design. When OD practitioners are asked for advice

on how to implement a change they were not involved in crafting, they can't really utilize what we argue are the two central processes of organization development: engagement and inquiry. OD has much more to offer in helping clients figure out what the change should be than in implementing pre-ordained solutions. By branding our field as being "about change", we confuse our potential clients, our students and ourselves about what our real value proposition is and reduce our brand appeal and our ability to position ourselves for success.

We are not about change, but about *improvement.* Yes, that requires expertise in change, but improvement has very different connotations from *implementation* – which is what most clients associate with change. As we will argue later in this paper, creating great organizations requires a different kind of change process than an implementation of changes designed by leaders or technical experts. For OD to be successful at improvement, it must be engaged from the beginning in working with stakeholders to design a process for identifying both the destination and the journey to get there.

What Stops us from Embracing the Image that OD is about Creating Great Organizations?

We believe that *OD is about creating great teams and organizations* is a more generative image for our field than *OD is about change.* Why hasn't the field embraced this image? We believe it is

because we have failed to produce a theory/model of the great organization that has stood the test of time. However, our argument is that no model ever will, and nor is one needed.

Because OD practitioners are interested in great organizations, they pay attention to models of organizing. From early models like McGregor's (1960) Theory X and Y, Argyris' (1962) "interpersonal competence", and Likert's (1967) System 4, to recent work by Laloux (2014) and Kegan and Lahey (2016), codifying models of organizational structures and processes have always attracted the attention of OD practitioners. In the 70's many people thought socio-technical systems theory (STS) was the answer (Trist et al., 1951, Emery and Thorsrud, 1969). Progressive corporations in North America and Europe used STS principles, aiming at creating team-based organizations as productive as the conventional assembly line but much better places to work. For example, all new North American plants built by General Motors between 1974 and 1980 were created by joint union-management design teams using STS principles. Yet by 1990 accumulated evidence suggested that many successful applications of STS oriented organizations turned back to "rigid structures" within 6-8 years (Miller, 1975; Polley and Van Dyne, 1993; Whitsett and Yorks, 1983).

Our argument is that OD can be about creating great teams and organizations without having the definitive organization model because no model of organizing will ever be right for every organization,

nor can any organization perpetuate itself without evolving its model of organizing. Human beings will never develop a definitive solution to how to divide up work, and then coordinate that work, in a conclusive way since effective collective action rests on a set of tensions. Paradoxes (Smith and Berg, 1987), polarities (Johnson, 1992) and competing values (Quinn, 1988) are different ways of describing these tensions. Quinn (1988)'s competing values model, for instance, tells us that organizational effectiveness depends on both managing outside and managing inside, of having enough stability and having enough flexibility. It necessitates adapting to external demands while at the same time, standardizing internal operations. Working through people and relationships and working through impersonal processes and routines are both necessary.

It is ironic that this model is used for a popular survey to measure the gap between idealized and current organizational cultures. We think, however, the more crucial implication from Quinn (1988)'s research is that because effectiveness is bi-polar, there is no unique solution to a specific problem of organizing; today's solution will be an unavoidable cause of a new set of problems to be solved tomorrow. We try decentralization after too much centralization, which will then create a need for more centralization. We hold on to routines until they become stifling and then depend on relationships until they become too inefficient, in a never-ending journey for how to best adapt the various challenges the world keeps

throwing at us. This is not a new insight; the origins of sociology go back to the seminal proposal that a variety of social forms evolve through this dialectical process (Marx, 1847).

Where OD Thrives[1]

If there is no unique model and solution to a specific problem of organizing, then is there any room for top-down approach to work? Our answer is "yes". Heifetz's (1998) distinction between technical problems and adaptive challenges provides a helpful perspective to answer this question. Table 1 is an illustration, influenced by an earlier table developed by Eric Svaren, to identify the characteristic differences between the two. On the one hand, technical problems can be fixed in a top-down operation applying analytical models and expertise. Adaptive challenges, however, are complex issues without a single right answer. They require the engagement of those who have a stake in the solutions to those challenges. They require a spirit of inquiry with experimenting and to develop local and unique models and solutions. We believe they are the issues that OD, as an inherently "engagement and inquiry" based approach, is uniquely qualified to work on.

The single greatest failure of leadership, to paraphrase Heifetz (1998), is to treat adaptive challenges like technical problems. We need to help leaders understand that any solution to an adaptive challenge will eventually create a new problem and therefore, trying making big bets on the "right" answer is a losing proposition. Instead, what OD can do is to help leaders to engage their stakeholders in inquiries that will lead to any answers that stakeholders will own and implement, secure in the knowledge that OD is a never-ending process of small wins. We believe that the focus of OD is to enhance the adaptive capability of the organization while working to solve whatever problem is currently being attended to. We are creating a great organization whenever we are tackling adaptive challenges.

Many studies show that 75% of change processes have failed (Balogun and Hope Hailey, 2004; Eaton, 2010; Towers Watson, 2013). We argue, however, that this figure only represents conventional change approaches, and not those that use well-designed processes of engagement and inquiry. Failures abound with the typical Kotter-type change process in which leaders or experts exclusively contribute to shaping a vision, defining the change, and clarifying who is in charge of what. The business model of the large consulting firms is based on this kind of model. Leaders, or experts they hire, are expected to bring blueprints for new

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[1] Some of what follows adapts material from G. Bushe's report (2017) *Where Organisation Development* Thrives, which can be downloaded from the Roffey Park Institute:

http://www.roffeypark.com/research-insights/free-reports-downloads/where-organisation-development-thrives/

Table 1: Differences between Technical Problems and Adaptive Challenges

TECHNICAL PROBLEMS	ADAPTIVE CHALLENGES
Easy to operationally define.	Difficult to agree on what the "problem" is.
Lend themselves to operational (process and procedures) solutions.	Require changes in values, beliefs, relationships, and mindsets.
People are generally receptive to technical solutions they understand.	People generally resist adopting other-defined values and beliefs.
Often can be solved by authorities or experts.	The stakeholders have to be involved in solving it.
Requires change in just one or a few places; often contained within organizational boundaries.	Requires change in numerous places; usually across organizational boundaries.
Solutions can often be implemented relatively quickly by changing rules or work processes.	Adaptation requires experiments and new discoveries as well as wrong turns and dead ends.
Technical problems stay solved until something else changes.	Adaptation creates new problems that will have to be adapted to.
Examples from Healthcare	
How do we ensure nurses know the safest methods for lifting patients?	How do we improve the health and wellness of nurses?
How do we ensure accurate information is provided during handoffs between care providers?	How do we increase collaboration among care providers?
How do we reduce errors in medications delivered to patients?	How do we get patients to take more responsibility for taking their meds?

Source: Bushe (2017).

strategies, organization designs, marketing programs, supply chains, and so forth. They write a big report and exit, leaving implementation solely up to the company. This is the kind of change process that leads to so much failure.

Table 2: Where OD Thrives

	Leaders Define the Changes	Stakeholders Define the Changes
"Staff" manage the process	Almost always fails Q1	Only succeeds if leaders buy in to what emerges Q3
Leaders manage the process	Often fails Q2	Almost always succeeds and where OD thrives Q4

Source: Bushe (2017).

Table 2 (Bushe, 2017) summarizes our argument. No matter how brilliant its leaders, a change effort will fail if leaders define a change and then leave it up to middle managers or external consultants ("staff") to manage the process (Q1 in Table 2). The explanation for these failures is often a lack of leadership attention; that leaders need to be full sponsors who not only define the change but manage the process (Q2) is widely believed. We argue that the 1 out of 4 successes happens in this quadrant. We do not believe this is where OD thrives.

On the contrary, when the stakeholders who will actually implement the change are the ones who define the change, the effort is almost always successful if leaders are focused on managing the process (Q4 in Table 2). The word "stakeholders" is meant to include employees and managers, customers and suppliers, sometimes government and communities. Quadrant 4, which could be called "emergent change" and is the kind of change

process advocated by Dialogic OD (Bushe and Marshak, 2015; (Roehrig, Schwendenwien, and Bushe, 2015) is where OD thrives. It is where the core processes of engagement and inquiry meet. It is where we work on solving adaptive challenges, while improving the organizational capacity to adapt.

Evidence for Emergent Change Success and Improving Adaptive Capability

It is interesting to note that the early OD action research studies were good illustrations where stakeholders fully participated in interpreting the research and in planning what to do about them. One of the earliest studies, for example, investigated a survey feedback effort at Detroit Edison from 1948 – 1950 with a special focus on an interlocking chain of conferences, starting at the top, where leaders managed the process and reported to their supervisors when they reached

an impasse (Mann, 1957). It was a successful effort in which results were discussed throughout the organization to decide on the changes they would make at every level of the groups. More recent studies, reviewed below, support our argument about the effectiveness of quadrant 4.

Bushe and Kassam's (2005) meta-analysis of 20 "successful" appreciative inquiry cases found that 6 out of 7 transformational change cases used a change process consistent with quadrant 4. They called this an improvisational approach, versus an implementation approach. On the other hand, 12 of 13 incremental change efforts used an implementation approach.

Heracleous, Gößwein, and Beaudette (2018) were involved in the development of Wikimedia's 5-year strategy plan through an open strategy process with large group OD interventions. During the Wikimedia's strategic planning process, the invited stakeholders pursued an inquiry to review and refine the five emergent strategic priorities of quality content, innovation, increasing participation, growing readership, and stabilizing infrastructure. The process ended up with an official document titled "Wikimedia Strategic Plan: A collaborative vision for the movement through 2015", and Jimmy Wales, the founder of Wikimedia, declared that all the investments at the Foundation were in line with the newly developed plan (Heracleous et al., 2018: 24).

Gulati, Casto, and Krontiris (2014), applying the concept of Weick's (1995) "sensemaking", concluded that Fukushima Daini plant's survival in the midst of earthquake and Tsunami crisis in 2011 was attributable to the stakeholder's de-centralized behaviors in which understanding and experiences shaped each other to adapt to unpredictable twists and turns in the incident. The article vividly describes the emergent change process followed by Noriaki Masuda, the site superintendent, and rest of Daini's 400 employees. The enactment (Weick 1995: 30-38) in the plant was so non-linear that any solution eventually created a new problem. They were eventually freed up from trying to find "the answer". As Gulati et al. (2014, 114) point out, "Masuda had to revise something on his whiteboard. As unforeseen challenges emerged, the team members repeatedly had to act their way through them, making adjustments as they went".

Stensaker, Falkenberg, and Grønhaug (2008:175) also focused on sensemaking during the change implementation process (how individuals make sense of organizational change over time) in their study of three different business units (BU) in one company that were supposed to implement a corporately mandated change program. One of the BUs "…focused on careful and detailed top-down planning through representative but limited participation. The result was a lack of understanding as to what changes should be made and how to implement change. Employees struggled to make sense of the changes and were unable to act in any consistent manner." The most successful change, however, occurred in the BU that "…used a different approach. They relied on

extensive participation and negotiations with employees during planning and decision making. The result was a unified account of change in the form of a customized change plan that was implemented in a stepwise and cumulative process through consistent action."

Rowland and Higgs (2008), from a broader empirical perspective, asked senior managers in a variety of large companies about their stories of change successes and failures. What they found from analyzing 70 different change efforts was when leaders decided on the content, and tried to control the change, efforts usually failed. But those where leaders engaged the stakeholders to find and solve the problem in an adaptive, emergent process of change (Q4 in Table 2), were almost always successful.

To sum up the literature on examining the mechanisms of emergent challenges and improving adaptive capability, there has been substantive evidence that emergent approaches create more change more reliably than conventional top-down methods. Whether you call it participatory action research, open space, complexity and emergence, appreciative inquiry, an organizational confrontation meeting, or work out, (and many other labels), the essence of the process comes down to what leaders do and what stakeholders do; OD succeeds when leaders identify the problem (adaptive challenge) but not the solution, and manage the process of engaging stakeholders in inquiry that leads to them identifying the changes they are willing to pursue.

We highlight three things about the research we just reviewed. First, we note that these examples meet the three common criteria of development, which we describe next in this paper. Secondly, the emergent nature of the strategic implementation in these examples is consistent with the literature on emergent strategy (Chia, 2014; Mintzberg and Waters, 1985). That is, the studies above show that when leaders lead the process and stakeholders define the change, then change happens (i.e. strategy gets implemented). The research on this subject, however, is in its infancy. Future research 1) could take account of the fact that empirical studies of the effectiveness of OD on emergent strategy implementations are still scarce, and 2) could probe the extent to which our three criteria of a more developed organization contributes to the capacity for emergent strategy implementation.

Third, we want to point out how the processes in these studies are consistent with the common core values of OD founders. Argyris (1970), Bennis (1970), and Bennis, Benne, and Chin (1969), for instance, stress the importance of engagement and inquiry in the OD process. This is why we say that where OD thrives can be identified by standing on the past to reimagine the future.

Three Criteria for Successful Organization "Development"

We agree with Bushe and Marshak (2018) that OD does not need a generally agreed model of great organization, for OD practitioners to define

themselves as being mainly interested in creating great organizations. OD practitioners can, and should, use a variety of models of a great organization. But that still leaves the question of what standards ought to be applied in assessing the success of an OD effort. We suggest this can be found by developing broad agreement on what a more developed team or organization is like. While we can't say what a great organization looks like in the abstract, we think the following three criteria of "development" can specify what an OD intervention should pursue. The criteria can be used as a checklist against which to ask "will this intervention help to create a great organization"? We believe that this is a crucial point that distinguishes OD from other (e.g. facilitating and coaching) approaches that don't have a position on what a great organization is.

We believe that what distinguishes OD practices from other improvement and change methods, is that they originated from a "spirit of inquiry" based on an interest in the developmental journey by which individuals, groups, and organizations become great. In the concept of development, we are not interested in simply what happens over time, but rather in the idea of progress, improvement, and growth. Any person, group or organization will not ever fully develop. It does not naturally happen, it requires continuous effort and intention. Let us now explore how we can extend the common threads derived from a few geniuses (Freud, Erikson, Piaget, Maslow, and some others)

into three criteria we can use for assessing the success of OD efforts (Bushe, 2017).

1) The more developed an organization, the more aware it is of itself and can talk to itself about itself

OD's paradigm originates with Freud (1922) and the psychoanalytic method that promoted self-analysis as a path to health and growth. The "talking cure" is buried deep in our DNA. Part of any OD practitioner's job is to help people work past denial, repression, or a simple lack of awareness to new knowledge about why what happens; why we do as we do, feel as we feel, and want what we want. The more self-aware we are, the more developed we are. As we develop we increase our ability to articulate a narrative about the self that is deeper, broader, and more complex and more integrative (Piaget, 1926; 1954; Kohlberg, 1984; Loevinger, 1970). In his theory of group development, Gibb (1964) emphasized "data flow" among members, the most developed of which was spontaneous, authentic, unrestricted communication. Increasing authentic communication is central to Bennis and Shepard's (1956) description of a highly-developed group. Descriptions of highly developed organizations all include the capacity for authentic communication, transparency and employee voice (Laloux, 2014; Likert, 1967).

We can easily apply these criteria to our work. Are people in this team or organization more able to talk to each other about what they really think, feel and want about how they work together? If so,

then the organization has developed. From this point of view, a great organization is one where people feel compelled to speak out, to engage meaningfully, to bring up difficult issues, to reflect on what has taken place and learn from it, to question and challenge visions and plans, to collect data and learn from their own performance and the performance of others, to be able to see below the particular instance to the underlying pattern, to share and understand their collective dreams and aspirations. To create a small or large group where such talking is possible, requires skillful and respectful discourse, an acknowledgment and appreciation of differences, an ability to make those differences a source of learning and innovation, and so on. But we can't specify in advance any of those traits because how much of that depends on so many other things: national cultures, the particular challenges facing the organization and their urgency, the shifting contingencies that affect whose voices should be most influential, and on and on. Regardless, the more a group or organization can talk to itself about itself, the less unaddressed mindsets that are short-term, reactive, small picture, and blame-placing, can persist. While we can identify in general terms what a great organization looks like, it must always be nuanced by situational constraints and opportunities. Perhaps it is enough to ask, are we really able to talk to ourselves about ourselves and if not, how can we increase that?

2) *The more developed an organization, the less it is driven by reactive, unconscious emotions, motivations and cognitive frameworks and the more decisions and actions are based on reason, rationality, and cognitive complexity*

Again we begin with Freud (1936), where the arc of development is conceived as away from reactive (neurotic), out of control behavior toward the capacity for choice and reason to guide behavior. The idea that powerful motivations reside outside of awareness, and that the purpose of human and social development is to replace instinct and reactivity with reason and relationships, rests on Freud (e.g., 1924, 1930). The reasons for repression and lack awareness, and what to do about it, are what differentiate different schools of psychotherapy, but the underlying image of development is the same (e.g., Erikson, 1950; Bowen, 1978). This should not be understood as a negation of the importance of emotions or some kind of Cartesian ascendancy of mind over body. Humanism has always valued emotions and argued for their centrality in human relations (e.g., McGill, 1954; Montague, 1951) way before brain research found evidence that decision-making requires feelings (Bechara, 2004; Gupta et al., 2011). Emotional development is a process of becoming ever more aware of ones feeling and motivations, without being hostage to them; able to act rationally while fully feeling.

The cognitive side of developmental theory does not negate the importance of emotional intelligence, but stresses an increasing capacity to think about thinking. A more developed person is

less a prisoner of unconscious frames of thinking, with the highest levels of development aware of the limits of rational analysis and of symbolic representation, exposing the assumptions and paradoxes that lay hidden in earlier developmental mindsets (Alexander and Langer, 1990; Cook-Grueter, 2000).

In a developed group people are not avoiding discussions that they are afraid will cause others to be upset or reactive, if those discussions are crucial for attaining the organization's purpose. We know from group development theory that this is a state that must be achieved; it doesn't just happen. The early life of any group amplifies unconscious emotion and suppresses rational discourse (Bion, 1961: Slater, 1961). Our neurological inheritance amplifies the anxieties of status threat and shame (Boyatis, 2011; Rock, 2008).

As applied to OD, we can ask; are the decisions and actions of people in this team or organization less driven by unspoken feelings and motivations than before? Are they able to deal with the pertinent issues in a calmer, more rational, deliberate and mindful manner than before? If so, then the organization has developed. From this point of view a great organization is not one where discussion of emotions is banned; just the opposite. It's when emotions that can drive irrational behavior are described and acknowledged that they lose their potency to unconsciously influence people's decisions and actions. In a great organization, people say what's on their minds and in their hearts. The

assumptions underlying our logic and rationales are open to examination and discussion (Argyris and Schön, 1978).

To create a great team and great organization, where communication and decisions truly rest on free and informed choice, peoples' different feelings and wants have to be expressed and acknowledged. This requires some effort and a maturation process of becoming self-aware, emotionally intelligent, and self-differentiated. Different points of view need to be allowed expression and legitimacy. Clearly, this and the first criterion of development are mutually reinforcing - the less we are driven by unspoken fears, the more we are able to talk to ourselves about ourselves. The more we talk about what is real, the more aware we become of the range of motivations and perspectives in the organization and the less room for unconscious drivers.

How to do that in any particular instance, with a particular group of people facing specific challenges, can't be boiled down to a recipe. Perhaps it is enough to ask, to what extent is what is happening now driven by unconscious emotions or unspoken wants or unexamined frameworks? Have we increased the system's capacity to acknowledge difficult feelings and motives while making rational decisions?

3) *The more developed an organization, the more it is able to realize its potential*

While the notion of actualization is most associated with Maslow (1954), it is latent in Freud and flowers in Jung's (1939) theory of individuation as

the full realization of an individual's self through an integration of opposites. All stage theories of development have as their subtext the idea of arrested development; that development can stop before one's full potential has been realized. More developed individuals display increased behavioral complexity (Denison, Hooijberg and Quinn 1995) as well as increasingly integrative cognitive complexity (Cowie, 2013; Torbert, 2004). We find this theme echoed in group development theory, where more developed groups are able to identify and utilize the variety of individual competencies and talents (Gibb, 1964; Hearn, 1957; Schroder and Harvey, 1963) and therefore able to take on tasks more effectively (Bushe and Coetzer, 2007). Cooperrider broadened our scope for actualizing potential beyond making the latent manifest, with the importance of the affirmative image of the future that guides decisions and actions (Bushe, 2013; Cooperrider, 1990) and the benefits of talking about flourishing (Cooperrider, 2016).

Are people in this team or organization more aware of what they are capable of, more motivated to bring the best of themselves to their work together, more able to create synergy from collective efforts, more able to manage the adaptive challenges facing them, than they were before? If so, then the organization has developed. From this point of view, a great organization is consistently able to achieve outcomes that it could not in the past, and is able to grow its capacities, competencies and core strengths, is able to achieve synergies that were previously unknown. To some

extent, this is about organizational learning but it's about more than learning. It's about creativity, generativity, and innovation. It's about the ability to perform and learn simultaneously, so that continuous improvement is a natural product of growth and maturation. Again, notice that each of these elements of development can be self-reinforcing. The more we can talk to ourselves about ourselves, the more we can understand the abilities and motivations that otherwise lie dormant and the less likely individuals will feel that the organizations they work for don't really see or use the best they have to offer. The less we are driven by unspoken anxieties and fears, a more fertile space is created that supports day to day experimentation and innovation. The more we actualize the potential of the system, the more it is likely to thrive in its environment, creating a less anxious climate and space for talking to ourselves about ourselves.

Conclusion

Theories and evidence of the adaptive and emergent challenges, shown in this article, indicate that great teams and organizations combine engagement and inquiry with high-performing norms and processes. Now practitioners and academic scholars can cooperate on the research and implementation of the processes to create great organizations based on original OD values and mindset. OD does not fit with a narrative of change management and performance mindset. Standing on the past to reimagine the future, OD

rather thrives where stakeholders fully participate in planning and implementing what to do about them with the support of leaders. The image of *OD is about change* is no longer generative for the field; as Bushe and Marshak (2018) suggest, the image that *OD is about change* "puts us in the position of being asked to do things we might not be good at and even don't really want to do, re-orients our focus from development to effectiveness, and reduces our visibility as a body of knowledge and practice that can make important contributions to desired means and outcomes for current organizational and social issues". As a subject, change remains of central importance in understanding what our work does involve. But it is not a purpose of our practice; this is the reason why we call ourselves OD practitioners instead of change managers.

Just as OD was originally a challenge to the mechanistic assumptions and practices of the 1950s, today OD can be a challenge to the performance mindset of the 20th century. Wouldn't it be stimulating and less of a values dilemma if OD practitioners and researchers have a generative image of creating great organizations, managing adaptive challenges with the principles of "engagement and inquiry" and "interest in development"? Hopefully, this article will be the first step in trying to inspire those who will take up the challenge to reinvigorate our field of OD.

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